

# *The Shepherd*

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## *From the Fathers*

“I HAVE THOUGHT it only right to tell you by letter what I said to myself, when I heard of the trials brought upon you by the enemies of God, that in a time reckoned a time of peace you have won for yourselves the blessings promised to all who suffer persecution for the sake of the name of Christ. In my judgment the war that is waged against us by our fellow countrymen is the hardest to bear, for it is easy to defend ourselves against open and declared enemies, while we are necessarily at the mercy of those who are associated with us, and are thus exposed to continual danger. This has been so in your case. Our fathers were persecuted, but their possessions were plundered and their houses were overthrown by idolaters. They themselves were driven into exile for Christ’s name’s sake by our open enemies. The persecutors who have lately appeared [the Arian-minded inside the Church, - now, of course, the Ecumenists and Sergianists] hate us no less than these idolaters, but, to the deceiving of many, they put forward the name of Christ that the persecuted may be robbed of all comfort from its confession... I am, therefore, persuaded that the reward in store for you from the righteous Judge is yet greater than that bestowed on those former martyrs. They indeed both had the public praise of men and received the reward of God. To you, though your good deeds are not less, no honours are given by the people. It is only fair that the requital in store for you in the world to come should be far greater. I exhort you, therefore, not to faint in your afflictions, but to be revived by God’s love, and to add daily to your zeal, knowing that in you ought to be preserved that remnant of True Religion which the

Lord will find when He comes on the earth. Even if bishops are driven from their churches, be not dismayed. If traitors have arisen from among the very clergy themselves, let not this undermine your confidence in God. We are saved not by names, but by mind, purpose, and genuine love for our Creator. Consider how in the attack against our Lord, high priests and scribes and elders devised the plot, and how few of the people were found really receiving the word. Remember that it is not the multitude who are being saved, but the elect of God. Be not then affrighted at the great multitude of the people who are carried here and there by winds like the waters of the sea. If but one be saved, like Lot at Sodom, he ought to abide in right judgment, keeping his hope in Christ unshaken, for the Lord will not forsake His holy ones.

**SAINT BASIL THE GREAT OF CAESAREA, + 379 A.D.**



## **Sermon on the Theophany of the Lord**

**METROPOLITAN ANTONY (KHAPOVITSKY), + A.D. 1936**

FIRST PRESIDING HIERARCH OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH ABROAD

TODAY the Creator of heaven and earth is come in the flesh to the Jordan seeking Baptism, being sinless, to purify the world of the flattery of the enemy.

How, brothers, can the Baptism of the Lord emancipate us from flattery? We hear from the prophetic readings today that by humbling Himself in Baptism, the Saviour opened new life to the world, a new path, following which His disciples would not be lost. “No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there; and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Sion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Esaias 35:9-10).

From this we see that the path of life revealed to us by the accomplishment of Christ's Baptism delivers inner peace to those who travel upon it in their personal lives, and well-being or happiness in the life of society in general. The wise sages of the Old Testament had the justified conviction, or rather, revelation, that while God does not send the Holy Spirit to the earth until His Heavenly Redeemer comes, no powers of reason, no authority, no wealth will correct the foundations of society, nor will any good deeds grant a person peace with his conscience. And so the wisest of these men, King Solomon, recognised in his old age that he could only alter his physical appearance, but his inner substance remained filled with the same injustice and wrath as before. I saw, he says: "the place of judgment, that wickedness was there in the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there" (Ecc. 3:16). "So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter" (Ecc. 4:1). This enlightened monarch applied all of his wisdom to rectify evil, but decided before his death that "That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered" (Ecc. 1:15). The endeavours of wise men and those who seek common happiness, or who at least seek to make sense of their own lives remain in "vanity and vexation of spirit;" the pathetic mortal cannot rise above his passionate, servile nature; society, filled with wickedness, does not subject itself to the philanthropic transformation of becoming a friend of mankind, but with the persistence and stubbornness of a turbulent river crashes along its deliberate path despite all effort to turn it to good and truth; it endlessly repeats its adopted laws and "that which is done is what shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun" (Ecc. 1:9).

This sorry state of the world, which rejected the grace of God, lasted until the arrival of Christ, and this day celebrates His arrival. Now the way to truth has been opened, now the prophecy of Esaias has been fulfilled, that one day the crookedness of life will be straightened, as Solomon knew: "and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain... and the glory

of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together” (Es. 40:4-5), for then, as Saint Gregory says, the only thing “new under the sun” appeared, which displaced what the author of Ecclesiastes had said of natural life. The Consoler of the suffering had come, for we heard and the Church assures us of the fulfilment of the holy prophecies: “Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert” (Es. 35:3-6).

Does it even need to be said, brethren, that these words were fulfilled with the true followers of Christ? You must have read in the Acts of the Apostles: “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart praising God, and having favour with all the people” (Acts 2:44-47).

This internal blessedness amid external persecutions was brought to the society of His followers by the Lord today, and to the hearts of each of them in particular. What secret did He reveal to us on this day? What is it that we are being taught? Did the appearance of the Holy Trinity illuminate us? Of course, this is a great and holy mystery, but it had already been revealed to mankind before, during the Annunciation, and later, not only to the Baptist himself, but to many with Christ’s final words to His followers and at Pentecost. Or, maybe, the day of the Epiphany is great because it was the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel? No, for this was followed by His forty-day period of seclusion.

This feast day is great, brethren, because now the Lord opened the mystery of the reborn, new life, the spirit that the natural world had never known. This mystery, this spirit is the spirit of

self-deprecation and humility, filled with love. See how it contrasts with the spirit of the world: the worldly figure, setting out to work, first of all tries to declare his worth, his rights; he hastens to persuade everyone how far he is from the evil and ignorant of this world, how close he is to people of respect. Then, if he belongs to those few who wish to serve the good of their neighbours, he treats them as though he is a teacher or a scholar, or a ruler, or as the father of his family, in any case as above them, with the constant reminder of his superiority, in his good efforts which draw him closer to his inferiors, whether in intellect, morality or social standing. Of course, if the others were always clearly aware of what is spiritually beneficial, they would submit to his instructions, as long as they seemed rational! - but that is the main obstacle to well-being and perfection, that in the hearts of men the deepest-seated of all emotions is pride, for the sake of which people are prepared to deny reasonable caution, to reject what is obviously beneficial, only for the sake of not having to submit to another, just so as not to cede their prejudice, not to show their preference for one's neighbour's truth and admit one's own falsehood. That is why they hated wise reformers, why they persecuted scholars, and rejected revelation: the benefit of the new teaching was attached to the person who introduced it, only pride prevented the acceptance of the guidance of another.

What is observed in social life can be seen in personal life as well. The first condition of our inner transformation must be self-condemnation, the recognition of one's own great fall, one's own shamefulfulness, as did the tax collector and the prodigal son. But the prideful man rejects this, he forever seeks to justify himself, deeming himself better than others. He has created for himself false gods, more lethal than Baal or Astarte, and given them the names of noble pride, noble self-respect, the sense of one's worth, personal honour. He intentionally closes his eyes to his faults, and so remains in the sorry state of the patient who feels himself healthy, or the blind man who thinks he can see.

So, when all were blinded thus in prideful mutual rejection, when the wisest of them ceremoniously declared the inability of any methods to bring peace and perfection in life, and only the

sons of the people of God, who thirsted for correction, surrounded the holy prophet in the desert and asked "What are we to do?" - then that very year of sorrows and darkness, the light of the humility of Christ shone forth. Christ did not approach the great rulers of the world, or the false wise men, but went among these pilgrims in the desert and bowed His head before the Baptist, as though He were in need of purification.

As if to say, "O people! do not fear admitting yourselves worthless and fallen; do not praise yourselves before each other, do not declare your superiority to each other. See, I, the Holy and Pre-Eternal Son of God, Who am praised by the Seraphim, I not only do not disdain contact with you, but I am prepared to be seen as one like you who are in need of purification! Follow Me to the preacher of repentance, and then come to Me, 'and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls'" (Matt. 11:29).

With these words, brethren, our hearts are lifted; they do not call us into combat, to defend ourselves before the One Who humbled Himself before all, Who does not berate us with His superiority, Who "without fire He reforges, without breaking, He reforms." We then cast off our pride with disdain, beholding His Divine Visage, which is bowed down under the hand of the servant, and immediately sense new life. As a boat which is relieved of a heavy load, our spirit rises above our daily struggles. We do not fear for every step we take in life, we do not fear that we are not respected, that we are ignored or mocked. The compassion we have for our neighbour, which had once hidden behind our frail self-love, might never have revealed itself before, but now openly embraces others. Our faith in God, which had before infused us with an almost sickening fear of our future, now, freed from our own pride, finds spiritual ardour when we mentally approach the Jordan River. We behold the humbled Christ, and, pouring forth tears of love, at the same time weep over our previous waywardness. Why, oh why did we poison our own lives? Why, surrendering ourselves to the prejudices of self-love, did we build for ourselves dungeons of spiritual solitude among our loved ones? Why is it that while we despise blasphemy or perver-

sion in our souls, we serve these vices in order not to subject our pride to mockery or barbs from others? Why do we hide our holy love out of false shame, even as we boast before others of deeds worthy of horror and derision?

Now our mind's eyes are opened: we see where the true greatness of mankind lies, not in the struggle for superiority, but in humbling oneself before others, gaining wealth not by climbing higher but through empathy for others, not by the flattery of men but from love for them. Here is what is "new under the sun," here the "crooked is made straight," here is where the humiliated by life can find consolation, right here in the Baptism of the Lord! "Christ is baptised, and emerging from the waters, brings up the world with Him."

Not only did the prophets and the Baptist rejoice before this great event: even dead nature could not lie at rest before this image; the natural order of man's pride was disrupted. The Jordan trembled from the approaching Master, the waters receded from the entering God-Man; the skies opened up above Him, and as the grand testimony of God the Father and the Holy Spirit manifested itself, the terrifying Cherubim and Seraphim, shielding their faces in trepidation, served the One Who was baptised, singing to Him the Divine glory: "Christ is baptised with us, He Who is purest of all, supernatural; He sanctifies the water, and this becomes a purification for our souls."

This healing and illumination by the Lord is granted to us all who wish to follow Him, but an augmented truth and augmented wisdom is granted by Him through His Baptism to those who wish to serve their neighbour, rear their children or those of others, or lead their compatriots or their flock. Only those will be true friends of mankind, powerful guides for their hearts, genuine perfecters of social life, who can take up their task as Christ the Saviour revealed through His service to the world - only those who crucify themselves, humble their hearts and minds, who inscribe upon their consciences a vow to serve not their own honour or glory, but serve others with selfless love and humility; for whom the pleasures of the praise and worship of others are foreign, but who will only know the joy that comes



from their children walking in the truth, as the Divine Apostle said; who will not strive to rule and demand subjugation, but will feel, like another Apostle who said: “For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the Gospel’s sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you” (1 Cor. 9:19-23). “Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?” (2 Cor. 11:29).

For such true followers of Christ there will be no earthly disappointments, as for Solomon; their words and deeds will ignite human hearts; life will blossom around them; all that is good will be strengthened and will rise up to fight against evil; everything darkened by sin but not yet consumed by it, noticing in this messenger the absence of any rebuke or humiliating condescension, will repent and bow down before him, while all that is wicked to its core, consciously despising the truth, will be denounced and exposed, and if it assails the truth with renewed hatred and even unto the murder of its messenger, he will yet not destroy his works, but will only glorify them, as it was with the Holy Martyrs.

Such, brethren, is the new path of social and personal life, opened to us in the mystery of the Baptism of Christ. “The voice of the Lord crieth upon the waters: ‘Come, receive ye all the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of the fear of God, of the manifested Christ.’” Can we ourselves receive this Spirit? Can we receive Christ? Abundant is His feast, great is His gift. But if you hesitate, as did the wealthy youth from the Gospel, if you have not decided to live from now on in the spirit of service and self-deprecation, to obtain the true goodness of life, then bow your head nonetheless before Christ and say to Him, as did that woman of Canaan: “Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which

fall from their masters' table." And He will reply: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." Amen.



## ON THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE

SAINT CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, + 444 A.D.

YE WHO LOVE instruction, and are eager to listen, receive once again the sacred words (Luke 18:9-14): *delight yourselves in the honey of wisdom; for so it is written, Good words are honey-combs, and their sweetness is the healing of the soul.* For the labour of the bees is very sweet, and benefits in many ways the soul of man: but the divine and saving wisdom makes those in whom it dwells skilful in every good work, and teaches them the ways of improvement. Let us therefore, as I said, receive again in mind and heart the Saviour's words. For He teaches us in what manner we ought to make our requests unto Him, in order that the act may not prove unrewarded to them who practise it; and that no one may anger God, the Bestower of gifts from on high, by means of those very things by which he imagines that he shall gain some benefit. For it is written, *There is a righteous man, who perishes in his righteousness.*

For see, I pray, an instance of this clearly painted, so to speak, in the parable set before us. One who prayed is condemned because he did not offer his prayer wisely. *For two men, it says, went up unto the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.* And here we must admire the wise arrangement of Christ our common Saviour, in all things whatsoever He does and says. For by the parable previously read to us, He called us to diligence, and to the duty of offering prayer constantly: for the Evangelist said, *And He spake unto them also a parable, to the intent that men ought always to pray, and must not grow weary.* Having then urged them to diligence in constant prayer, yet, as I said, lest by doing so sedulously but without discretion,

we should enrage Him Whom we supplicate, He very excellently shows us in what way we ought to be diligent in prayer. *Two men then*, He says, *went up unto the temple to pray*. Observe here, I pray, the impartiality and entire fairness of the unerring Nature: for He calls those who were praying men, since He looks not so much at wealth or power; but regarding their natural equality, He considers all those who dwell upon earth as men, and as in no respect different from one another.

And what then was the manner of their prayer? *The Pharisee*, it says, *prayed thus to himself*. *God, I thank Thee that I am not like the rest of mankind, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or as this publican*. Many at once are the faults of the Pharisee: for first of all he is boastful, and without sense; for he praises himself, although the sacred Scripture cries aloud, *Let a neighbour praise thee, and not thine own mouth: a stranger and not thine own lips*. But, O excellent sir, one may well say to him, Behold, those who live in the practice of good and holy actions, as any one may see, are not very ready to listen to the words of flatterers: yea, and even if men extol them, they often are covered with shame, and drop their eyes to the ground, and beg silence of those that praise them. But this shameless Pharisee praises and extols himself because he is better than extortioners, and the unjust, and adulterers. But how did it escape thy notice, that a man's being better than the bad does not necessarily and as a matter of course prove him to be worthy of admiration: but that to vie with those who habitually excel, is a noble and honourable thing, and admits a man into the number of those who are justly praised.

Our virtue, therefore, must not be contaminated with fault, but must be single-minded and blameless, and free from all that can bring reproach. For what profit is there in fasting twice in the week, if thy so doing serve only as a pretext for ignorance and vanity, and make thee supercilious and haughty, and selfish? Thou tithest thy possessions, and makest a boast thereof: but thou in another way provokest God's anger, by condemning men generally on this account, and accusing others; and thou art thyself puffed up, though not crowned by the divine decree for righteousness, but heapest, on the contrary, praises upon thyself. *For*

*I am not*, he says, *as the rest of mankind*. Moderate thyself, O Pharisee: *put a door to thy tongue, and a lock*. Thou speakest to God Who knoweth all things. Await the decree of the Judge. None of those skilled in the practice of wrestling ever crowns himself: nor does any man receive the crown of himself, but awaits the summons of the arbiter. Lower thy pride: for arrogance is both accursed and hated by God. Although therefore thou fastest with puffed up mind, thy so doing will not avail thee: thy labour will be unrewarded; for thou hast mingled dung with thy perfume. Even according to the law of Moses a sacrifice that had a blemish was not capable of being offered to God: for it was said unto him, *Of sheep and ox, that is offered for sacrifice, there must be no blemish therein*. Since therefore thy fasting is accompanied by pride, thou must expect to hear God saying, *This is not the fast that I have chosen*, says the Lord. Thou offerest tithes: but thou wrongest in another way Him Who is honoured by thee, in that thou condemnest men generally. This is an act foreign to the mind that fears God: for Christ even said, *Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned*. And one also of His disciples said, *There is one Lawgiver, and Judge: why then judgest thou thy neighbour?* No man because he is in health ridiculeth one who is sick for being laid up and bedridden: rather he is afraid, lest perchance he become himself the victim of similar sufferings. Nor does any man in battle, because another has fallen, praise himself for having escaped from misfortune. For the infirmity of others is not a fit subject for praise for those who are in health: nay, even if any one be found of more than usually vigorous health, even then scarcely does he gain glory thereby. Such then was the state of the self-loving Pharisee.

But what of the publican? He stood, it says, *afar off*, not even venturing, so to speak, to raise up his eyes on high. Thou seest him abstaining from all boldness of speech, as having no right thereto, and smitten by the reproaches of conscience; for he was afraid of being even seen by God, as one who had been careless of His laws, and had led an unchaste and dissolute life. Thou seest also that he accuses his own depravity by his external manner. For the foolish Pharisee stood there bold and broad, lifting

up his eyes without scruple, bearing witness of himself, and boastful. But the other feels shame at his conduct: he is afraid of his Judge, he smites upon his breast, he confesses his offences, he shows his malady as to the Physician, he prays that He may have mercy. And what is the result? Let us hear what the Judge saith, *This man*, He says, *went down to his house justified rather than the other.*

Let us therefore, *pray without ceasing*, according to the expression of the blessed Paul; but let us be careful to do so aright. The love of self is displeasing to God, and He rejects empty haughtiness and a proud look, puffed up often on account of that which is by no means excellent. And even if a man be good and sober, let him not on this account suffer himself to fall away into shameful pride: but rather let him remember Christ, Who says to the holy apostles, *When ye have done all those things, those namely which have been commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do.* For we owe unto God over all, as from the yoke of necessity, the service of slaves, and ready obedience in all things. Yea, though thou ledest an excellent and elect life, exact not wages from the Lord; but rather ask of Him a gift. Being good, He will promise it thee: as a loving Father, He will aid thee. Restrain not thyself then from saying, *God be merciful to me the sinner.* Remember Him Who says by the voice of Esaias, *Declare thou thy sins first, that thou mayest be justified;* remember too that He rebukes those who will not do so, and says, *Behold, I have a judgment against thee, because thou sayest I have not sinned.* Examine the words of the saints: for one says, *The righteous is the accuser of himself in the beginning of his words.* And another again, I said, *I will confess against myself my transgression unto the Lord: and thou forgavest the iniquity of my heart.*

What answer then will those who embrace the new tenets of Novatus make to this, and say of themselves that they are pure? Whose prayer do they praise? That of the Pharisee, who acquitted himself, or that of the Publican, who accused himself? If they say that of the Pharisee, they resist the divine sentence; for he was condemned as being boastful: but if that of the Publican, why do they refuse to acknowledge their own impurity? Cer-

tainly God justifies those who know well their transgressions, and are willing to confess them: but these men will have the portion of the Pharisee.

We say, that in many things *we all of us offend*, and that no man is pure from uncleanness, even though his life upon earth be but one day. Let us ask then of God mercy; which if we do, Christ will justify us: by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father, be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, unto ages of ages. Amen.



## THE COMING MONTH

JUST one very beautiful life taken from Saint Dimitry of Rostov's collection, slightly shortened, this month:-

**SAINT JULIANA the Merciful of Lazarevo** (2<sup>nd</sup> / 15<sup>th</sup>) gives us an example of piety and spiritual purity. Her life teaches us that even in the world, even within a family, amid cares for children, spouse and members of one's household, one may please God no less than one who withdraws from the world to a monastic cell: one only need live according to the demands of the love of Christ and the righteousness of the Gospel. The merciful Juliana was born in Moscow, in the palace milieu, to pious and philanthropic parents named Justin and Stephanida Nedyurev. Her father served as the steward at the court of Tsar Ivan IV Vasilievich, known as the Terrible. Justin and Stephanida, possessed of great riches, lived in all reverence and purity, with their children, and a multitude of servants. Into their family the blessed Juliana was born in the 1530s. When she was six years old, she lost her mother, and was taken to be raised by her maternal grandmother, Anastasia Lukina, and moved from Moscow to the outskirts of the city of Murom. Yet six years later the righteous Juliana's grandmother passed away, leaving the twelve-year old orphan to be raised by her aunt, Natalia Arapova. It is well known that siblings do not always live in peace and goodly concord; and it is even more common for disputes and quarrels to arise among more distant kinfolk if they live together. Juliana honoured her aunt, was

obedient to her in all and unfailingly humbled herself before her cousins, the children of the household, enduring in silence their insults and reproaches. Yet Juliana did not resemble her cousins: she had no love for the games and pastimes, the pursuits of youth, but gave herself over to fasting and prayer. This difference in temperament between her and her cousins became a cause of mockery and ridicule not only among her cousins, but also among the servants; and under the influence of her children, Juliana's aunt frequently upbraided her niece. "O foolish one! Why art thou mortifying thy body at such an early age? Dost thou wish to ruin thy virginal beauty?" At times, they had to compel her to eat and drink. Yet the meek, quiet and dutiful Juliana remained steadfast and immovable when the matter concerned the salvation of her soul and the God-pleasing life. The taunts and ridicule of her relatives and servants had no effect upon her: she led the same strict and ascetic life as before. Juliana gave herself over with intense commitment to her handiwork: the needlework which flourished in the homes of the nobility in that age, especially spinning and sewing at embroidery-frames. The righteous one spent her evenings in such pursuits. Yet she did not work for herself: she made clothes for homeless orphans, widows and the sick of her village. And she laboured for them indefatigably, without taking sufficient food, drink or rest. Word of this spread to the outlying region, and all who heard of it marvelled at her virtuous life. What is particularly striking is that Juliana's exalted humility and boundless love for her neighbours sprang forth only from the depths of her own pure heart, full of Christian meekness. She had no guides and teachers; she was unable either to read the sacred Scriptures or to derive instruction therefrom; during the years of her girlhood she did not even attend church, for there was none nearby. When Juliana reached the age of sixteen, she was married by the priest Patapius to George Ossorgin, a rich merchant of Murom, in the village of Lazarevo, which was on his estate. After the wedding, the priest delivered to the couple a discourse on how they should live, how they should raise their children in the fear of God, how they should instil virtue in the members of their household and, in general, make of their family a little church. The words of the priest penetrated deeply into the soul of Juliana, and she followed them devoutly all her life. Her father-in-law, Vasily, and her mother-in-law, Eudocia, were wealthy people well known at the court of the tsar. Besides George, their only son, they had two daughters. By her calm and meek character, her personal kindness and welcoming attitude, Juliana won the love not only of her husband's parents, but

even of her sisters-in-law. Kinfolk of the Ossorgins and close friends all fell in love with her. They asked her various questions, so as to obtain some idea of her character, but she disarmed them with her constant kindness and goodness, her meek and soft replies, and little by little won the love even of those who at first were reluctant to extend their regard to her. Thus Juliana came to occupy the most visible place in the family of her husband, and became the mistress of the household. The cares and concerns of the household and its economy did not take up all the attention of the blessed Juliana and did not occupy her soul to its detriment: rising early in the morning or resting from the day's cares and turmoil before going to sleep, she would pray long to God and make a hundred or more full prostrations; and she drew her husband to take part regularly in this continual and fervent supplication. George was often summoned to serve in the tsar's army in faraway places, and he was often away from his home for as many as three years. While she was parted from her husband, under the influence of her natural sorrow, Juliana would spend whole nights in prayer, or at her spinning and sewing. The products of her handiwork she would sell, distributing to poor the moneys thus obtained. Moreover, as a skilled seamstress, the blessed one would sew shrouds and donate them to the church. She kept her benefactions a secret from her husband's parents. She would send a trusted handmaid forth at night to distribute her alms. She cared for widows and orphans like a true mother, washed them with her own hands, fed them, gave them drink and sewed clothing for them. She ran a well-ordered household, where everyone knew what tasks he was expected to perform, yet she was always kind and meek with the servants, always addressing them by their Christian names. She never required her servants to wait on her hand and foot: no one poured the water as she washed her hands, no one helped her dress or removed her shoes, as was usual in most of the households of the nobility. If in the presence of guests, as was customary, she had to rely on such ministrations by her servants, when the guests departed she would bow down and say of herself: "Who am I that I should be served by others, who are also created by God?" She was ever ready to serve others herself, and she made certain that her servants had nourishing food and proper clothing. Yet the righteous Juliana was not satisfied just to look after the needs of her servants: she strove to see that there were no quarrels and arguments among them, so that peace and quiet, and the grace of God, reigned in her home. Whenever quarrels would arise among her servants, Juliana would frequently take the



blame upon herself, and thus placate those who were at enmity. She was wont to say: "I often sin before God, and He, being full of loving-kindness, forgiveth me. Therefore, I will be patient with my servants' sins. Even though they are subject to my authority, yet in soul they can be better than me and more pure before God." She never complained about their faults to her husband or his parents, who scolded her for excessive leniency. Whenever she lacked the skill and strength to cope with spoiled servants and restore peace to the house, she would pray fervently to the all-holy Virgin and to Saint Nicolas, asking their help. During one such trying time, while Juliana stood in prayer at night, the demons struck fear into her heart. She fell senseless upon her bed and plunged into a deep sleep. In a dream she saw a multitude of unclean spirits advancing upon her with swords. "If thou dost not stop what thou art doing," said the demons, "we will destroy thee!" The blessed one cried out in prayer to the Mother of God and Saint Nicolas, and the holy wonderworker appeared with a large book and drove away the dark spirits, who vanished like smoke. After this, he blessed the merciful Juliana and said: "My daughter, be of good cheer and be strong. Fear not the wiles of the demons. Christ hath commanded me to defend thee against demons and evil men." When she awoke, Juliana clearly beheld a radiant man, who passed through the door of her bed-chamber and disappeared. She ran after him, but the bolts and bars of her quarters had not been moved. Then Juliana understood that the Lord had indeed sent her a heavenly protector: she was strengthened in her faith and hope in the help of God, and with yet greater diligence continued her works of almsgiving and love. It happened that, in the year 1570, a great famine struck Russia, and multitudes of people died from lack of grain. The merciful Juliana drew supplies from her mother-in-law, ostensibly for her own meals, but secretly distributed all to the starving and poor. Her mother-in-law was amazed at this, and said: "I rejoice that thou hast begun to eat more often, yet I am astonished that thou hast altered thy usual habit. Before, when there was plenty of everything, thou didst take no food in the morning and at noon, and I was unable to prevail upon thee to do so. But now, when there is everywhere a shortage of bread, thou takest both breakfast and the noonday repast." So as not to disclose her secret almsgiving, the blessed Juliana replied: "While I had not yet given birth to children, I had no desire to eat those meals; but now I have become weak from birthgiving, and I wish to eat not only during the day, but also at night. But I am ashamed to ask you for food at night." Juliana's mother-in-law was delighted that she had begun

to eat more, and began to send her food even at night. The merciful Juliana accepted the food and distributed it all in secret during the famine. When any of the poor of the surrounding area would die, she would purchase a shroud and provide funds to cover the cost of the funeral. She prayed for the soul of everyone buried in the village of Lazarevo, whether known to her or not. When the famine passed, a new misfortune befell Russia: a deadly contagion descended upon the hapless land. Filled with horror, the people shut themselves up in their homes and would not allow those infected with the plague to enter; they were even afraid to come in contact with their clothing. Yet the merciful Juliana, unbeknown to her in-laws, would wash the sick in the bath-house, treat them as far as she was able, and besought the Lord for the restoration of their health. And whenever any orphan or pauper died, she would wash him with her own hands and hire someone to help bear him away for burial. The parents of Juliana's husband died at an advanced age, and, according to the custom of their forebears, received the monastic tonsure on their death-beds. Juliana's husband was not at home at that time: he had been serving in the tsar's army at Astrakhan. The blessed Juliana buried Basil and Eudocia Ossorgin with honour, distributed lavish alms for the repose of their souls, had requiem liturgies celebrated each day for forty days, set forth tables of foodstuffs for the monks, priests, widows, orphans and the indigent, and sent abundant donations to the gaols. Afterwards, every year, she kept the memory of her husband's departed parents and expended a sizeable portion of the family's revenue on this good work. Blessed Juliana lived peaceably and quietly with her husband for many years, and the Lord gave her ten sons and three daughters. Of them, four sons and two daughters died in childhood. Her remaining children she raised, finding joy in them. But when her children grew to adulthood, the enemy of the human race sowed enmity between them and the servants of the blessed one. Her eldest son was even murdered by a servant; and not long afterward, her second son was killed while serving in the tsar's army. A bitter burden were these tribulations to Juliana's maternal heart, yet she did not cry aloud, she did not tear the hair from her head as other women were wont to do: unceasing prayer and almsgiving strengthened her powers. Her husband also grieved over the loss of his sons, but the blessed one consoled him. Under the influence of these familial misfortunes, Juliana began to press her husband to permit her to retire to a convent, and she even let it be known that she was prepared to depart secretly, but George reminded her of the beautiful words that the priest had

spoken at their wedding, and the admonitions of other fathers: "Black garments will not save us if we do not live monastically, and white garments will not destroy us if we do what is pleasing unto God. If anyone departeth to a monastery, not desiring to care for children, he seeketh not the love of God, but rather peace. And the children, orphaned, will often weep and curse their parents, saying: 'Wherefore, having given birth to us, hast thou left us in tribulation and suffering?' If it is commanded to feed the orphans of others, it followeth that one ought not to starve one's own children!" The husband of the righteous Juliana was a lettered man. And he read to her other passages from spiritual writers until he had persuaded her. And she said to him: "Let the will of the Lord be done!" After this, husband and wife began to live as brother and sister. George continued to sleep in his usual bedroom, but Juliana lay down on the stove in the evenings, spreading firewood, branches uppermost, to sleep on instead of a bed, and positioning her ring of iron keys beneath her side. Thus she would fall into a slumber for an hour or two. When the house grew quiet, the blessed Juliana would rise for prayer, and would often spend whole nights in supplication; in the morning she would go to church for Matins and Liturgy. After the divine services, the merciful one would go home and busy herself with the running of her household. On Mondays and Wednesdays the blessed one would eat but once a day, and on Fridays she would take no food at all, but would withdraw into a separate room, setting up in her home the semblance of the cell of a monastic recluse. And she would permit herself only a single cup of wine on Saturdays, when she fed the clergy, widows, orphans and poor. Ten years after she and her husband suspended their marital relations, Juliana's husband died. When she had buried and commemorated him, the merciful Juliana gave herself over wholly to the service of God and the poor. Since her children grieved mightily over the loss of their father, she consoled them, saying: "Be not sorrowful! The death of your father is for the edification of us sinners. Seeing it, and continually expecting our own departure from this life, be virtuous. Above all, love one another, and give alms." And the blessed Juliana did not teach by means of words alone: she strove also to emulate by her manner of life the great Christian strugglers, the holy women of whom her husband and other literate people had read to her. Whenever she was free from domestic concerns, the blessed Juliana gave herself over to prayer and intensified her fasting. Yet she concerned herself most of all with almsgiving. Often she would have no money left to distribute to the poor. In wintertime she would receive money

from her children to buy warm clothing for herself, but she gave it all to the poor, and she herself went about in thin garments and barefoot. In order to struggle for the Lord in ascetic labours, and, experiencing pain, to fan the flame of her prayer to God, the Bestower of joy and consolation, she placed broken nut-shells between her bare feet and her sandals, and thus walked about her house. One year, there was an exceptionally cold winter, so that even the ground froze through and cracked. Juliana came down with a cold and did not attend church for a time, but she prayed at home. One day, the priest of the village of Lazarevo came to church early in the morning and heard a voice issuing forth from the icon of the Theotokos, saying: "Go and ask Juliana the merciful why she hath not been coming to church. Her prayer at home is pleasing unto God, yet not as pleasing as supplication made in church. And do thou render homage to her: she hath passed the age of sixty, and the Holy Spirit resteth upon her!" Filled with awe and fear, the priest hastened to Juliana, fell at her feet, asked her to forgive him, and told her of the vision he had witnessed. The blessed one was greatly saddened and said to the priest: "Thou hast surely fallen into temptation to say these things! How can I, a sinner before the Lord, be worthy of such a call?" The priest promised Juliana not to speak of his vision while she was alive, but declared that he would make it known after her repose. Then Juliana went to church; there she had a service of supplication offered before the icon of the Mother of God, and she kissed it and entreated the heavenly intercessor with tears. The blessed one's widowhood lasted for ten years, during which she distributed practically all her possessions to the poor. She retained for her household only what was most necessary and arranged that her supplies of stored food not be carried over from one year to the next. All that remained from the year's stores she immediately passed on to the poor, the orphans and indigent. Then came the hapless reign of Tsar Boris Godunov (1598-1605), and the Lord punished the Russian land with a famine of unusual intensity: the starving people even had to resort to eating carrion, and in certain cases were driven to consume human corpses. Countless multitudes perished of starvation. The Ossorgin family was also affected by the dearth of food, for the sowers had not gone forth to plant the fields, and even the cattle died from lack of fodder. The blessed Juliana begged her children and servants not to take anything that belonged to others. All that remained in her house of clothing, livestock and vessels, she sold, buying grain with the money she received. With these funds she fed her household, and despite the terrible lack, she

also helped the poor, so that not one of them departed from her empty-handed. When there was no more grain left, the merciful Juliana did not become discouraged, but put all her trust in God's help. Eventually, the blessed one was forced to move to the village of Vochnevo, on the outskirts of Nizhni Novgorod, where some food was still obtainable. Yet even there the famine soon hit with full force, and Juliana, no longer able to feed her servants, set them at liberty. Some of them took advantage of their freedom, but others remained to endure want and grief with their mistress. Juliana ordered the servants who remained with her to gather pig-weed and to strip the bark from a certain species of elm-tree. With these she prepared a type of bread with which to feed herself, her children and servants. Through her prayers, the bread made from pig-weed and elm-bark turned out to be quite tasty, and the poor, of whom there were an extraordinarily great number because of the famine, came in multitudes to receive it from the merciful Juliana. Her neighbours asked the poor: "Why go ye to the house of Juliana? She and her children are barely alive in their hunger!" But the poor said: "We have travelled through many villages, and sometimes we have been given pure wheat-bread; but we have never tasted bread as sweet as that given out by this widow!" Neighbours, who had quite a store of pure wheat, sent to ask Juliana for some of her pig-weed and elm-bark bread, and they were convinced that it was indeed very sweet; yet they attributed this to the skill of the servants who prepared the dough. While enduring grievous want for two years, the righteous Juliana was not troubled, did not resort to grumbling and complaints, did not become despondent, but was of good cheer and as joyous as was her wont. One thing alone gave her cause for sadness: there was not a church in the village of Vochnev, and because of her advanced age she was unable to visit the church in the nearest village. Yet mindful of how the domestic prayer of the centurion Cornelius was pleasing to God, the blessed one gave herself over to supplication and quickly found peace for her soul. On the 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1603, the merciful Juliana fell ill. Her sickness continued for six days, yet she lay in bed only during the daytime, while at night she rose and stood in prayer without any support. Her handmaidens mocked her, saying: "What kind of a sick woman is this? During the day she lieth abed, but at night she standeth in prayer!" But the blessed one replied those who mocked her meekly: "Why do ye laugh? Do ye not know that the Lord expecteth even the sick to pray?" On 2<sup>nd</sup> January, when day broke, the merciful Juliana called her spiritual father, the priest Athanasius, and received communion of the Holy

Mysteries. Then she sat up in her bed and called her children and servants to her. Much did she teach them of how to live a God-pleasing life, and said also: "When I was still a child, I had a strong desire to be tonsured and given the great angelic habit, yet I was not deemed worthy of this, because of my sins. Glory to the righteous judgment of God!" She ordered a censer prepared for her burial and incense placed in it, and having bidden farewell to her children, handmaids and friends, she stretched out on the bed, made the sign of the Cross thrice over herself, wrapped her prayer-rope around her hands, and uttered her last words: "Glory to God for all things! Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commit my spirit!" When the blessed one reposed in the Lord, everyone present saw how a splendid light formed around her head in the guise of a golden crown, such as one sees on the icons of the saints. When they washed the body of the newly-departed and had it placed in a separate storeroom, at night they saw burning candles (although no one had lit them), and sensed a sweet fragrance emanating from the room where the blessed one lay. During the night following on the day of her repose, the merciful Juliana appeared to one of her handmaids and ordered her to see that her body was carried from Vochnev to the Murom region and buried by the church of the righteous Lazarus, next to that of her husband. The body of the blessed, which had seen so many labours, was placed in an oaken coffin and borne away to the village of Lazarevo, about three miles from Murom, and was there interred on 10<sup>th</sup> January, 1604. In the years to come, the children and kinfolk of the merciful Juliana erected a winter church, dedicated to the Archangel Michael, over her gravesite. On 8<sup>th</sup> August, 1614, the blessed one's son George died, and as they began to prepare a burial place for him in the crypt of the Ossorgin family, they found the coffin of the blessed Juliana intact, though they were unaware of the identity of the coffin's occupant. On 10<sup>th</sup> August, after George's funeral service, when those who had taken part went to the house of the Ossorgins to commemorate the departed, the curious women of the village opened the coffin and saw that it was full of fragrant myrrh. When the guests left the commemorative meal, the women reported what they had seen to the Ossorgin family. The children of the merciful Juliana hastened to the coffin and saw that the women's report was true. In reverent fear they took away a small vessel of the myrrh and carried it to the cathedral of Murom, probably as evidence of their report. During the daytime this myrrh was like unto the juice of beets, but at night it thickened and became like attar exuded by some purple flower. In their awe they

did not dare to inspect the whole body of the righteous Juliana: they saw only that her hands and legs were intact; they did not see her head, because a beam which supported the church's furnace lay across the lid of the coffin. That night, many heard a bell ring in the church of the righteous Lazarus, and they hastened to the church, thinking that someone was sounding the fire tocsin; yet there was no fire to be extinguished anywhere. They noticed that a sweet fragrance was being emitted from the coffin. Word of this happening spread quickly to the outlying areas, and many came to the saint's coffin, anointed themselves with the myrrh and received healing for their divers ailments. When the myrrh had been almost completely distributed, the sick began to take the sand from beneath the coffin of the merciful Juliana, rubbed it on themselves and, according to the measure of their faith, received the alleviation of their infirmities. Thus, Jeremiah Chervev, a resident of Murom, went to the coffin of the merciful Juliana with his wife and two sick children. His son and daughter were afflicted with a disease which had caused blood to flow from their hands and feet for more than two years, and they were unable even to lift their hands to their mouths. Having had a service of supplication and a *panikhida* chanted at the coffin of the holy Juliana and having rubbed some of the sand upon their children, Jeremiah and his wife returned to their home. Their children slept for a full day and night, and when they awoke they were able to make the sign of the Cross freely. Within a week their health had been completely restored. A peasant from the village of Makarova suffered from a terrible dental affliction and had long been unable to eat, drink or work. On the advice of his wife, he went to the coffin of the merciful Juliana alone at noon-time, prayed to the blessed one, rubbed some of the sand on his teeth and returned to his home well. One night, a fire broke out in the village of Lazarevo and consumed four lead-roofed cabins. An extraordinarily powerful wind was blowing, and the fire gradually grew closer to the church. The priest ran to the church, hurriedly took soil from beneath Saint Juliana's coffin in both hands, and cast it at the fire. The wind then changed direction, the fire died down little by little, and finally went out. A peasant from the village of Koledino, by the name of Clement, had an abscess on his leg which gave him much discomfort. The sick man, having heard of the miracles wrought by the blessed Juliana, asked his friends to carry him to her coffin; there he had a service of supplication offered, rubbed soil from the saint's grave on his ulcer, and quickly received a cure. Maria, a servant of the nobleman Matthew Cherkasov, who

lived in a suburb of Murom, became blind. When her friends and family brought her to the shrine of the holy Juliana and had a service of supplication and a *panikhida* offered up for her, she sensed that her sight was returning. On the way back to Murom she was even able to pick mushrooms and berries. A certain ten-year old boy became paralysed and lost his sight. He was carried to the Church of the Archangel Michael, where a service of supplication was offered up to the righteous Juliana, and the sick child suddenly could see a burning candle; in a short time he completely regained his health. Agatha, the wife of Theodore, a clergyman who served in the Church of the Archangel Michael, contracted a condition of the hand which was so painful that she was unable to move it. The merciful Juliana appeared to the unfortunate woman and said: "Go to the Church of the Archangel Michael and kiss the icon of Juliana." Then the saint identified the place where the sick woman had hidden two coins and commanded her to give them to the priest to touch to the icon. The ailing woman did all that she was told: she had a service of supplication and a *panikhida* offered, drank holy water, rubbed the sand on her hand, and was healed. Joseph Kovkov, a courtier of Moscow, was grievously ill, to the point where it was expected that he would soon die. But the thought came to him to have his servant Anicius go to the shrine of the righteous Juliana. The servant had a service of supplication offered up for the health of his ailing master, and took with him holy water and sand. When Kovkov sprinkled himself with the water and rubbed himself with the sand which had been brought to him, he immediately recovered his health. The cured man then travelled to the village of Lazarevo on foot, to give thanks to the merciful Juliana.



## POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

*"I READ somewhere recently that if Mary gave birth as a virgin, the baby would have had to have been a girl not a boy, because as a woman Mary had no Y chromosomes which males have but not females, so where would they have come from for Jesus to have been male?" - S.B., Walsall.*

WELL, this is an incidence of science blinding rather than, as it should, science illumining. I suspect too that it was just one



of those items posted on the internet and in the media to draw attention at the Christmas period. Consider just for a moment, if God created the whole universe, that which we know and that which is still “beyond our ken,” which He did, could He not provide Y chromosomes for the Virgin’s Son? There is no doubt that He could. He did so for our Forefather Adam. And we have further evidence that the Babe was a boy in that on the eighth day He was circumcised; the Jewish people at that time, nor at any other time as far as I know, did not and do not practice female genital mutilation. Also every early reference to Him, in the Gospels and other Scriptures, as well as in other sources, report that He was male. The piece you read was simply spreading mischief, perhaps with the intention of defaming our Faith. But let this be a warning to you not to pay attention to such things. Rather than reading that article, you could have nourished your soul by reading something from the Fathers, and it would have been time far better spent.



*NBS from the Richmond  
Diocese of the Church of the Genuine  
Orthodox Christians of Greece*

**GIFTS TO THE CHURCH**

ELeni KYRIAKOU has given us a hand-painted icon of the **Four Evangelists**, which was painted on the Holy Mountain, Athos.

OLIVER GALBEAZA has given us two hand-painted icons, one of **Saint Januarius of Benevento**, and one of the Holy **Martyr Boniface and the Righteous Lady Aglais**. May these Saints ever pray for our kind benefactors.