

The Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese
of the British Isles and Ireland
(incorporating the Deanery of the UK and Ireland)



Cornerstone

Number 3 • Summer 2014

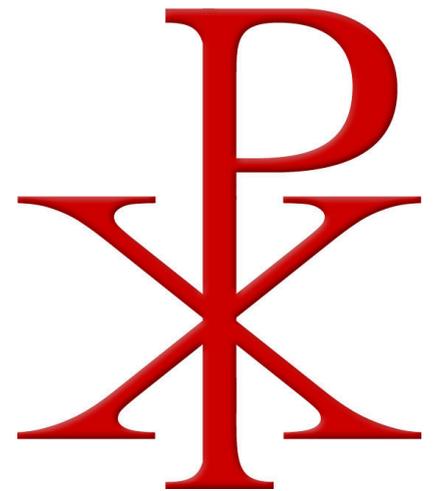
Living Stones



Metropolitan IGNATIUS of France, Western and Southern Europe

Met. Ignatius visited the Archdiocese in May, at the invitation of His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN.

He undertook a long schedule of ordinations and parish visits, and we were greatly blessed by his presence.



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Ordinations

At the hand of Met. IGNATIUS of France Western and Central Europe

An ordination service is an occasion of great joy, and in the few days before the Archdiocesan Conference, Met. Ignatius was pleased to ordain: one priest, four deacons, one subdeacon and one reader! Here are some photographs from the services. Axios! Many years!



Fr Michael (York)
is vested



Fr Dn Thomas
(Doncaster) is
vested



Above left (lr): Fr Dn Alban (Grimsby), Met. Ignatius, Fr Dn David (Louth)
Above right (lr): Fr Dn Jacob (Basildon), Met. Ignatius
Below (lr): Subdeacon Ibrahim (Louth), Fr Michael, Met. Ignatius,
Fr Dn Thomas, Reader James (Doncaster)



Small Victories

by Chris Tsielepi

Fasting, Prayer and Good works are what we're instructed to do during Lent, but in actual fact this is the Orthodox life and we should be doing this day in, day out.

Whilst studying for the Equip Course I read "God-given vocation is borne out in community because it is a response to the call to love the neighbour"¹. "Vocation is one's ongoing and unique way of being in the world that is a response to Christ's call to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and one's neighbour as oneself"²

St. Clement of Alexandria wrote in The Perfect Person's Rule of Life:

"The perfect person does not only try to avoid evil. Nor does he do good for fear of punishment, still less in order to qualify for the hope of a promised reward.

The perfect person does good through love. His actions are not motivated by desire for personal benefit, so he does not have personal advantage as his aim. But as soon as he has realized the beauty of doing good, he does it with all his energies and in all that he does.

He is not interested in fame, or a good reputation, or a human or divine reward.

The rule of life for a perfect person is to be in the image and likeness of God."

Spiritual victories are only achievable through God's grace and by doing His will. Constantine the Great prayed to God to give him a sign which would inspire his army to fight valiantly, and the Lord showed him a radiant sign of the Cross in the heavens with the inscription "In this Sign, conquer." Small victories sent by God, also have far-reaching effects. I'm not a general, I'm chair of the village Well-Dressing

Committee, Secretary of the committee that's fund-raising and building the village hall, I've organised street parties for the Royal Wedding and the Diamond Jubilee. I've instituted an Orthodox Liturgy as part of the Well Dressing festivities which have a 70 year old tradition in our village. I instituted and organise an annual open day at the private chapel in the grounds of Pisani Plc near Cromford during their summer festival. I write articles in the local parish magazine distributed in 4 local villages about Orthodoxy and I have a day job.

Victories have come for me too. The first Well-Dressing under my chairmanship was during the very wet summer of 2012 but Well Dressing Week was dry. During the post-mortem I was thanked because my "Friend upstairs" looked after us. During the publicity for the first Liturgy at Stoney Middleton I was invited to speak to BBC Radio Sheffield. On another occasion I was stopped in the village one Sunday morning by a retired vicar who had listened to a BBC Radio 4 programme that morning which happened to be about Orthodoxy and he said "You are actually living the Orthodox life". With God's love, grace and help I've introduced Him and Orthodoxy to a few hundred people who would otherwise be in the dark. That's a small victory. Thanks be to God.

Chris

¹(Bezzerides, "Introduction", p. 10 Ann Mitsakos-Bezzerides in *Christ at Work: Orthodox Christian Perspectives on Vocation* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2006)

² *Ibid* P.10

Antioch: the Great City of God

by Subdeacon Ibrahim Zakhour

Geographical, historical Antioch extended to reach the Syrian, Armenian, Turkish Torus mountains in the North, the Persian boundaries to the East, to the Sinai desert and the Mediterranean Phoenician coast, including Mount Lebanon, Palestine, in the South and West. It Encompassed the Umayyad Capital Damascus, Lebanon's Beirut, the Jordan's Amman and the Iraqi Baghdad. Indeed it embraced the whole of the Greater Syria and the Levant, known as well as the Holy Land.

This "Antioch" progressed historically to lead the church, in its own way, and developed a grand character, distinct from that of the great Church of Alexandria, and indeed other grand churches, such as Byzantium and Rome. That character of the creative grand human cultural cosmological ideology and civilisation that holds the whole world, transforming its sky to a ceiling for the spiritual and materialistic existence of the Eastern Christians.

According to the poet, philosopher and priest of Christ Al Khoury Michael al Hayek, the "Antiochian spirit" means to abolish human meanness, such as selfishness, misuse of power, self-interest and pride. We carry a vision. We are attached to the Syriac Antioch church, with its pains and hardships, while my pains are attached to the Assyrian church, I do not forget that I am a Byzantian, but not that alone, I am also a disciple of Jerusalem and Athens, yet I am attached to Byzantium, Rome and Al Raha, or Syriac, Aramaic Antioch. I will miss my right hand if any of these traditions or cultures is away or far from me. To be Antiochian means to be Aramaic, Syriac, Byzantian, Roman, Syrian, Arab, human, all at the same time. All those fathers, are my Fathers. I

can't consider in my mind that I am antiochian alone, or an Arab alone. I am not an Arab alone, yet, I am not less Arab, but more Arab, because in myself, I am all these traditions" .

Where is Antioch today? I may at times speak of politics, but in this article, I cannot. But for the issue of this little article, I want to say as an answer to my question, that present day Antioch is simply dissected, annihilated, occupied, destroyed, damaged, do you want me to carry on?

Our great people of Antioch, who in the past, and through endless fathers and saints, have contributed to humanity the grand civilisation and ideology, mysticism and the sense of the One God are now reduced to worrying about their self preservation, worldly existence, primarily their safety, food, and simple living.

In such a climate, and where we, in the British Isles, are Antiochian Orthodox, and yes, are attached to where the disciples were first called Christians, and are becoming an Archdioceses, a role for us is set.

We need to research, understand, to look for and comprehend, what " Antioch" stands for, why it is distinct, what it has given to the world, how is it different to Alexandria, Byzantium and Rome's churches, and what it can give exactly to the world.

We need to accept a task, thereafter, to start again, and continue the philosophy, the message, the word, the ideology of our Great Antiochian heritage, into the present day world, to reincarnate again, like the Phoenix, or indeed, like our God, who rose from the dead trampling down death by death.

This I think is our first task. Do you agree with me?

Ibrahim

Through your holy prayers!

by Mother Photina

“You also, as living stones, are being built into a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5)

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers... Thus begins our monastic service and also thus was blessed our journey into Orthodoxy... From the beginning! The first Father we encountered, first breath of life, first Breath of the Spirit... In 1987 we were received for the first time by Archimandrite Sophrony in Essex, who would sum up for us in a few words our past and our future. At the time, it was incomprehensible. We asked for written explanations. He replied. This letter is today like a will and everything became very clear. Memory eternal!

What can be said about the hours spent outside of time, immersed in impassioned nocturnal conversations on life in the Lord with Father Raphaël Noïca, who was in Essex at the time and has since retired to “the desert” in his native land.

The first Orthodox country visited in 199: Romania. First, a stay in Bucharest, where we met Archimandrite Sofian at Antim Church. A very quiet man. But he did not need to speak in order to nourish us. Seeing him and being in his presence was amply sufficient. He took us on a visit to Father Dumitru Staniloae. The latter, a great theologian of our times, lived in a filthy building, in a small, poverty-stricken flat. His wife Maria was dying on the living room sofa. He talked to us about love for almost two hours....Unforgettable...Memory eternal!

We left then for Moldavia to visit “frate Marco”, a novice at Sihastria Monastery. He is a good friend, French, who

abandoned everything to become a monk. Today he is a bishop of the Romanian Church in France.

At Sihastria we had the good fortune to be received and blessed by Father Cleopas. We came looking for a very special blessing for our life. And we received it. Memory eternal!

Last year we had the grace to receive the blessing and anointing from Father Adrian, last starets of the monastery The Dormition of the Mother of God of Petchory in Pskov. We had the feeling we were no longer on earth.

How many other Fathers and Mothers, less known, but undoubtedly as holy, have we met in Russia, Serbia, Montenegro? How many services in the night at Valaam with Father Seraphim...? And then you can really understand what the expression “Heaven on Earth” means in the context of the Divine Liturgy.

So many blessings received in these last thirty years! May they be offered to the Lord who overwhelms us!

Lord Jesus Christ, our God, through the prayers of our Holy Fathers and Mothers, who are in Heaven, but also here on the blessed soil of England where your Holy Orthodox Church flourishes once again, have mercy on us and save us. Amen!

Mother Photina

The Living Stones of Barking

by Margaret Haig

In the 7th century, St Erkenwald, the Light of London, founded a monastery by Barking creek for his sister, St Ethelburga. The monastery was dedicated to the Mother of God and other saints associated with it include St Theogirtha, St Hildelith and St Wulfhild. The monastery was dissolved by Henry VIII and fell into ruin; the ruins are now a public park in the centre of Barking, the settlement in the ancient kingdom of Essex now comfortably within Zone 4 of East London.

The fifth annual pilgrimage to the Saints of Barking took place in May. Pilgrims attend from London, the South East and further afield. This year there were over 60 pilgrims, some of whom walked from the Church of All Hallows by the Tower, others assembling at Barking itself. We worshipped, ate, and prayed together – that the pilgrimage will continue to thrive and become a regional place of pilgrimage for all Orthodox people.

Barking is a ‘thin’ place, as we heard in this year’s talk by Metropolitan Kallistos, a place where we can feel the presence of the Kingdom of Heaven a little more clearly. Barking may not have the natural beauty of other ‘thin’ places in our Archdiocese, but there is a quite unexpected sanctity and quietness there, considering the busy and diverse area which surrounds it. It is an island in the metropolis.

The Canon to the Saints of Barking uses an acrostic, so that the first letter of each verse spells out ‘Grace Halloweth the Stones of Barking’. This is borne out by the pilgrims’ experience. When we pray to the Saints, we are surrounded not by dead and historic ruins, but grace-filled

living stones which echo and direct our songs and prayers. The stones have memory, they recollect those Anglo-Saxon voices which were there at the beginning, as well as our more recent voices which sang the Paschal troparion in English, Arabic and other languages. They remember when the ancient stone rood (cross) was newly carved and venerated, as well as when we sang the troparion of the Cross to the worn figures of Christ, the Mother of God and the Disciple John.

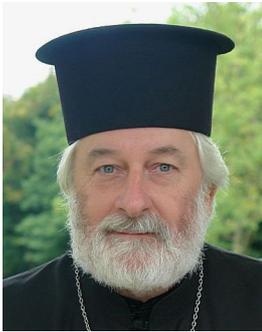
Look out for ‘thin’ places on your travels, and observe the living stones that surround them. Let grace hallow us as stones, making us monuments of memory, absorbing prayer and providing a witness of faith to others.

Margaret Haig

The pilgrimage to Barking takes place on the second Saturday of May each year; email barkingorthodoxpilgrimage@yahoo.co.uk for more information.

What the Critic Says

by Fr Johnathan Hemmings



**Out of darkness cometh
Light...**

*He shall judge between the
nations, And rebuke many
people... (Isaiah 2:4)*

Thucydides did with perfect form reveal
The axiom of pompous power "Might is right"
Preening, the arrogant rage upon the stage
Of history.

What Athens did to Melos we know repeats:
"The strong do as they can and the weak
suffer."

No neutral buffer zone exists alas for
Those at sea.

"We have a right to our empire because we
Overthrew The Mede "we read. The proud
acclaim
Themselves. Award the prize of Narcissus with
Ego's sighs.

Myopic Athenians considered this:-
The short term gain, territory and battle won
Whereas the Melians looked to the future,
And beheld:

Truth, fairness, justice beneath the beating Sun.
The strutting proud pretensions will be brought
low
Not before they have their way, their day and
then
Due demise

Lysander to the rescue will soon arise
And make a new beginning-a Genesis.
The haughty find an end to their playful pride-
Nemesis.

Hybris not hearing seeks the ears of others.
Blind to love, its vanity desires the eyes
Of fawning slaves, for the father of lies has
No brothers.

Beware of all those who pay the "actor's" wage
And wait for audience applause and sound
reviews.
For them, no good news, only an earned
reverse,
Right is Might!

*...They shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall
not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall
they learn war anymore.*

Fr Jonathan

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Publication: September, December, March, June. Contributions by 15th of the previous month.

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