

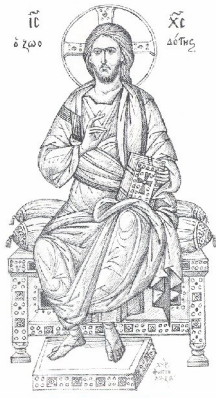
March 2007



# The Orthodox parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross, Lancaster

Meeting at the Chaplaincy Centre of Lancaster University

## Newsletter



Ἐπιφάνιος, Χριστός Ζωοδότας.  
(Αθ. Κωνσταντίνου, 1962)

The parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,  
belongs to the Antiochian Orthodox Deanery of the United Kingdom and Ireland,  
which is part of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of Western and Central Europe.  
Our Metropolitan is His Eminence Archbishop Gabriel.  
The Patriarchate of Antioch is third senior of the Orthodox Churches.  
The Patriarch is His Beatitude Ignatius IV.

*The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch  
(Acts 11:26)*

BP. NIKOLAI VELIMIROVICH  
Bless My Enemies O Lord

Bless my enemies, O Lord, Even I  
bless them and do not curse them.

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I  
bless them and do not curse them.

Whenever I have made myself wise,  
they have called me foolish.

Enemies have driven me into your  
embrace more than friends have.

Whenever I have made myself  
mighty, they have mocked me as  
though I were a dwarf.

Friends have bound me to earth,  
enemies have loosed me from earth  
and have demolished all my  
aspirations in the world.

Whenever I have wanted to lead  
people, they have shoved me into  
the background.

Enemies have made me a stranger in  
worldly realms and an extraneous  
inhabitant of the world. Just as a  
hunted animal finds safer shelter  
than an un hunted animal does, so  
have I, persecuted by enemies,  
found the safest sanctuary, having  
ensconced myself beneath your  
tabernacle, where neither friends nor  
enemies can slay my soul.

Whenever I have rushed to enrich  
myself, they have prevented me  
with an iron hand.

Whenever I thought that I would  
sleep peacefully, they have wakened  
me from sleep.

Whenever I have tried to build a  
home for a long and tranquil life,  
they have demolished it and driven  
me out.

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I  
bless them and do not curse them.

Truly, enemies have cut me loose  
from the world and have stretched  
out my hands to the hem of your  
garment.

They, rather than I, have confessed  
my sins before the world.

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I  
bless them and do not curse them.

They have punished me, whenever I  
have hesitated to punish myself.

Bless them and multiply them;  
multiply them and make them even  
more bitterly against me:

They have tormented me, whenever  
I have tried to flee torments.

so that my fleeing to You may have  
no return;

They have scolded me, whenever I  
have flattered myself.

so that all hope in men may be  
scattered like cobwebs;

They have spat upon me, whenever  
I have filled myself with arrogance.

so that absolute serenity may begin  
to reign in my soul;

so that my heart may become the  
grave of my two evil twins,  
arrogance and anger;

so that I might amass all my treasure  
in heaven;

ah, so that I may for once be freed  
from self-deception, which has  
entangled me in the dreadful web of  
illusory life.

Enemies have taught me to know  
what hardly anyone knows, that a  
person has no enemies in the world  
except himself.

One hates his enemies only when he  
fails to realize that they are not  
enemies, but cruel friends.

It is truly difficult for me to say who  
has done me more good and who  
has done me more evil in the world:  
friends or enemies.

Therefore bless, O Lord, both my  
friends and enemies.

A slave curses enemies, for he does  
not understand. But a son blesses  
them, for he understands.

For a son knows that his enemies  
cannot touch his life.

Therefore he freely steps among  
them and prays to God for them.

## FAITH IN GOD IS A PERSONAL JOURNEY

Faith in God is a very personal  
journey. Some of us are born in  
religious families; some of us come  
to experience religion later on in our  
lives. Either way, the path is similar  
for us all. Whether you consider  
yourself a 'strong' or 'casual' belie-  
ver, whether you feel you know  
much about what it is you believe or  
you are just trying to make it out as  
you go along, there are always 'hub'  
moments. Maybe one, maybe plenty  
more. The truth is, these moments  
come and shake you from within.  
These are the moments where you  
might ask yourself if you are good  
enough, whether you have betrayed  
yourself by leading a life that is  
contrary to your religious beliefs,  
whether you are doing all you can to  
be a 'good' person, or even moments  
where you ask yourself if you are a  
fool believing in God at all.

These are the moments that you  
realize that there are no guarantees,  
no fallbacks, no insurance policies.  
You might have to battle against  
yourself, your family, your sense of  
rationality. And you are alone. This  
is the worst part. But it is a necessary  
part. Because if you do not find  
yourself alone, if you do not ques-  
tion yourself and your beliefs, if you  
are afraid to take a shot in the dark  
and hope, if you do not look for  
strength from within and just take  
everything for granted then you can  
never know. You can never know  
that this is what you want to do,  
what you want to believe. You can  
never feel that this is right. And this

is ignorance. Sweet, trouble-free, but  
ignorance nevertheless.

I was in Lancaster on Good  
Saturday evening a few years ago;  
one of the very few occasions I spent  
Easter away from my family in  
Greece. I stayed in the UK not  
because I had too much work on my  
PhD, but because, being the coach  
and a player in the University  
basketball team, I wanted to be part  
of 'Roses' weekend. I was told by a  
friend there was this little commu-  
nity in Lancaster with a kind priest  
that I could go and celebrate Easter  
with. I did not want to. After a long  
spell back in my teens where I  
actually wanted to become a priest I  
had, for some reason, turned away  
from church in general. Not from  
believing, from church. I chose to  
stay in my room, wait for the clock  
to show 12am so I can eat my fried  
chicken. I was fasting for the whole  
week, something I did since I was a  
child. For this is what I was raised to  
do. Next morning I felt bad I did not  
take up the invitation. I quickly for-  
got about my grief though. After all,  
I had a basketball game to win. And  
win I did!

I don't really know what got to  
me, but a few weeks later I decided  
to visit this community. I was appre-  
hensive before I entered this room in  
Lancaster Grammar school. I was  
told that the community is mainly  
comprised by British people who  
converted to Orthodoxy. That was  
new to me. I was not used to people  
actually converting to my religion. I  
was accustomed to meet fellow  
countrymen that could no care less  
about God and anything spiritual.

So I was not sure what to expect. I  
was greeted by warm hearted  
people, and I immediately felt at  
home. As if I was 15 again. The  
smell of incense, the candlelight, the  
sweet voice of the people singing  
and of course the priest. All of a  
sudden it all made sense. I was  
happy! This was what I wanted. This  
was what I needed. This was what I  
believed in. This was who I really  
am!

I started attending church on a  
regular basis. Every Sunday I was  
there, and even more, my girlfriend  
at the moment, a German national  
started to follow me in my Sunday  
visits. After almost a year, she  
converted to Orthodoxy. I was sur-  
prised but thrilled. After all, it was  
her choice; I had nothing to do with  
her decision. On the contrary, I tried  
to persuade her to reconsider. I did  
not want her to make her decisions  
based on me. She did not. She  
wanted that and who was I to stop  
her?

Now it has been three years since  
I completed my PhD and left Lanca-  
ster. I have been up there three or  
four times since, and I was able to  
see Fr Jonathan either during service  
or privately. Both my wife and I are  
missing the community terribly. We  
both miss the warmth and comfort  
the Lancaster Parish brought to our  
souls. Emails are good, but there is  
nothing like the 'real thing'. Today I  
started fasting for Lent. My first  
attempt to keep the whole fasting till  
Easter. My wife has already four  
successful attempts under her belt.  
We probably will be celebrating  
Easter in Lancaster this year, so it is

my chance to 'make up' for this 'lost' Easter of 2002. Who knows? Maybe...

Thank you to all the community in Lancaster that made us feel we belong. Thank you for restoring my hope, and enlightening my wife. Hope to see you soon.

Konstantinos Arfanis

#### THE SERVICES OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN THE BYZANTINE TRADITION

Lectures • Workshops •  
Demonstrations • Discussion

Saturday to Sunday,  
10 - 11 March and 14 - 15 April 2007

#### THE SERVICES (in English)

- The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil
- The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
- Proskomide
- Matins (Paschal)
- The Third and Sixth Hours
- The Ninth Hour and Vespers
- Compline

PLEASE NOTE: that only students already enrolled in the Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education Diploma may take this module, but OTHERS MAY ATTEND AS AUDITORS, either for the whole course (cost £60 per weekend) or for a day (cost £30). Visitors join students for meals.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION,  
please visit: [www.iocs.cam.ac.uk](http://www.iocs.cam.ac.uk)  
or e-mail: [info@iocs.cam.ac.uk](mailto:info@iocs.cam.ac.uk)  
or ring: 01223 741037

#### IT IS ESSENTIAL TO BOOK YOUR PLACE

THE INSTITUTE FOR ORTHODOX  
CHRISTIAN STUDIES  
Wesley House, Jesus Lane, Cambridge.

#### THE SYRIAC FATHERS

Friday evening and Saturday  
all day, 20-21 April 2007

Dr. Marcus Plested writes:

Syriac Christianity is perhaps the most vivid and poetic of Christian traditions. Often neglected in surveys of early Christian life and thought focussing on the Greek East and the Latin West, the Syriac Orient presents us with an extraordinarily rich theological vision, a vision expressed in a language and culture very close to that of the Gospels themselves. This elective course will introduce the origins of Syriac Christianity and present the life and teachings of some of the greatest figures: St. Aphrahat the Persian Sage, St. Ephrem the Syrian, and St. Isaac of Nineveh. It will be a veritable journey of discovery.

COST: Certificate students: £75  
(unless you paid for the year) ;  
Auditors: £50 (meals included)

#### PLEASE NOTE

Cambridge University will offer the Course only if there are enough students enrolling.

IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR CERTIFICATE STUDENTS TO INFORM US IF THEY PROPOSE TO ATTEND.

If others indicate their interest it may be possible to run the course anyway – but in that case, Certificate students will not be eligible for credit.

Tel: 01223741037

E-mail: [info@iocs.cam.ac.uk](mailto:info@iocs.cam.ac.uk)

Website: [www.iocs.cam.ac.uk](http://www.iocs.cam.ac.uk)

THE INSTITUTE FOR ORTHODOX  
CHRISTIAN STUDIES  
Wesley House, Jesus Lane, Cambridge.

#### THE RULES OF FASTING IN HOLY ORTHODOXY IN GREAT LENT

These rules give the strict observance. In practise few observe them in their full strictness today. There is no distinction made, as in the West, between fasting and abstinence. In the first week of Lent fasting is particularly severe. When a meal is permitted there is no strict limitation on the quantity of food that may be taken, but, as always, moderation is required. There has never been exact uniformity, but most authorities agree on the following:

A: The preliminary observance

This period covers the 22 days before Lent (four successive Sundays).

1. During the week beginning with the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee (i.e. from Vespers on the Saturday evening): there is a general dispensation from all fasting, even on Wednesday and Friday.

2. In the following week (i.e. from Vespers on the Saturday before the Sunday of the Prodigal Son): the usual fasts on Wednesday and Friday.

3. In the following week (i.e. the week before Lent): no meat, but dairy products are allowed, even on Wednesday and Friday.

B: On Mondays to Fridays in Great Lent

#### 1. The First Week

Monday: total fast.

Tuesday: total fast for those with the physical strength. Others should, if possible, take only bread and water (or tea or fruit juice) after Vespers.

Wednesday: one meal of "dry eating" (xerophagy), i.e. vegetables cooked only in water and salt, and such things as fruit, nuts, bread, honey. Shell fish is allowed, as is vegetable margarine and vegetable (but not olive) oil. Prohibited are meat, animal products (cheese, eggs, milk, etc), fish with backbones, olive oil, wine (i.e. all alcoholic drinks).

Thursday: as Tuesday.

Friday: as Wednesday.

2. Second to Sixth Weeks (but see D3 regarding the fifth week)

One meal of "dry eating", to be taken after Vespers.

C: On Saturdays (except Holy Saturday) and Sundays in Lent

Two normal meals per day, around mid-day and in the evening. Wine and oil are allowed, but not meat, animal products or fish with backbones.

D: Exceptions to the rules in B2

1. On the Feast of the Annunciation (25th March): fish is permitted as well as wine and oil, but not meat or animal products. In a year when this Feast falls on Monday to Thursday of Holy Week, wine and oil are permitted, but not fish.

If this Feast falls on Great Friday or Holy Saturday wine is permitted but no oil or fish.

2. If the following fall on Monday to Friday of the Second to Sixth weeks of Lent, wine and oil are permitted:

- First and Second Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist (24th February);
- Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (9th March);
- Forefeast of the Annunciation (24th March);
- Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel (26th March);
- Patronal/Dedication Festival of the Church or Monastery.

3. Fifth Week of Lent (see B2):

Wednesday and Thursday: wine and oil are allowed, because of the

Vigil for the Service of the Great Canon.

Friday: wine and oil are allowed, because of the Vigil for the Akathistos Hymn.

E: Holy Week

1. Palm Sunday: As D1 (The Feast of the Annunciation)

2. Holy and Great Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday: One meal (dry eating) per day. Some of the faithful keep the fasts as in the First Week of Lent (see B1).

3. Holy and Great Thursday: one meal; wine and olive oil are permitted.

4. Holy and Great Friday: Total fast. Those unable to observe a total fast may eat bread with a little water, tea or fruit juice, but not until after the Veneration of the Epitaphion (the Figure of the Dead Christ laid out for Burial).

5. Holy and Great Saturday: One meal; wine, but not olive oil, is permitted.

F. Fasting Today

The application of the Rule of Xerophagy is not universally strict. The Rules of Fasting are to be taken seriously, but are not to be interpreted with dour legalism. Personal health, age, circumstances are to be taken into account. Fasting should follow Holy Tradition as faithfully as possible; it is even

harmful if not combined with prayer to enrich and deepen our life in the Spirit and our perpetual knowledge of the Presence of God.

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

2nd Mar: St. Nicholas Planas

4th Mar: St. Gregory Palamas

6th Mar: Finding of the precious cross by St. Helen

11th Mar: Sunday of the Holy Cross  
17th Mar: St. Patrick the enlightener of Ireland

24th Mar: Tikhon Pat. Of Moscow

25th Mar: Annunciation of the Theotokos

26th Mar: Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel

30th Mar: St. John Climacus

31st Mar: Lazarus Saturday



For the lives of Saints please visit the Prologue of Ohrid:

[www.westsrbdio.org/prolog/prolog.htm](http://www.westsrbdio.org/prolog/prolog.htm)

or the Calendar of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America:

[www.calendar.gaoarch.org](http://www.calendar.gaoarch.org)



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