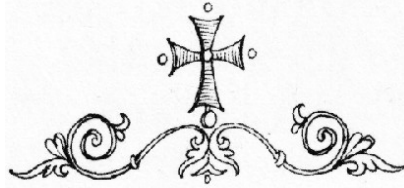


December 2007



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

Meeting at the Chaplaincy Centre of Lancaster University

Newsletter



*Ἦθηρος Χριστός, Ζωοδότης.
(Φ. Κόντογλου, 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.*

*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)*

NEWS

We have now received the icons of St. Herbert and St. Cuthbert as well as the one of Blessed Seraphim, hieromonk of Platina, painted by our iconographer Demetrios Hakim in London. Both icons can be seen in this page.



We also extend our thanks to Katerina Dokou, Ioanna Nassiopoulou and Konstantinos Prevedouros for the kind gifts of candles and other liturgical items.

ABOUT PRAYER

“But when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”
Matthew 6:6

Prayer should descend from the mind to the heart since God has made us rational and spiritual creatures. The

heart warms with compassion that which is and those who are brought to mind. To be close to God we need both silence and words. We need to name those who need our prayers and to be still before the Creator to listen to Him. In our busy world which is so full of distractions we need to find a holy space, a time and a stillness in our daily lives. The *room* is the chamber of the heart where in *humility* we commune with our Creator. We are called to pray “without ceasing” 1 Thess 5:17. The spiritual fathers of the church teach us that spiritual growth involves us in that personal discipline and relationship with the Father, through the Son in the Holy Spirit. The Jesus Prayer is a way to achieve this unceasing prayer of the heart. “*Lord Jesus Christ Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.*”



Humility is so important to our spiritual lives, not only as the attendant of true prayer but in our conversation with others, since it mirrors the Divine condescension when Christ the Word became flesh for our salvation.

Such humility is to be seen in Christ when he washed the feet of his own apostles. Humility springs from the very dust or soil (*humus*) of our being acknowledges God as Lord and Creator and is the opposite of pride which asserts self importance. Such humility also attends prophecy as we see in The Spiritual Meadow of John Moschos:

139. Abba Sergios' Prophecy concerning Gregory, Higoumen of the Monastery of Paran

Concerning this Abba Sergios the anchorite, his attendant, Abba Sergios the Armenian, told us that Abba Gregory, higoumen of the Lavra at Paran, was very insistent that he should be taken to the elder. "So one day" (said the attendant), "I took him to the elder who, in those days, was in the region of the Dead Sea". When the elder saw him, he greeted him with gladness and, bringing water, washed his feet. All day long he spoke with him about what is beneficial to the soul. The next day he dismissed him. When Abba Gregory had departed, I said to the elder: "You know, father, you have rather offended me. Of all the Bishops and Priests and all the other people whom I have brought to you, not one of them has ever had his feet washed by you except Abba Gregory and him alone." Then the elder said to me: "Child, as for Abba Gregory, I do not know who he is. This thing alone I know; that I have received a Patriarch in my cave. I saw him wearing the omophorion and carrying the holy gospel." And that is what came to pass. Six years later God raised up Abba Gregory to the dignity of the Patriarch of Theoupolis (Antioch) as the elder had foreseen.

May God grant us the gift of humility to receive in our heart the God Man, Christ our true God at Christmas who for sake and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Blessed Virgin Mary and was made man. Christ was born in Bethlehem but we must be born from above, so that the Christ child may be born in our heart.

Fr. Jonathan

NATIVITY HYMN - "THE MYSTERY"

Luke 2:11: "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord".

Based on the Nativity sermon of St. John Chrysostom

Look a new and wondrous mystery
Christ is born in Bethlehem,
Angels singing blend their voices
With the hosts of Cherubim.

Join in praise then all you living
Here on earth with those above,
He "Who is" comes down from heaven
Manifests the Father's love.

Sun of Justice far outshining
Stars that led the kingly wise,
Today is born for our salvation
Him Unseen before our eyes.

Infants run then to adore Him
Shepherds come to be His sheep,
Priests to labour in His Vineyard
Wine and Bread His presence keep.

Fishers catch the world before Him
Sinful, lost and maimed repent,

That they may embrace together
This Child whom the Father sent.

Therefore let us sing together
Sharing in this choral dance,
“Christ is born!” the incarnation
So we may to heaven advance.

This our song, our hope, our story
This our life, so glory be
To the Father, Son and Spirit
Undivided Trinity.

*J.A.H.,
to the glory of God, 31.12.2006*

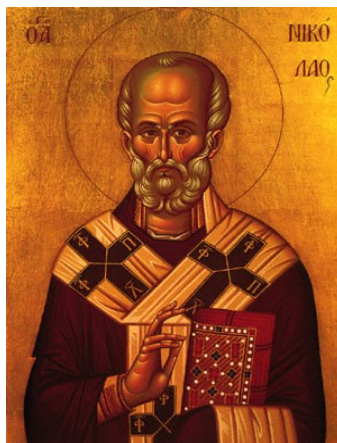
True wealth, for me, is to see you in
the Kingdom of Heaven.

Elder Amphilocios

ST. NICHOLAS THE WONDERWORKER, ARCHBISHOP OF MYRA

This Saint lived during the reign of Saint Constantine the Great, and reposed in 330, As a young man, he desired to espouse the solitary life. He made a pilgrimage to the holy city Jerusalem, where he found a place to withdraw to devote himself to prayer. It was made known to him, however, that this was not the will of God for him, but that he should return to his homeland to be a cause of salvation for many. He returned to Myra, and was ordained bishop. He became known for his abundant mercy, providing for the poor and needy, and delivering those who had been unjustly accused. No less was he known for his zeal for the truth. He was present at the First Ecumenical Council of the 318 Fathers

at Nicaea in 325; upon hearing the blasphemies that Arius brazenly uttered against the Son of God, Saint Nicholas struck him on the face. Since the canons of the Church forbid the clergy to strike any man at all, his fellow bishops were in perplexity what disciplinary action was to be taken against this hierarch whom all revered. In the night our Lord Jesus Christ and our Lady Theotokos appeared to certain of the bishops, informing them that no action was to be taken against him, since he had acted not out of passion, but extreme love and piety. The Dismissal Hymn for holy hierarchs, The truth of things hath revealed thee to thy flock... was written originally for Saint Nicholas. He is the patron of all travellers, and of sea-farers in particular; he is one of the best known and best loved Saints of all time.



ST. SPYRIDON THE WONDERWORKER OF TRYMITHOUS

Spyridon, the God-bearing Father of the Church, the great defender of Corfu and the boast of all the Orthodox, had Cyprus as his homeland. He was simple in manner and humble of heart, and was a shepherd of sheep. When he was joined to a wife, he begat of her a daughter whom they named Irene. After his wife's departure from this life, he was appointed Bishop of Trimythus, and thus he became also a shepherd of rational sheep. When the First Ecumenical Council was assembled in Nicaea, he also was present, and by means of his most simple words stopped the mouths of the Arians who were wise in their own conceit. By the divine grace which dwelt in him, he wrought such great wonders that he received the surname "Wonderworker." So it is that, having tended his flock piously and in a manner pleasing to God, he reposed in the Lord about the year 350, leaving to his country his sacred relics as a consolation and source of healing for the faithful.

About the middle of the seventh century, because of the incursions made by the barbarians at that time, his sacred relics were taken to Constantinople, where they remained, being honoured by the emperors themselves. But before the fall of Constantinople, which took place on May 29, 1453, a certain priest named Georgios Kalokhairtes, the parish priest of the church where the Saint's sacred relics, as well as those of Saint Theodora the Empress, were kept, took them away on account of the impending peril. Travelling by way of Serbia, he came as far as Arta in Epirus, a region in Western Greece opposite to the isle of

Corfu. From there, while the misfortunes of the Christian people were increasing with every day, he passed over to Corfu about the year 1460. The relics of Saint Theodora were given to the people of Corfu; but those of Saint Spyridon remain to this day, according to the rights of inheritance, the most precious treasure of the priest's own descendants, and they continue to be a staff for the faithful in Orthodoxy, and a supernatural wonder for those that behold him; for even after the passage of 1,500 years, they have remained incorrupt, and even the flexibility of his flesh has been preserved. Truly wondrous is God in His Saints! (Ps. 67:3 5)



LITURGIES IN DECEMBER

- Sat. 1st Dec. at 10am (RC chapel)
- Sat. 8th Dec. at 10am (RC chapel)
- Sun. 16th Dec. at 10am (Quiet room)
- Sat. 22nd Dec. at 10am (RC chapel)
- Tue. 25th Dec. at 10am (Christmas day at the RC chapel)
- Sun. 30th Dec. at 10am (Quiet room)

NEWSLETTER FOR A YEAR

Our newsletter becomes 1 year old this December! You are all invited to send articles to Thodoris or fr. Jonathan for inclusion in the next issues.

RECEIPE

“Detoxing”, as you might know, is very much in fashion. A period during which you cleanse your body from toxins created by consuming processed, mainly animal-derived foods, by consuming instead, fresh, wholesome, plant-derived produce. Nothing new to the orthodox tradition, this newly discovered, expensive merchandise-accompanied trend. Fasting is the way to cleanse your body in orthodox tradition and Christmas lent is here, so here's also a chance to get rid of all sorts of ailments, from constipation to cholesterol and eat more healthily. The featured ingredient here is tahini, i.e. sesame paste (made by pulped sesame seeds that we all know). Sesame, and as a result tahini, is very rich in calcium (more than milk apparently), iron and other nutrients, so a very good food to eat all year round and even more so during lent. It is also a great ingredient to use instead of oil, when you abstain from it. The recipe here is my adaptation of a recipe from the book “Greek Monastery Cookery” (apparently praised by Marie Claire, too!) by Abbot Archimandrite Dositheos of the monastery of Tatarna in northern Greece. All the ingredients used in monasteries are fresh and organic, as they are cultivated in the grounds of the monasteries by the nuns and monks.

Make, eat and enjoy:

Potato stew with tahini:

- 1.5 kg potatoes cut into pieces
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic (optional, I like more!)
- 1 celeriac bulb (celery root) - replace with other vegetables if you don't like (carrots, parsnips, turnips, swede, sweet potatoes, butternut squash)
- 1 tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 tbs tomato paste
- 2-4 tbs tahini (to taste)
- salt and pepper to taste
- optional extras: chillies, parsley, spring onions (all chopped), a tin of cooked pulses (chickpeas or beans), all work well.

In a saucepan of water: add onions, bring to boil, add tomatoes, tomato paste, garlic, celeriac (and/or other vegetables), potatoes and enough water to cover all ingredients. Add salt and bring to the boil, reduce heat and simmer till potatoes are tender. In the meantime, beat the tahini paste with some of the hot potato broth until it dissolves, then add it to the stew, mix well and simmer for a little while. Serve hot with freshly ground pepper and crusty bread. It makes plenty so invite some friends round!

pieceofcake





MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

4th Dec: **The Great Martyr Barbara**

6th Dec: **St. Nicholas the wonderworker**

9th Dec: **Conception of the Theotokos**

12th Dec: **St. Spyridon the wonderworker**

17th Dec: **Prophet Daniel**

19th Dec: **Martyrs Boniface and companions**

22nd Dec: **Great Martyr Anastasia of Rome**

23rd Dec: **Founding of Aghia Sophia**

25th Dec: **The Holy Nativity and the Adoration of the Magi**

27th Dec: **Protomartyr Steven**

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

www.westsrbdio.org/prolog/prolog.htm

or the Calendar of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America:

www.calendar.goarch.org



For further information please contact:

Father Jonathan Hemmings

67 Sibsey Street, Fairfield, Lancaster, LA1 5DQ

Tel: +44 1524 840759, +44 1524 580600

Email: frjah@yahoo.co.uk

www.antiochian-orthodox.co.uk/lancaster.htm

