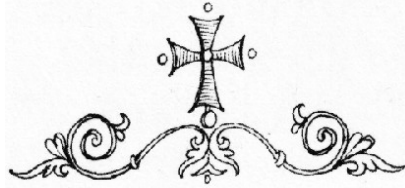


July 2008



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

Meeting at the Chaplaincy Centre of Lancaster University

Newsletter



*ἸϞϞϞ Χριστός, Παντοκράτης.
(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.*

Our Metropolitan is His Eminence Archbishop John.

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)*

PASTORAL LETTER

To our Antiochian Sons and Daughters
In Western and Central Europe.

Saints Peter and Paul, 2008.

Fathers senior priests.

The Societies, Councils and Boards.
Beloved Sons and Daughters in the
Lord, in our Antiochian Parishes in the
Diocese of Western and Central
Europe.

May the Lord's peace and mercy
encompass all of you.

*"This is the message we have heard
from Him and proclaim to you, that
God is light and in Him is no darkness
at all" (I John 1:5).*

This is what the beloved Apostle John
addressed to us, and with these words
I am starting my first discourse to you.
I have just been commissioned by the
Spirit, through the Fathers of the Holy
Synod of Antioch headed by his
beatitude our father patriarch Ignatius
IV of whole blessedness and amply
respected, a pastor to our Antiochian
Orthodox Diocese in Western and
central Europe.

Light has no darkness in it. Light is
joy and consolation. Light is a soft
breeze that moistens the heart. Light
is peace and safetiness. Light is radi-
ance and beauty. Light is assurance
and pleasantness. Light is highness
and sublimity. Light is reconciliation
and fraternity.

This light came to us and we met
him. He manifested Himself to us and
we touched Him. Hence the beloved
says also: *"The life was made manifest,
and we saw it, and testify to it, and
proclaim to you the eternal life which*

*was with the Father and was made
manifest to us-that which we have
seen and heard we proclaim also to
you, so that you may have fellowship
with us... And we are writing this
that our joy may be complete."*
(1John1:2-4).

The mystery which was kept in
silence from all eternal times has
been revealed by His love, as a salva-
tion, joy, peace and life. Our Jesus is
our life, joy peace salvation and bliss.
Therefore we preach Him as life and
salvation in the world, so that man
perceives that eternal life consists in
knowing Him as the true God alone.

And how beautiful is the prayer
Jesus addressed to His heavenly
Father for His disciples, when He
said: *"Holy Father keep them in thy
name, which you have given me, that
they may be one, even as we are one"*
(John 17:11). I kneel down on my
knees and raise my eyes to the
heaven asking the Father of all light
to keep you, to bless you, to protect
you, to increase you, to help achieve
your aims and put away from you
every misfortune. I cannot see here
more sweetness than the invocation
made by the hierarch during the Holy
Liturgy when he says (while raising
his eyes towards the Ruler of All and
blessing the people): *"Look down
from heaven, O God, and behold and
visit this vine which though hath
planted with thy right hand and
establish it"*.

You are the parish that the Spirit
entrusted to me. You are my children
in the Lord, my brothers and my
beloved. *"There is no greater love
than this to lay down one's life for his
loved ones"* (John 15:13). I ask
insistently for your prayers and
invocations so that God would

strengthen me and you too, for the new task I have been commissioned to. We shall be, by His grace, the one family that will call with one mouth and one heart, saying “*Our Father who art in Heavens*”. We shall be the one family whose sons and daughters do with one hand, clergy and God-loving people, to build the house and set it up on the truth, faith and love. The fatherly house is for all His sons and daughters, and each one of them has his standing and role; the family shall be considered incomplete if only one of its sons and daughters would miss, and let us not forget that the Lord Jesus has left aside the ninety-nine sheep and sought for the lost one.

This testimony is an obligation for us, especially in these days when the world is stumbling by its might, pride and hatred, that determined man to search for peace everywhere without finding it, because the earth peace is other than God’s peace. Today the world is in need of the word of truth and salvation, probably more than in any other time; and here lies our responsibility and our role to be the guides to the harbour of peace.

I have a great hope in your love. I shall seek to gather the house together, so that we shall be faithful guardians of what we have been entrusted with, in order to make the name of our Antiochian Orthodox Church there where the faithful were first called Christians, shining in Europe .

Asking from God His grace and blessings for all of you.

† John
Metropolite of Western and Central Europe.



Our newly elected Metropolitan John

STEPHEN'S CHRISMATION

Dear Fr. Jonathan and everyone at Holy Cross,

Christ is Ascended!

I was indeed chrismated last night when we celebrated the Feast. It truly is a blessing, and thank you all for your prayers.

Physically what happened was that when I finished work, I made my way straight to church, where I was in time to help set up the icons, etc...(as we also have to book space, and have a movable chapel). When everything was set up, I had confession. After that, I changed into my white clothes, and about fifteen minutes later I was chrismated. I received the body and blood of

Christ, and after the liturgy we had a joyous potluck meal.

In terms of understanding all of this, I am still trying to process all that happened. There is a great difference between simply knowing about chrismation and the life afterwards, and then actually trying to live that life as an Orthodox Christian. That much I can realize, and all I can say is Lord have mercy, and Glory to God!

So, Glory to God for things!

Your brother in Christ,
Stephen

PS: I thought you all would be interested to know that the only festal icon I have is a paper icon that I was given at Holy Cross. Can you guess which feast that is? It is the Ascension, and I keep it on the wall beside my door. I didn't notice the connection between the icon and the date of my chrismation until after the date had been set, and so all I can say is that God does indeed work in wonderful and mysterious ways. Glory to God!

RELICS OF THE SAINTS

Set into the Holy Antimins upon which the Holy Mysteries are offered at every Holy Liturgy are to be found bones of a martyr or saint. This is because the faith and growth of the Church is based upon the witness of the martyrs. Set into our own antimins at Holy Cross is a piece of bone from a holy martyr monk of St. Sabas Monastery; Feast Day (March 20th). Recently, our Deanery has been making an inventory of relics that we

have in our Deanery Churches and one of our Deanery priests wrote: "*I really do think that we need to acquire many more relics - along with Bishops, priests, deacons and monastics, icons, service books and vestments the relics of the saints were ALWAYS part of the mission equipment. I see no difference between our first missions in these lands and our current ones.*"

We are indeed blessed that our community has two tiny relics of St. Nicholas Planas who is one of the great examples of priesthood from the last century. Soon, we hope to be given a relic of St. Joachim of Ithaca ("Papoulakis" 1868) who by strange coincidence-no, by Divine providence is commemorated on March 2nd the same day (though a different year) that our beloved St. Nicholas Planas reposed in the Lord.

The way that the holy relics of the Saints were translated and greeted is in a touching manner described by St. Chrysostomos in an eulogy on St. Ignatios: "*You, inhabitants of Antioch, have sent forth a bishop and received a martyr; you sent him forth with prayers, and received him back with crowns; and not only you, but all the cities which lay between. For how do you think that they behaved when they saw his remains being brought back? What pleasure was produced! How they rejoiced! With what laudations on all sides did they beset the crowned one! For as with a noble athlete, who has wrestled down all his antagonists, and who comes forth with radiant glory from the arena, the spectators receive him, and do not suffer him to tread the earth, bringing him home on their shoulders and according him countless praises. So*

also every city in turn received this Saint from Rome, and bearing him upon their shoulders as far as this city, escorted the crowned one with praises, hymning the champion... At this time the holy Martyr bestows grace to the very same cities, establishing them in piety, and from that time to this day he enriches this city”.

Speaking of the miraculous power of holy relics, St. Ephraim the Syrian relates the following concerning the holy Martyrs: *“Even after death they act as if alive, healing the sick, expelling demons, and by the power of the Lord rejecting every evil influence of the demons. This is because the miraculous grace of the Holy Spirit is always present in the holy relics”.*

Although they are rare and it is difficult, it is our duty to try to acquire and so venerate the relics of the saints of this our land which was blessed by their presence and by whose prayers the Holy Orthodox Church is strengthened and will grow once more.

SHARING PHOTOS

From this month we have established a photo gallery of recent events that our Parish has taken part in. The gallery can be found in the next address:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/orthodox.lancaster>

It is an easy way to share photos and videos among us, as well as with the Old Stavronians who can contribute as well! You can also add comments on the photos or view them as a slide-show if you wish.

If you have photos to share, comments or suggestions on this initiative, please contact Panagiotis Georgopoulos our student representative.

For those of us who may have privacy concerns, the photos are not returned as search results in google -since we have disabled this feature- and none family names of the parishioners have been published. Nevertheless, we'd be happy to let us know if for any reason you wouldn't like a photo to be published.



CHILDRENS CORNER

ST. JOHN THE RUSSIAN

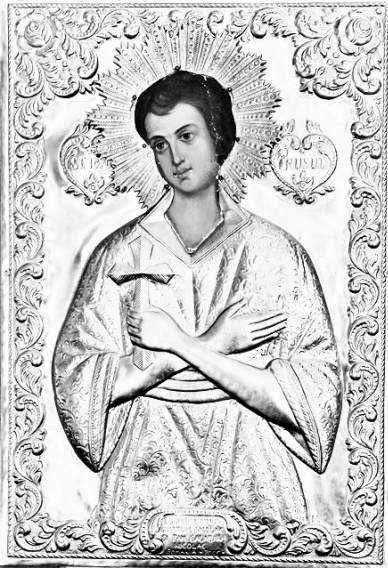
One of our Old Stavronians, Katerina Dokou has sent us some Icon badges of St. John the Russian. If you would like to win one, answer the following questions, download and colour in his Icon. You might want to ask your parents to read his story. You can find information about him on:

<http://www.roca.org/OA/39/39g.htm>

Questions:

1. Where can we visit the relics of St. John the Russian today?
2. Why was he such a good Christian?
3. When is his name day?

The best answer and Icon (age considered) will be awarded an Icon of Saint John the Russian.



St. John the Russian

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

7th July: The Great Martyr Kyriaki

11th July: St. Olga, equal to the Apostoles

20th July: Prophet Elias

27th July: Great Martyr Panteleimon

31st July: St. Joseph of Arimathea

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



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