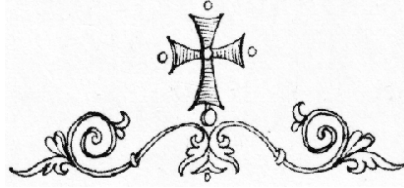


October 2008



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

*Meeting at the Chaplaincy Centre of Lancaster University*

## *Newsletter*



*ἸϞϞϞ Χριστὸς Παντοκράτωρ.  
(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)*

## ST. JOACHIM OF ITHACA

During mid September, our Parish was very blessed to receive as a gift a fragment of bone of St. Joachim the Ithacesian of Vatopaedi. We would hereby like to wholeheartedly thank Fr. Theodosios Dendrinis for sending us this holy relic, with the hope that St. Joachim will assist our prayers to the Lord for the spiritual growth of our community.

On the next newsletter we will include a short Biography of the life of the Saint as well as some photos of the relics. Our community has also commissioned the Saint's Icon with Dimitrios Hakim, our iconographer in London.

## KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH

*From "God's Revelation to the Human Heart" by Fr. Seraphim (St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1987):*

"...Is there a special organ for receiving revelation from God? Yes, in a certain sense there is such an organ, though usually we close it and do not let it open up: God's revelation is given to something called a loving heart. We know from the Scriptures that God is love; Christianity is the religion of love (you may look at the failures, see people who call themselves Christians and are not, and say there is no love there; but Christianity is indeed the religion of love when it is successful and practised in the right way)... If you ask anyone who knew Archbishop John what it was that

drew people to him -and still draws people who never knew him- the answer is always the same: he was overflowing with love; he sacrificed himself for his fellow men out of absolutely unselfish love for God and for them. This is why things were revealed to him which could not get through to other people and which he never could have known by natural means. He himself taught that, for all "mysticism" of our Orthodox Church that is found in the Lives of the Saints and the writings of the Orthodox Elders, the Orthodox faithful always has both feet firmly on the ground, facing whatever situation is right in front of him. It is in accepting given situations, which requires a loving heart, that man encounters God. This loving heart is why anyone comes to a knowledge of the truth...



*Fr. Seraphim Rose.*

## ST. SERGIUS AND BACCHUS

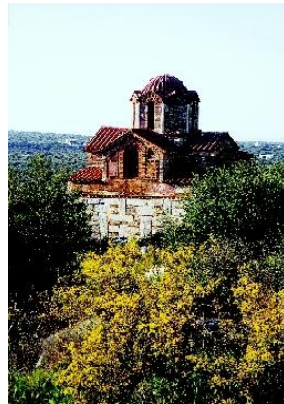
“Saints Sergius and Bacchus (also Serge and Bacchus or Sergios and Vakchos), were 3<sup>rd</sup> century Roman soldiers who are commemorated as martyrs by the Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches. Sergius and Bacchus were officers in Caesar Maximian's army, and were held high in his favour until they were exposed as secret Christians. They were then severely punished in 303, with Bacchus dying during torture, and Sergius eventually beheaded. Churches in their honour have been built in several cities, including Constantinople. Officers of the Roman Army and secretly Christians, their martyrology reports their religion was



discovered when they attempted to avoid accompanying a Roman official into a pagan temple with the rest of his bodyguard. After they persisted in refusing to worship Roman gods they were exiled to the front lines in Syria by order of Roman Emperor, where they were tortured and killed. Bacchus is thought to have died while being flogged. Sergius survived torture to

later be beheaded. Both were killed in Syria; the traditional site of Sergius' death is Resafa. According to legend, upon being tortured to death, Bacchus appeared (in spirit) to Sergius who was still being tortured and encouraged him to remain strong, as they would soon be reunited in Heaven.

In the Byzantine Empire, they were venerated as the protectors of the army. A large monastery church was dedicated to them in Constantinople by Justinian I, probably in 527. Sergius was a very famous saint in Syria and Christian Arabia. The city of Resafa, which became a bishop's see, took the name, Sergiopolis, and preserved his relics in a fortified basilica. The church was adorned and the place further strengthened by Justinian. It became one of the greatest pilgrimage centres in the east.



Many churches were built dedicated in the name of Sergius, sometimes with Bacchus. The nomads of the desert looked upon Sergius as their special patron saint. Their feast day is 7 October”. (source: wikipedia).

Since I was a little child I admired this small, unusual for the

area, beautiful church that was in the middle of nowhere, near the southernmost part of mainland Greece, and Europe. It was only recently that I found out its name, Sergios and Vakhos, saints' names I hadn't heard before. That made me look them up, see who they were. My amazement grew when I read the above information, it made me wonder how the isolated people of the area, who struggled for survival on an inhospitable and unforgiving land, discovered the saints from far away, loved them and built (in the 12<sup>th</sup> c.) such an elegant church (reputed to be one of most perfect architecture) in their honour. Thanks to them, I discovered them too, 9 centuries later, and I'm introducing them to you, like I'd introduce new friends, to greet them on their feast day, the 7<sup>th</sup> October.

## O STRANGE THIS MYSTERY

Theme: Grace and Faith

*"It is not only among us, who are marked with the name of Christ, that the dignity of faith is great; all the business of the world, even of those outside the Church, is accomplished by faith. By faith, marriage laws join in union persons who were strangers to one another. By faith, agriculture is sustained; for a man does not endure the toil involved unless he believes he will reap a harvest. By faith, seafaring men, entrusting themselves to a tiny wooden craft, exchange the solid element of the land for the unstable motion of the waves. Not only among us does this hold true but also, as I*

*have said, among those outside the fold. For though they do not accept the Scriptures but advance certain doctrines of their own, yet even these they receive on faith". Catechesis V, St. Cyril of Jerusalem*

O strange mystery  
O greatest wonder  
That in human history  
Is without compare!

**We** did not really die!  
**We** were not buried  
In the earth to lie!  
**We** were not crucified!  
Or raised again to life  
Like Him,  
Of whom others testified.

We preach the pattern  
Of what one day will be.  
Salvation that is born  
of true faith, hope and charity.

But Christ-He **truly** died!  
He hungered, suffered, wept  
And on the Cross he cried,

*"Father, forgive them,  
For they know not what they do!"*  
Thus He speaks today  
To me and you.

Christ, He **truly** rose again  
All this bestowed to us  
Who out of freedom, sin.  
He **truly** is the Life.  
And we by imitation,  
That communing in His strife

Might gain in reality  
This figure and promise  
Of His eternal verity.

O surpassing, loving Lord!  
O kind condescension  
Of the Incarnate Word!

Whose undefiled hands  
Received the bitter nails?  
Whose side the spear?  
Whose was the anguish?  
Whose is the love so dear?

Whilst to me,  
Without suffering or toil  
By fellowship of His pain,  
He vouchsafed the kingdom  
And I, unworthy one, salvation gain!

*Lyrics based on the words and theology  
of St. Cyril of Jerusalem 313-386 "On  
the Christian Sacraments"*

Δόξα Σοι ο Θεός ημών Δόξα Σοι!

*JAH 24.8.08*

## **VISIT TO ST. NICHOLAS PLANAS IN ATHENS**

Every time I'm in Athens I try to pay a visit to our friend and patron Saint, Nicolas Planas. His church, Agios Ioannis (St. John) is very easy to find as it is just outside the metro station with the same name. The first time I went, the church would normally be closed, as it was siesta time, but I

found the doors open because of a special occasion. The last time I went, even though the church was closed, it was so hot that the glass panes of the doors were open, so I could see the saint, greet him and take some pictures of his relics and icon to share with you, until you visit him in person, I'm sure he'll make sure the church is somehow open.

Certainly his prayers are always open to those who call upon him!



*The Interior of the church of St. John*



*The reliquary of St. Nicholas Planas*



*The exterior of the church of St. John*

## VISIT IN MANI, GREECE

One of our parishioners, Evangelia Stergiou has been to Mani, Greece during summer and has sent some beautiful pictures of old churches and chapels from this part of the South Peloponnese:



*St. Taxiarches at Areopoli.*



*St. Nicholas*



*St. John the Baptist, at Areopoli.*



*St. Peter*



*The transfiguration of Christ at Pyrgos Dirou.*



*The Bodiless Powers of Heaven at Akrotainaro where the ancient Greeks*

believed that the gates of Hades were located. It is built of ancient stones and marble.



*St. Pelagia of Tarsus. The church is located at the top of this mountain where the locals do a great pilgrimage every year on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May. The climb is difficult but the miracles quite many.*

## **PRAYER BEFORE MAKING PROSPHORA**

*The prayer follows the Trisagion:*

Bless my hands I pray Father as I give myself to the making of this Bread that I may honour Thee so that this Bread may be holy.

Accept my gift and make me and all Thy people worthy to receive Thy greater Gift at the Divine Liturgy when Thou dost consecrate this Prospkhora and give it back to us Thy Precious Body.

In the Name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

## **ST. EUPHROSYNUS THE COOK**

St. Euphrosynus, a monk in one of the monasteries of Palestine, carried out the obedience of working as a cook in the kitchen. While labouring for the brethren, St. Euphrosynus focused his thoughts upon God, and constantly fasted and prayed. He always remembered that the monk's first obligation was his obedience, and he therefore meekly obeyed his elder brethren. His patience was astounding: although he was often subjected to words of reproach, he never complained, and calmly endured all difficulties.



With the internal virtue he kept hidden from others, St. Euphrosynus pleased the Lord, Who chose to reveal to the monastic brethren the spiritual loftiness of their modest brother. One of the presbyters of the monastery had prayed that God might show him the blessings prepared for the righteous in the age to come. In a dream, the priest saw

what awaited in Paradise, and with fear and joy was able to sense its ineffable beauty. There he also saw the monk Euphrosynus, the cook from his monastery. Surprised by this meeting, the priest asked Euphrosynus how he had come to be there. The saint replied that he was there by the great grace of God. The priest then asked Euphrosynus whether he had the authority to give him something of the beautiful things that surrounded them. Venerable St. Euphrosynus invited the priest to choose what he would like to have, and the priest pointed to the wonderful apples that grew in the heavenly garden. The Venerable One picked three apples, wrapped them in a cloth, and gave them to him. Awakening just before Matins, the priest at first thought that his vision had been an ordinary dream. However, he suddenly noticed that next to him were the heavenly fruits, wrapped in a cloth and exuding a marvellous fragrance. Finding St. Euphrosynus in the church, he asked him to state under oath where he had been that night. The Saint replied that he had been where the priest had been. Then the Venerable One said that, in granting the priest's prayer, the Lord had shown him Paradise and had offered the fruits of Paradise through "the poor and unworthy servant of God Euphrosynus." After Matins, the priest told the monastery brethren of everything that had happened, pointed out the spiritual loftiness of Monk Euphrosynus, the hidden saint of God within their midst, and he showed them the fragrant, heavenly fruits. Profoundly moved by what they had heard, the monks went into the kitchen to bow

down before St. Euphrosynus. However, he could not be found there, for, avoiding human glory, he had left the monastery. Where he hid himself remained a mystery, but the monks always remembered that their brother, Venerable St. Euphrosynus, had had Paradise opened to him, and that they -those saved by God's grace- would meet him there. They reverently kept the heavenly apples, and would distribute pieces of them as a blessing and a source of healing".

## APPLE PIE RECIPE

In St. Euphrosynus' honour a recipe with 3 apples is following, adapted from the book "The Cook's apples" - Monastery cooking, named after the saint's story. It is also a very autumnal recipe.

### *filling:*

- \* 3 large apples. Pray to St. Euphrosynus to bless them.
- \* 1 tbs cinnamon or mixed spice
- \* 125gr butter or margarine
- \* ½ cup (brown) sugar

### *pastry:*

- \* 2-3 eggs
- \* ½ cup sugar
- \* ½ cup self-raising flour

Melt butter and pour in a pie dish or cake tin. Sprinkle spices on top. Peel and core the apples and cut across in half. Place in the tin (cut side down). Sprinkle with the sugar.

Now prepare the cake mix: cream egg yolks with sugar. Add flour and mix well. Beat the egg



whites and then fold in gently. Pour over the apples and bake in a pre-heated oven, 10min 200°C (gas 6) and 50min 180°C (gas 4). Leave to cool for 5-10min and turn over on a plate to serve.

*pieeofcake*

12<sup>th</sup> Oct: St. Simeon the New Theologian

18<sup>th</sup> Oct: Luke the Evangelist

20<sup>th</sup> Oct: St. Gerasimos of Cephalonia

26<sup>th</sup> Oct: St. Demetrios the Myrrh-streamer

28<sup>th</sup> Oct: Holy Protection of the Theotokos

## MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

3<sup>rd</sup> Oct: St. Dionysios the Areopagite

6<sup>th</sup> Oct: Apostle Thomas

9<sup>th</sup> Oct: Apostle James, son of Alphaeus

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.goarch.org](http://www.calendar.goarch.org)

“We have been called to become unknown heroes,  
visible only to the unsleeping eye of God.”

- Elder Ephraim -



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