



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

*Meeting at the Chaplaincy Centre of Lancaster University*

## *Newsletter*



*Ἐθρονος 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.*

*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)*

## A WAY TO CHRIST

How many different ways we have been provided to reach Christ! Can anyone be discontent with any of them? After all, we are all doing the same, that is, trying to get there, aren't we?

When seeing parents bring their children to partake of the Holy Mysteries during a Liturgy, I cannot help rejoicing at that the Lord already abides with these little people and they are walking in the right way. It is not that I regret my way to Church has been different and, perhaps, strangely winding in its way. However, no one knows how many twists and turns our way is going to have, therefore, all we can do is rely on the Lord so that we may endure.



*Old and new churches at Chebarkul, Russia.*

It so happened, for the first time, I took communion when quite adult. I think, in this particular case it was good as well, for the Grace of God condescended onto me at the time He had prepared me. Why did it take me to God so long? Sometimes, it is not easy to find the true direction at once. The first move to the truth was made at the moment of baptism, though it was during a mass movement (in the 1990s people would get baptized by thousands in Russia). However, I deliberately received my

baptism. Yet, lacking in a consistent relationship with God and in partaking of the Holy Mysteries, the soul could not feel at rest, and when unquieted it is easy to stumble.



*Theophany in Chebarkul, Russia.*

I did exactly that. In two years, I joined sectarians who called themselves Christians. The word of the Bible when said apart from the Truth had an absolutely different meaning that was necessary to someone. Anything sectarians say is accurately proved by the Holy Scriptures, and that is where the stumbling point was. But the Bible comprises many books constituting integrity, while sectarians take their pleasure in selecting the verses, which suit their statements. But, don't we know that the phrase "there is no God..." taken out of context in the Bible can be perishable for a man if he skips reading that these words "belong to a madman". (Psalms 13:1)?

Such a contextual, or, I'd rather say, incoherent truth in a sectarian church is not able to stand its ground for long. The questions which have been answered today but which baffled the sectarians gave me no peace. Some external factors added, and I abandoned them. Indeed, that was the only good thing about the piteous story, but, glory to God! One

must go through this kind of experience, too. Moreover, it is important to go on!



*The blessing of waters during Theophany at the frozen Chebarkul lake.*

Deviation from the truth with a false teaching and, as a result, open encouragement of blandishments brings about its own consequences. Severe illnesses require bitter cures. So, the story resulted in a long and, oftentimes, aggressive unwillingness to accept the true teachings of Christ, and personal troubles. Otherwise, was there then another way for me to reflect on things and see my delusion? And, was there anything else to push me off the slumber of mind unless a sharp pain?

It seemed that the time was ripe for me then, and I should approach the Chalice. I did, but ... after five years only. It looks strange now but, on the other hand, it was simply right. Now I come to understand what I had been doing during those five years: there was a search for repentance through humility. I hope I shall keep searching for it. These were exactly the things that I found missing from the protestant church. However, the Church teaches us that, if there is no humility, there is no love, and we know that God is Love.

By God's will I happened to be far away from Russia over those five years.

He willed it so that there was an Orthodox Parish of the Antiochian Patriarchate quite close to me. It was only then, following twelve years after my baptism, when I had no doubt in which direction one should be looking for the Truth. Only then, I felt I might approach the Chalice...



*The blessing of waters during Theophany at the frozen Chebarkul lake.*

How beautiful and diverse is the world that God created, along with a personal way for each of us to find Him. To take this long and winding road, one sometimes needs to live many years, to endure a lot and even to get to an island in the sea, however romantic this may sound. But, whatever the route, we must get there!

*Pavel Zlobin*

## **GOD IS GLORIFIED**

### Theme: Materialism

Genesis 1:31a: *And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.*

*"But Adam did not wish to say, "I sinned," but said rather the contrary of this and placed the blame for the transgression upon God*

Who created everything "very good," saying to Him, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I ate." And after him she also placed the blame upon the serpent, and they did not wish at all to repent and, falling down before the Lord God, beg forgiveness of Him. For this, God banished them from Paradise, as from a royal palace, to live in this world as exiles. At that time also He decreed that a flaming sword should be turned and should guard the entrance into Paradise. And God did not curse Paradise, since it was the image of the future unending life of the eternal Kingdom of Heaven. If it were not for this reason, it would have been fitting to curse it most of all, since within it was performed the transgression of Adam. But God did not do this, but cursed only the whole rest of the earth, which also was corrupt and brought forth everything by itself; and this was in order that Adam might not have any longer a life free from exhausting labors and sweat..."

*St. Symeon the New Theologian*

A certain philosopher questioned holy Antony, "How can you be content, father, without the comfort of books?" he replied, "My book, O philosopher, is the nature of created things and whenever I wish to read the words of God, it is in my hand."

There was an anchorite who was gazing with the antelopes and who prayed to God, saying, "Lord, teach me something more." And a voice came to him, saying, "Go into this monastery and do whatever they tell you." He went there and remained in the monastery, but he did not know the work of the brothers. The young monks began to teach him how to work and they would say to him, "Do this, you idiot," and "Do that, you fool." When he had borne it, he prayed to God, saying, "Lo do not know the work of men; send me back to the antelopes." And having

*been freed by God, he went back into the country to graze with the antelopes.*

The Oak and Elm, the Spruce and Pine  
Larch and Yew have nurtured time.  
Garlanded by the meadow flower  
That knows its own appointed hour.  
Attended by the humble herb  
Whose fragrances installed to kerb  
Human passions' wilder powers.  
No lecture, just a whispered hint  
From wise sage, basil, thyme and mint.

*God is glorified in His Creation*

Where mountains reach the speckled dome  
Swift and eagle find their home.  
Yawning valleys greet the dawn  
And gaping caves in darkness spawn  
Spiders, flatworms, snails and bats.  
The nettle, bee and tiny gnats  
Bite and sting our mortal pride.  
Thick forest hides reclusive deer  
Retreat of wolf, wild boar and bear.

*God is glorified in His Creation*

No fabricated holy fable  
Framed the mouse, the grouse and sable.  
Great creatures swarming in the sea  
Were caused like you and me, to be.  
The Artist of the Universe  
The Poet of the Book and verse  
Shares His nature in the world  
Let creatures all His name endorse  
And Heaven and earth declare the source.

*God is glorified in His Creation*

*JAH 5<sup>th</sup> May 2008  
Ad Gloriam Dei*



## BECOMING LIKE CHILDREN

Going back home for Christmas I had two beautiful surprises. The first one was watching my little nephews play with their toys observing how natural this process was and the second one was the fact that I could actually join in with them in their creative activity as well!

I thought it would be difficult for me to play with childrens' toys after so many years of focusing only on "serious" adult matters -so I was unwilling at first- but then when I tried to play I realised that I can still do it and not only that, but also still very much enjoy it as well! I found out that it was not that difficult at all! Then, when we finished playing and I had to return to the world of the adults, a part of the gospel came into my mind where Jesus is asking the people to change and become like little children if they really wished to enter the kingdom of the heavens and how difficult it is for adults to even start trying to come close to such a state, i.e the state of being like a child, since our mind has so much got used in thinking in practical terms that is impossible to rewind and go back the steps.

I then also remembered a friend of mine who pointed out once, during one of our discussions, that it is only the kids who can have a sharp and unmistakable judgment between what is good and what is bad when it comes to ethics; they have an absolutely crystal view of the subject, while for adults good and bad is always something obscure since it always depends on perspective; what is good for me may be bad for you and vice versa and we can never find common ground.

It's really an obscure adult world where this beautiful creative instinct of the children is forever lost and we may

need to start playing with kids again to start learning step by step how it is to be good again not by following some certain rules which make us feel better just because it makes our conscience fall asleep but because one simply is trying to live and exist on such a heavenly state in full, like the Saints do, and everything else just comes naturally.

*Thodoris Papadopoulos*

## WHITE CHRISTMAS

Going back home for Christmas I was lucky to enjoy 30cm of snow since we didn't have such an amount of snow at my hometown for about 5 years! So of course I took the chance and went out taking as many photos as I could, some of them I felt like sharing with you. They are from the Byzantine churches that exist in my hometown Sérvia at Kozani, Greece, which used to be a strong Byzantine city from the 7<sup>th</sup> century onwards as its name reveals (*sérvo* in Latin means to serve or to guard since the town's castle, built by Justinian, was guarding the Northwest of Greece).



*The Metropolitan Church of Aghios Demetrios built in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. It is a large three-aisled basilica with narthex; two layers*

*of wall-paintings still survive bearing witness to a great Byzantine past.*

The most important of these churches is the Metropolitan Church of St. Demetrios (in ruins today) where a great liturgy was actually served last summer after more than 550 years of liturgical inactivity.

*Thodoris Papadopoulos*



*The hermitage of Aghioi Theodoroi (Saints Theodoros). Many monks had been using these small caves as cells from the 10<sup>th</sup> century.*



*The interior of the Church of the hermitage of Aghioi Theodoroi is also a cave; it dates back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The cave was decorated with beautiful frescos most of them unfortunately ruined by time.*



*Aghioi Anargyroi dedicated to all Saints who although they were doctors, they never accepted money for their services. It is a small chapel built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Its uniqueness lies on the fact that it does not have any windows; as a result the interior is fully decorated with beautiful one-piece themed frescos.*



*Hagiographies on one of the interior walls of the chapel of Aghioi Anargyroi.*



*Aghia Kyriaki, built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.*



*Aghios Georgios (St. George), the latest church built during the 1960s.*

## LITURGIES THIS MONTH

This month's liturgies will be served on:

- Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> at the RC chapel
- Saturday the 14<sup>th</sup> at the RC chapel
- Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Quiet Room
- Saturday the 28<sup>th</sup> at the RC chapel

## PRAYERS

Prayers are asked for:

*Alexandros  
Marios  
Father Raphael  
Ian  
Paraskevi*

Please pray for their health and salvation.

*In Christ,  
Father Jonathan*

## VEGETARIAN MINISTRONE

"After the rich foods we consumed, or even over-consumed, during the festive season, a soup is a tasty and satisfying way to give our system a break, to cleanse and nourish our body in a gentle way. This is a no meat version of the classic Italian minestrone soup, which is also credit crunch-friendly and a perfect winter warmer. You could omit anything you don't have or like, or replace with something else, e.g. another root vegetable, or barley instead of pasta. Do use the herbs though, they make all the difference.

### *Vegetarian Minestrone*

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 2 courgettes, chopped
- 1 cup shredded cabbage
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 potato, cubed
- 1 tin of tomatoes
- 1 tin of cannellini beans
- 1 cup uncooked macaroni
- 6-7 cups vegetable broth (water may also be used)
- 2 tablespoons dried basil
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme, or 1 tablespoon fresh
- ¼ cup fresh flat leaf parsley, chopped
- Salt and pepper
- optional: grated parmesan

Heat the oil in a heavy large pot over medium heat. Add the onion, carrots, celery and garlic. Sauté until the onion is translucent, about 7 minutes. Add the potato and cabbage and sauté for 2

minutes. Add the tinned tomatoes, heat until tomatoes begin to break apart and then add 6 cups of the broth. Stir in beans, pasta, and all of the seasonings except parsley. At this point you may want to add the other cup of broth, depending on how thick or thin you like your soup - entirely up to you. Simmer for about 10-15 minutes, until potato cubes and pasta are soft. Give the pot a good stir so that the beans and tomatoes begin to break apart, adding a nice texture to the broth. Stir in fresh parsley, salt and pepper, then serve, with a little parmesan on top, if you wish."

*pieceofcake*



## MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

2<sup>nd</sup> Feb: **The Presentation of Our Lord and Saviour in the Temple**

3<sup>rd</sup> Feb: **St. Symeon the God-Receiver**

8<sup>th</sup> Feb: **Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee: Triodion Begins Today**

10<sup>th</sup> Feb: **St. Charalambos the Holy Martyr**

15<sup>th</sup> Feb: **Sunday of Prodigal Son**

24<sup>th</sup> Feb: **First & Second Finding of the Venerable Head of John the Baptist**

For the lives of Saints please visit the Calendar of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America: [www.calendar.goarch.org](http://www.calendar.goarch.org)

Matthew 18:2-6

Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me".



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