

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)*

PRAYER OF THE OPTINA ELDERS

Lord, give me the strength to greet the coming day in peace. Help me in all things to rely on Thy holy will. Reveal Thy will to me every hour of the day. Bless my dealings with all people. Teach me to treat all people who come to me throughout the day with peace of soul and with firm conviction that Thy will governs all. In all my deeds and words guide my thoughts and feelings. In unexpected events, let me not forget that all are sent by Thee. Teach me to act firmly and wisely, without embittering and embarrassing others. Give me the physical strength to bear the labours of this day. Direct my will; teach me to pray, pray in me. Amen



The Optina Monastery at Central Russia.

ORTHODOXY AND THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

If by evolution one is referring to the theories and teachings of Charles Darwin, the Orthodox Church surely does not subscribe to evolution in any manner. Orthodoxy firmly believes that God is the Creator of all things and that human

beings, created in the image and likeness of God, are unique among all created beings. At the same time Orthodoxy is not literalist in its understanding of the accounts of creation in Genesis; there are writings by Orthodox Christians which attempt to balance the creation accounts with a certain ongoing -evolutionary, if you will- process which, on the one hand, affirms that while humans may have evolved physically under the direction and guidance and plan of the Creator, their souls could not have evolved any more than the powers of reasoning, speaking, or the ability to act creatively could have simply evolved. In such a scenario the Creator intervened by breathing His Spirit into man and giving him life, as stated in Genesis. Such thinking, however, while admitting the possibility that the Creator guided a process of physical evolution, is not identical with the theories of Charles Darwin, which in my limited understanding implies that man's soul also evolved and denies the active participation on the part of the Creator. This poses a variety of questions and problems.

In short, Orthodoxy absolutely affirms that God is the Creator and Author of all things, that He is actively engaged with His creation, and that He desires to restore His creation to full communion with Himself through the saving death and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This, unlike Darwinism, is not a matter of ideology but, rather, a matter of theology.

Orthodoxy has no problem with evolution as a scientific theory, only with evolution -as some people may view it- eliminating the need for God as Creator of All.

source:

<http://www.oca.org/QA.asp?ID=72&SID=3>

EVOLUTIONARY HYMN

Lead us, Evolution, lead us
Up the future's endless stair;
Chop us, change us, prod us, weed us.
For stagnation is despair:
Groping, guessing, yet progressing,
Lead us nobody knows where.

Wrong or justice, joy or sorrow,
In the present what are they
while there's always jam-tomorrow,
While we tread the onward way?
Never knowing where we're going,
We can never go astray.

To whatever variation
Our posterity may turn
Hairly, squashy, or crustacean,
Bulbous-eyed or square of stern,
Tusked or toothless, mild or ruthless,
Towards that unknown god we yearn.

Ask not if it's god or devil,
Brethren, lest your words imply
Static norms of good and evil
(As in Plato) throned on high;
Such scholastic, inelastic,
Abstract yardsticks we deny.

Far too long have sages vainly
Glossed great Nature's simple text;
He who runs can read it plainly,
'Goodness = what comes next.'
By evolving, Life is solving
All the questions we perplexed.

Oh then! Value means survival-
Value. If our progeny
Spreads and spawns and licks each rival,
That will prove its deity
(Far from pleasant, by our present,
Standards, though it may well be).

C S Lewis

Less known for his poetry, here the great 20th century academic, writer and theologian C.S. Lewis takes a wry glance at the theory of Evolution set in rather caustic satire to the famous hymn by James Edmeston "Lead us heavenly father lead us." The contrasting sentiment to the words of the hymn cannot fail to be lost since we do not know where evolution will lead us. As Christian apologetic it doesn't really stand up to scrutiny, but that is not Lewis's prime intention. Although the comparison is implied, he is looking at the presumed inherent lack of morality or more accurately the amorality of evolutionary theory which one modern writer describes as "raining DNA" or in Lewis' own words "Goodness = what comes next." The touch of irony that scientific theory does not either require us or want us to question why things are as they are (nature's simple text) is not missed. The poem reaches almost biting sarcasm in its conclusion with "Oh then! Value means survival value." The measured cadence itself seems to refute the sense of progression.

The writer tempts us to question where or what we will be in one million years time. At the risk of sharing Lewis's sense of irony more blatantly- God alone knows!!

JAH

C. S. LEWIS

What made CS Lewis move from Atheist to Christian? He saw faith in two ways because he was firstly converted to the belief that there was a God; his intellect convinced him of the reasonableness of God-*theism* he then went on to see faith as a personal relationship with God in Christ.

Lewis recognized, however, that this philosophical God could not automatically be identified with the Christian God. The religious belief which Lewis designated Faith-B is no mere intellectual assent; instead, it's a belief *in* God — a trust in God that represents a religious relationship between the person and the divine.

But what prompted Lewis to move from that intellectual philosophical idea to the faith of Christianity; let me suggest that it was the faith of others who were signposts for him JRR Tolkien-devout Catholic and in their discussions in the "Eagle and Child" Lewis must have been warmed by Tolkien taking faith to a personal level. "I wish I had your faith!" Faith is a gift but it is a gift which needs to be unwrapped and used; God gives it to all but it is like that dusty Bible that we rarely open because we would rather be reading other things.



"Now faith, in the sense in which I am here using the word, is the art of holding onto things your reason has once accepted, in spite of your changing moods. For moods will change, whatever view your reason takes. I know that by experience. Now that I am a Christian, I do have moods in which the whole thing looks very improbable; but when I was an atheist, I had moods in which Christianity looked terribly probable. This rebellion of your moods against your real self is going to come anyway. That is why faith is such a necessary virtue; unless you teach your moods "where they get off" you can never be either a sound Christian or even a sound atheist, but just a

creature dithering to and fro, with its beliefs really dependent on the weather and the state of its digestion. Consequently one must train the habit of faith".

"Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of; throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself".

"You don't have a soul. You are a soul. You have a body."

"Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: "What! You too? I thought I was the only one."

"Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable."

"God can't give us peace and happiness apart from Himself because there is no such thing."

"Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil".

"God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world"



"If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this."

"There are two kinds of people: those who say to God, "Thy will be done," and those to whom God says, "All right, then, have it your way".

"If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world."

C. S. Lewis

BOYS AND SPIRITUALITY: A CALL TO ACTION

International Boys Schools Coalition
Conference: 23rd April 2009

Hosted by
The Oratory School, Reading
"Boys and Spirituality: a call to action"

The keynote speaker for the conference was Sir Clive Woodward OBE, Director of Elite Performance at the British Olympic Association and former England Rugby Football Coach. Sir Clive addressed the whole school plus delegates of Boys Schools from all over Britain in the Oratory chapel. He mapped out for those assembled the profile of a champion with the aid of power point and video clips.

The three categories that he employed for the ascent to success were: character, criteria and coaching. One starts with raw talent, the criterion being ability and one can coach the skills necessary to improve the athlete to "student" level. At this stage the "student" requires the criterion of "teachability"; they must be receptive to input and have the wherewithal to soak up like a sponge that which is being taught. If the student is impervious and does not have an open adaptable mind, they cannot progress to the next level which he referred to as "warrior" status. The warrior must be able to cope with pressure which he styled T-cup (thinking correctly under pressure). The zenith of character possesses the attribute of a champion, the prime criterion being the will to win with the right attitude which again, can be coached.

Talent alone is not enough, mental profiling means that the mind needs to be disciplined but flexible enough to adapt to a new challenge under an alternate circumstance.

We were shown a slide of the unlikely scenario of the 1997 England Rugby front row learning to touch type on laptop computers. Thinking outside the box brings challenges that need to be presented and overcome! In 1998 Sir Clive took his England "warriors" to the Royal Marine base at Lympstone in order to see what it really means to be "under pressure." In war as on the rugby field things do not always go as expected which he referred to as "dislocated expectations," but it is necessary to prepare as far as possible for such situations. He brought into his armoury of coaching the "War Room" mentality-clock and whiteboard. Imagine, Wales 15-England 15, the enemy camped on your forty five yard line and two minutes to go! What do you do? The warriors are invited to think quickly, step forward and say what they would do to win the match? Certainly the illustration compliments the notion attributed to the Duke of Wellington that *"The Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton"*.

In the 2003 Rugby World Cup final there were ten minutes of extra time-itself a rare phenomenon in the realms of the Rugby world. With twenty five seconds to go at 17-17 Johnny Wilkinson delivered the drop kick that won the match for England. Was it planned, rehearsed? Certainly it was thinking correctly under pressure! There is never a time when you cannot win a match.

Attitude characteristics he placed under three categories:

- The ability to take charge
- Drive and passion
- Obsession for excellence

There must be a no compromise approach and at the highest level attitude and mental fitness is more important than talent.

In 1967 Muhammad Ali said: *"Champions aren't made in gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside of them; a desire, a dream, a vision. They have to possess the skill and the will but the will must be stronger than the skill"*.

How does this transfer to spirituality? Well, Sir Clive didn't spell it out but then he didn't need to because St. Paul uses the model of the Olympic Games for those who wish to attain to heaven; I Corinthians 9: 24*"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. ²⁷No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."*

The Church Fathers down the centuries have known that all that is required to be a saint (given the necessary grace) is the strong desire to be one. However we must focus on what we can do now, today, for yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery but today is the present a gift.

Cardinal John Henry Newman to whom The Oratory School owes its foundation said about education: *"The purpose of a liberal arts education is to open the mind, to correct it, to refine it, to enable it to know, and to digest, master, rule, and use its knowledge, to give it power over its own faculties, application, flexibility, method, critical exactness, sagacity, resource, address, [and] eloquent expression..."*

Talent + desire + discipline X coaching = success!

RIGHTEOUS ST. BOTOLPH, ABBOT OF THE MONASTERY OF IKANHOE

Saint Botolph was born in Britain about the year 610 and in his youth became a monk in Gaul. The sisters of Ethelmund, King of East Anglia, who were also sent to Gaul to learn the monastic discipline, met Saint Botolph, and learning of his intention to return to Britain, bade their brother the King grant him land on which to found the monastery. Hearing the King's offer, Saint Botolph asked for land not already in any man's possession, not wishing that his gain should come through another's loss, and chose a certain desolate place called Ikanhoe. At his coming, the demons inhabiting Ikanhoe rose up against him with tumult, threats, and horrible apparitions, but the Saint drove them away with the sign of the Cross and his prayer.



Through his monastery he established in England the rule of monastic life that he had learned in Gaul. He worked signs and wonders, had the gift of prophecy and was distinguished for his sweetness of disposition and affability.

In the last years of his life he bore a certain painful sickness with great patience, giving thanks like Job and continuing to instruct his spiritual children in the rules of the monastic life. He fell asleep in peace about the year 680. His relics were later found incorrupt, and giving off a sweet fragrance. The place where he founded his monastery came to be called "Botolphston" (from either "Botolph's stone" or "Botolph's town") which was later contracted to "Boston."

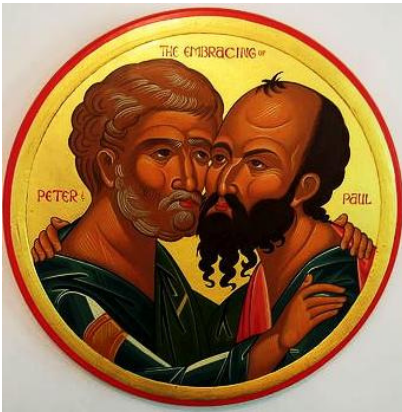
PETER AND PAUL, THE HOLY APOSTLES

The divinely-blessed Peter was from Bethsaida of Galilee. He was the son of Jonas and the brother of Andrew the First-called. He was a fisherman by trade, unlearned and poor, and was called Simon; later he was renamed Peter by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Who looked at him and said, *"Thou art Simon the son of Jonas; thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter)"* (John 1:42). On being raised by the Lord to the dignity of an Apostle and becoming inseparable from Him as His zealous disciple, he followed Him from the beginning of His preaching of salvation up until the very Passion, when, in the court of Caiaphas the high priest, he denied Him thrice because of his fear of the Jews and of the danger at hand. But again, after many bitter tears, he received complete forgiveness of his transgression.

After the Resurrection of Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit, he preached in Judea, Antioch, and certain parts of Asia, and finally came to Rome, where he was crucified upside down by Nero, and thus he ascended to the eternal habitations about the year 66 or 68,

leaving two Catholic (General) Epistles to the Church of Christ.

Paul, the chosen vessel of Christ, the glory of the Church, the Apostle of the Nations and teacher of the whole world, was a Jew by race, of the tribe of Benjamin, having Tarsus as his homeland. He was a Roman citizen, fluent in the Greek language, an expert in knowledge of the Law, a Pharisee, born of a Pharisee, and a disciple of Gamaliel, a Pharisee and notable teacher of the Law in Jerusalem. For this cause, from the beginning, Paul was a most fervent zealot for the traditions of the Jews and a great persecutor of the Church of Christ; at that time, his name was Saul (Acts 22:3-4).



In his great passion of rage and fury against the disciples of the Lord, he went to Damascus bearing letters of introduction from the high priest. His intention was to bring the disciples of Christ back to Jerusalem in bonds. As he was approaching Damascus, about midday there suddenly shone upon him a light from Heaven. Falling on the earth, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why

persecutest thou Me?" And he asked, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks". And that heavenly voice and brilliance made him tremble, and he was blinded for a time. He was led by the hand into the city, and on account of a divine revelation to the Apostle Ananias (see Oct. 1), he was baptized by him, and both his bodily and spiritual eyes were opened to the knowledge of the Sun of Righteousness. And straightway -O wondrous transformation!- beyond all expectation, he spoke with boldness in the synagogues, proclaiming that "Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 9:1-21).

As for his zeal in preaching the Gospel after these things had come to pass, as for his unabating labours and afflictions of diverse kinds, the wounds, the prisons, the bonds, the beatings, the stonings, the shipwrecks, the journeys, the perils on land, on sea, in cities, in wildernesses, the continual vigils, the daily fasting, the hunger, the thirst, the nakedness, and all those other things that he endured for the Name of Christ, and which he underwent before nations and kings and the Israelites, and above all, his care for all the churches, his fiery longing for the salvation of all, whereby he became all things to all men, that he might save them all if possible, and because of which, with his heart aflame, he continuously traveled throughout all parts, visiting them all, and like a bird of heaven flying from Asia and Europe, the West and East, neither staying nor abiding in any one place - all these things are related incident by incident in the Book of the Acts, and as he himself tells them in his Epistles. His Epistles, being fourteen in number, are explained in 250 homilies by the divine Chrysostom and make manifest the loftiness of his thou-

ghts, the abundance of the revelations made to him, the wisdom given to him from God, wherewith he brings together in a wondrous manner the Old with the New Testaments, and expounds the mysteries thereof which had been concealed under types; he confirms the doctrines of the Faith, expounds the ethical teaching of the Gospel, and demonstrates with exactness the duties incumbent upon every rank, age, and order of man. In all these things his teaching proved to be a spiritual trumpet, and his speech was seen to be more radiant than the sun, and by these means he clearly sounded forth the word of truth and illumined the ends of the world. Having completed the work of his ministry, he likewise ended his life in martyrdom when he was beheaded in Rome during the reign of Nero, at the

same time, some say, when Peter was crucified.

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

7th June: **Holy Pentecost**

8th June: **Day of the Holy Spirit**

14th June: **Sunday of All Saints**

17th June: **St. Botolph, Abbot of the Monastery of Ikanhoe**

24th June: **The Nativity of the Forerunner and Baptist John**

29th June: **Saints Peter and Paul the Holy Apostles**

30th June: **Synaxis of the 12 Holy Apostles**

For the lives of Saints please visit the Calendar of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America: 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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