

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

Meeting at the Chaplaincy Centre of Lancaster University

Newsletter



*Ἐσθρονος Χριστός 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)***

ORTHODOX FROM THE INSIDE OUT

“What Kireyevsky says is very important: we should start developing within ourselves an Orthodox philosophy of life. It is all there in the Holy Fathers, but we must have the right reason for turning to them. You can open the Holy Fathers and have the same problem you have with the Scriptures: you need someone to interpret them because you find something unclear, or you don’t have the whole context, or you don’t know how to understand what one Father said as opposed to another Father and you think they might disagree, and so on.

There can be a whole realm of confusion in the Holy Fathers, and thus we have to approach them not with our ordinary rationalistic minds. We must be trying to raise our minds up to a higher level; and the way to do this is to soften the heart and make it more supple. There are many examples in the Protestant world where people have very soft hearts and are, out of love for Christ, kind to other people. We should not, as Orthodox, think that we can be hard and cold and correct and still be Christians. This is not basic Christianity.

A pre-Christian philosopher in China named Lao Tzu taught that the weakest things conquer the strongest things. There is an example of this here at our monastery: the oak trees, which are very hard and unbending, are always falling down and breaking their limbs, while the pine trees, which are more supple, fall down much less often before they are actually dead.

We can see the same thing in human life. The person who believes in something so passionately that he will “cut your head off” if you disagree with him, shows his weakness. He is so unsure of

himself that he has to convert you to make sure that he himself believes. The contemporary forms of “super-zealotry” in the Church which are propagated by people who want so desperately to be on the right side, are in fact bowed up with weakness and insecurity.

The need to be “right” is again on the external side of Christianity. It is important, but not of primary importance. The first priority is the heart, which must be soft and warm. If we do not have this warm heart, we must ask God to give it, trying ourselves to do those things by which we can acquire it. Most of all, we have to see that we have not got it—that we are cold. We will thereby not trust our reason and the conclusions of our logical mind, with regard to which we must be somewhat “loose”. If we do this, entering into the sacramental life of the Church and receiving the grace of God, God Himself will begin to illumine us.”

Blessed Fr. Seraphim Rose

MONASTERY OF ST. PAUL

I hadn’t stayed in a monastery prior to my stay in Apostle Paul’s monastery, near Athens, in Greece. I didn’t know what to expect exactly, I was trying to imagine what it was going to be like. I didn’t manage to guess that a lady in T-shirt and jeans, big smile and *Alexiou* playing on her car radio would pick me up from the bus stop, to spare me the short walk in the midday heat, “I’m not a nun, I’m the neighbour” she laughed, telling me about the comfortable, loving relationship her household has with the monastery. Nor did I guess that one of the German sisters had already met both my English spiritual father and my

sister's Greek spiritual father. Was I impressed by the beauty, the cleanliness, the attention to every little detail in the place? Yes. The amount of hospitality and food, the self-sufficient life, the gentle discretion of each hospitable gesture towards me? Yes. But I think, the thing that impressed me, and maybe surprised me, the most, was how much I laughed, from the moment I arrived to the moment I left. The sisters' sense of humour, their light-hearted friendliness, the jokes they kept making, balanced perfectly their devoutness, quietness, gentility. As soon as I arrived, they told me to feel at home because the monastery doesn't belong to them, it doesn't belong to anyone, it's God's and they are there to offer people God's hospitality. They fed me and looked after me, they showed me things and they told me things. Like the time when one of the big pine trees caught fire by accident. The *gerontissa* cried out loud: "Apostle Paul save your Monastery!" There was an enormous thunderous noise and the fire disappeared in a puff in front of everyone's eyes.

We parted as old friends, my heart full and my hands full, too, next time I go I won't be visiting strangers, I'll be visiting friends.





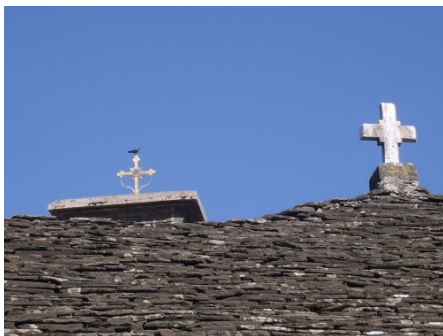
you stoop down to go through the low doorway, your journey upwards and outwards begins. The interior is just big enough for the one or two passers-by that decided to make a stop, or the hikers who made their way up the steep path, usually before sunrise, to avoid the summer heat. Inside, the icons and the "tamata", the offerings, tell you the story of the people that have been there before you. When you come out again, you squint, as if in wonder and disbelief, as if the world outside is new to you, as if you've just arrived.



THE "OUT" CHAPELS

One of the greatest joys when walking out and about in the Greek countryside in the summer, is coming across an "exocclesi", a small chapel, an "out" church. It is literally out of the city, out of the village, and it does take you out of this world and into another dimension, a more spiritual one. These churches are very often at the edge: the edge of a cliff, on a mountain, by the sea, as if they are ready to lift off, leave this place and fly higher. I bet they could do it, they are so small, so light, so simple, no excess ornaments to weigh them down. The minute





HOLY STONES OF CAPPADOCIA

Cappadocia is one of the places of the East where Christianity flourished for

more than 1000 years. The name was traditionally used in Christian sources throughout history and is still widely used to define a region of exceptional natural wonders and a unique historical and cultural heritage, especially Byzantine. It is located on the East side of Asia Minor (Turkey) and contains, among others, rock-cut churches and several underground cities largely used by early Christians as hiding places at the times of persecution. It has produced many Saints and Martyrs of the Orthodox Faith, especially the Cappadocian Fathers of the 4th century who were indeed integral to much of early Christian philosophy.

One of our Old Stavronians, Anna Sedina, has been to Cappadocia on a pilgrimage and has sent us some very beautiful photos of this holy place.





SAINTS OF CAPPADOCIA

A few of the Great Cappadocian Saints are:

* St. Mercurios the Great Martyr of Caesarea (†260)

* The Great Martyr George and Myrrh bearer (†280)

* St. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea (†379).

* St. Gregory the Theologian (†391)

* St. Gregory of Nyssa (†394)

* St. Arsenios the Cappadocian (†1924)



The Cappadocian Fathers are Basil the Great, bishop of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, bishop of Nyssa, and a close friend, Gregory Nazianzus, Patriarch of Constantinople. They are important figures in the history of the Church Fathers, who significantly promoted the early Christian theology, and are highly respected in both Western and Eastern churches as Saints. They were a 4th-century monastic family, led by St Makrina to provide a central place for

her brothers to study and meditate, and also to provide a peaceful shelter for their mother. Abbess Makrina fostered the education and development of three men who collectively became designated the Cappadocian Fathers: Basil the Great, was the second oldest of Makrina's brothers, the eldest being the famous Christian jurist Naucratus, Gregory of Nyssa, another of Makrina's brothers, and Gregory Nazianzus was a close friend.

These scholars set out to demonstrate that Christians could hold their own in conversations with learned Greek-speaking intellectuals and that Christian faith, while it was against many of the ideas of Plato and Aristotle (and other Greek Philosophers), was an almost scientific and distinctive movement with the healing of the soul of man and his union with God at its center- one best represented by monasticism. They made major contributions to the definition of the Trinity finalized at the First Council of Constantinople in 381 and the final version of the Nicene Creed which was formulated there.

Subsequent to the First Council of Nicea, Arianism did not simply disappear. The semi-Arians taught that the Son is of like substance with the Father (homoousios) as against the outright Arians who taught that the Son was not like the Father. So the Son was held to be like the Father but not of the same essence as the Father.

The Cappadocians worked to bring these semi-Arians back to the orthodox cause. In their writings they made extensive use of the (now orthodox) formula "three substances (hypostases) in one essence (ousia)," and thus explicitly acknowledged a distinction between the Father and the Son (a distinction that Nicea had been accused of blurring), but

at the same time insisting on their essential unity. Thus Basil wrote: *"In a brief statement, I shall say that essence (ousia) is related to substance (hypostasis) as the general to the particular. Each one of us partakes of existence because he shares in ousia while because of his individual properties he is A or B. So, in the case in question, ousia refers to the general conception, like goodness, god-head, or such notions, while hypostasis is observed in the special properties of fatherhood, sonship, and sanctifying power. If then they speak of persons without hypostasis they are talking nonsense, ex hypothesi; but if they admit that the person exists in real hypostasis, as they do acknowledge, let them so number them as to preserve the principles of the homoousion in the unity of the godhead, and proclaim their reverent acknowledgment of Father, son, and Holy spirit, in the complete and perfect hypostasis of each person so named"* (Epistle 214.4).

Basil thus attempted to do justice to the doctrinal definitions of Nicea while at the same time distinguishing the Nicene position from modalism, which had been Arius's original charge against Pope Alexander in the Nicene controversy. The outcome was that Arianism and semi-Arianism virtually disappeared from the church.

While the Cappadocians shared many traits, each one exhibited particular strengths. Scholars note that Basil was "the man of action", Gregory of Nazianzus "the orator" and Gregory of Nyssa "the thinker".

Source:

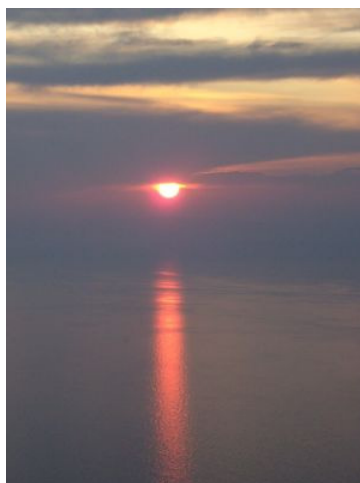
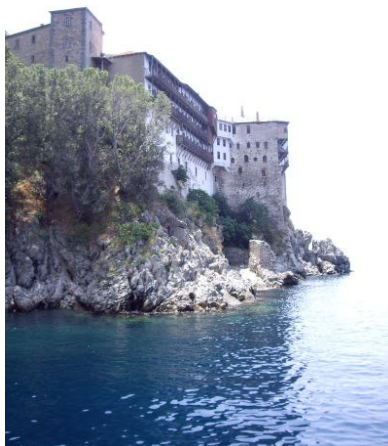
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cappadocian_Fathers



TRIP TO MT. ATHOS

Mount Athos is the oldest monastic republic still in existence. Located on the Athos peninsula of Halkidiki, in the North of Greece, it was officially established in 963 when a monk named Athanasios the Athonite built the Monastery of *Megisti Lavra*. However, anchorites had been living at the northern end of the Athos peninsula since the middle of the ninth century. In the centuries that followed, twenty monasteries were built, together with a number of smaller communities known as *sketes*. Nowadays, many monks live in *kellia*, *kalyvia*, *kathismata*, and *hesychasteria*, which are various forms of small monastic communities or hermitages.

One of our parishioners, Panagiotis Georgopoulos, has visited Mt. Athos during summer and sent us some beautiful photos.





MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1st Sept: **The Ecclesiastical New Year**

8th Sept: **The Nativity of our Most-Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary**

14th Sept: **The Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross**

16th Sept: **The Great Martyr Euphemia the All-praised**

17th Sept: **Martyr Sophia and her three daughters, Faith (Pistis, Vera), Hope (Elpis, Nadezhda) and Love (Agape, Lyubov)**

23rd Sept: **The Conception of the Holy, Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John**

25th Sept: **St. Sergius, Abbot and Wonderworker of Radonezh**

28th Sept: **St. Lioba of Wimborne, Abbess of Bischofsheim**

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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