

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)***

GODPARENTS

Ανάδοχος,
крёстные родители,
بالعماد أب,
Godparents

For the first time in my life I have been asked to be a Godparent. I feel honoured, pleased, nervous and rather unsure: what exactly is the role and purpose of a Godparent?

In today's secular world the term Godparent, doesn't have explicitly religious overtones. It is simply someone chosen by the parents to take an interest in the child's upbringing and personal development and designates someone who is informally responsible for the child should he/she be orphaned. However in true Christian tradition the Godparent sponsors and mentors their Godchild's membership of and life in the church.

So having been asked to be a Godparent I thought to myself: am I being asked to be a Godparent as I understand it? I suppose this thought crossed my mind because the friends who asked me to be Godparent to their newborn are Christian, but not Orthodox. Consequently I enquired. I was happy to hear that my friends were looking for someone to be a spiritual guide to their child, but I expressed my concern that my guidance might be somewhat different to theirs. They assured me that this would not be a problem and that they wanted their daughter to grow up with a wealth of Christian perspectives so that she could make an informed choice if and when she was ready. They went on to explain that they had no plans to baptise their daughter but to dedicate her. In total confusion I asked, what is dedication? They explained that their pastor would

gather all the babies of the church together and bless them and they the parents would publicly state their intentions to dedicate their children to Christ. By this point I was no longer confused, for if we could not even see eye to eye on the importance of baptism we certainly did not have a common view on the role of a Godparent.

Though it was heart-rending to oppose my dear friends, one of the positive effects of this experience was that it got me thinking about why we baptise?

The Holy Bible states that Jesus was baptised by St. John, the apostle Matthew writes (3:16); And Jesus, when he was baptised, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased".

The context and content of these biblical events indicate three very important points:

1. St. John the Baptist explicitly states the purpose of his own baptism and the importance of Baptism to come, when he states (Mathew 3:11): "I baptise you with water to show that your heart and lives have changed. But there is one coming after me who is greater than I am, whose sandals I am not good enough to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

This is a clear reference to ancestral sin, i.e. man's "inclination towards sin, a heritage from the sin of our progenitors" and furthermore that this is removed through Baptism.

2. That Jesus (having no sin) came to be baptised. Matthew 3:14 states that: John tried to stop him, saying, "Why do

you come to me to be baptised? I need to be baptised by you!" Jesus answered, "Let it be this way for now. We should do all things that are God's will."

The manner in which Christ was baptised indicates the faith and humility with which we should approach Baptism. Christ's Baptism itself demonstrates his kinship and the sanctification of mankind. It fulfils that of which Saint John spoke. It expressed in unambiguous terms God's revelation of himself to mankind.

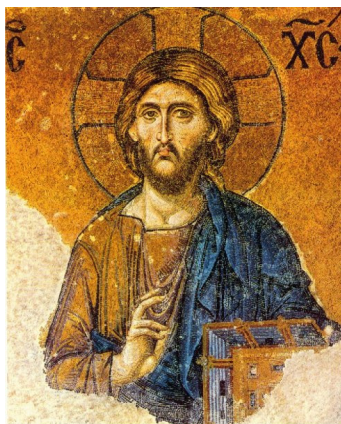
3. Just after his Baptism, Jesus was tempted. Matthew 4:1; "Then the Spirit led Jesus into the desert to be tempted by the devil."

This demonstrates that Baptism is not the end of a process, in being right with God, rather it is the beginning. For temptations will come, but it is our faith and works in Him that will see us through.

Therefore if we seek to follow in the footsteps of Christ then we too must be Baptised in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. As the apostle John writes (3:5) Jesus tells Nicodemus "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again". For each and every sacrament is indeed a mystery and manifests itself both outwardly and inwardly.

Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia writes "an Orthodox who becomes a member of Christ is admitted at once to the full privileges of such membership. Orthodox children are not only baptised in infancy, but confirmed in infancy and

given communion in infancy". This is not so in the West. I suspect that the issue the heterodox have is that they view our way of doing things as limiting the freedom of



the individual. However this is not the case, while it is true that we who were baptised as infants had one less choice to make, we are no less free, because although we are embolden by the Holy Spirit at every moment of every day we are tempted, and, we, choose and our spiritual parents, Godparents, brothers and sisters in Christ exist to help us in the exercise of that freedom.

Nicholas Planas Pearson

THE AMERICAN SPIRIT WITH THE EYES OF AN EASTERN EUROPEAN ORTHODOX

Dear readers,

Let me share with you some of my impressions of American spirit and values that I had experienced during my 5 and a half month stay. I do not claim to be

absolutely objective in my descriptions. I only want to share my thoughts from the point of view of an Eastern European Orthodox. In spite of substantial cultural difference one should try to learn the best from each other. The main thing that I realized here in the USA is that in the West one must work so much harder to remain Orthodox or even a Christian of any other traditional church organization. Here my family have realized how many temptations, obstacles and problems stand on the way of a Christian to get to an Orthodox Church service.

Believe us or not, but it took us several attempts to find the church. We either lost our way looking for it or took a wrong train or something happened on the way that delayed our arrival to the Divine Liturgy. Every trip to the liturgy is a struggle full of irritation and temptations. We are so blessed to have found an Orthodox cathedral of the Holy Trinity of OCA. It is a very warm community with

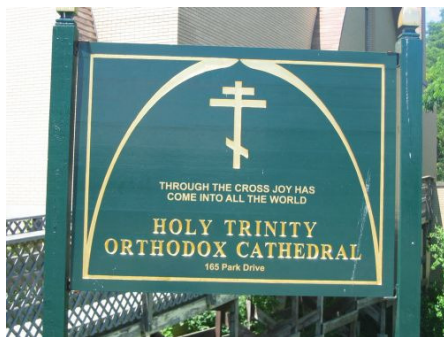


The Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Boston, USA.

a priest Fr. Robert that consists of approximately 50% of native Orthodox and 50% of Americans or other nationalities where Orthodoxy is not the main state religion. In this church we immediately appreciated how well everything is organized and run. The discipline in the

church was a big struggle for us with our little boy who wants to run around and play. The evil one always wants to irritate us against each other so that we did not get any spiritual benefit from the service. Sometime later we appreciated this accuracy and good order in the church. Here we have to learn about American discipline, hard work and ability to manage one's time. The choir in the cathedral sounds fantastic and I only can imagine how many rehearsals had to be arranged to achieve such a harmony. The liturgy is very spiritual and joyful even though it was with an American accent. After the Liturgy people are invited downstairs to a church canteen where the parishioners can share their bread and talk to each other. We met so many nice people that are, in fact, very different to most Americans in their spirit. There is something in their face that looks native and makes you feel warm. Indeed, the church is the best place to meet people. Outside church I could feel too much speed, extreme materialism overconsumption and high competitiveness. Being on the playground with my little son, I have realized that majority of small children are in care of babysitters or nannies. There feels some sort of obsession about the work. Of course everyone is different and has different life circumstances but it slightly feels as though people look down at those mothers who give priority to raising their children. It was, however, pleasant to meet some mothers who share my views about the family. They agree that it is not the state but the parents who should raise their children, in order to pass on their family values. Many people in the USA suffer from the effects of political correctness and extreme feminism. There were occasions when a man lost his job because he said

an innocent compliment to a woman-colleague: "Hello, good-looking". A 6 year old boy was expelled from school for having kissed a girl on the school play ground even though she had asked him to do so herself. A beauty contest winner of California lost her title only because being a Catholic she answered the question about marriage that she believed that a marriage must be between a man and a woman. It is certainly nice to live in a country where people are polite, caring and attentive to each other. On the other hand, I imagine many of my native Ukrainians go to prison for being straight forward and open. Here I see how much harder people have to work spiritually. Many people from my country have a church in 10-20 minutes' walk from their home and cannot realize how lucky they are. How many people in the American Orthodox church have to drive many hours to get to a service, to prepare



a meal for 40-80 people, to get the choir ready, etc. In this church they have faith education for adults and children and a Sunday school. In this secular world they cannot afford to be relaxed. It is very joyful to see in America good examples of religious and parental education even outside the Orthodox Church. There are thinking spiritual people who, I believe, will find their way to Orthodoxy.

I was so privileged to read a book by an American Christian writer Dr. James Dobson 'Bringing up Boys'. This book is a joy to read and a great helper in a task of bringing a happy and balanced man. James Dobson is a pedagogic, paediatrician and a family psychologist whose descriptions sound in many ways very Orthodox. He suggests focusing on family and has even created an organization that is called Focus on Family. He gives many useful advise how to bring up boys, how they differ from girls and how much more vulnerable they are and therefore require different attitude. James Dodson is strongly against generalization and unisex upbringing. He is talking about many modern problems that are in place due to poor quality parenting. Nowadays children have become much unhappier because their parents are too selfish and obsessed about their career. For many women a job becomes some sort of expensive hobby because most of the income is lost in tax, childcare fees and transport costs. I could still say a lot more about this book that I strongly recommend to any woman who has a son but will finish with the some words from this books that were pronounced by a lawyer who gave a lecture to Law students. He said: "You are going to have very competitive jobs but remember: No one on their death bed has ever regretted their not spending more time in the office".

Well, overall I found the trip very useful for my background. My family could enjoy wonderful American nature, enlarge our knowledge about many things and appreciate the peace that we have back home even more.

Iryna Minakova

ST. PATRICK AND ST. THEODORE VISITING CUMBRIA

On the 29th of August fr. Jonathan had the lovely idea to go for a day trip to the village of Cartmel at the Lake District. We were expecting to have a peaceful walk in the countryside when we realised that we had picked the wrong day.. Suddenly we found ourselves surrounded by cars and loud voices which distracted our view of Cartmel as a source of peace; the horse race had already been set and appeared to be a very popular one, a proper thunderstorm under the blue sky.



We decided to move on to Great Urswick and follow St. Patrick's steps to calmness and humility. St. Patrick was born in the North-West of England and had visited the Old Celtic Monastery of Urswick (probably then the Monastery of Elen) which flourished back in the 6th century A.D. What remains today of that Monastery Complex is a few surrounding field walls; the most important finding though is the Tunwini Cross, discovered in 1911, now displayed in the church of St. Michael at Great Urswick. The cross is Anglian with a "touch" of Celtic style connected to the decaying

Northern Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Deira. The runic inscription reads "*This cross Tunwini erected in memory of Torhtred a monument to his Lord. Pray for (his) soul*". The present text though has been overlaid on an earlier text which indicates that the cross was originally produced to



St. Michael's church, Great Urswick.

commemorate a meeting between St. Theodore of Tarsus, the dynamic Archbishop of Canterbury (†690) and Luigne, prior of the Monastery of Elen. There is evidence to suggest that the two figures below the main text are these two men, and that the cross dates from the late 7th - early 8th century, making it one of Britain's earliest datable runic inscriptions on stone.



The Tunwini Cross, 9th century A.D.

It was really a blessing to visit the same place that both St. Patrick and St. Theodore had visited more than 10 centuries ago. They brought spiritual peace to Britain and still that was exactly what we brought with us to Lancaster on our way back.

Thodoris Papadopoulos

Additional reading: "The Beacon on the Bay" by Steve Dickinson

Source: St. Mary & St. Michael's Church, Great Urswick, tour guide.



ST. THEODORE OF TARSUS

St. Theodore of Tarsus (†690) was the 7th Archbishop of Canterbury and is the patron saint of the Antiochian Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom and Ireland. As a "son of Antioch" coming from Tarsus, the saint is notable for putting the organisation and life of the Church in Britain on a proper footing. His contribution and legacy has been immense. He remains an inspirational figure for the Church's mission today. He is commemorated in the Orthodox Church on September 19.

Theodore was born in Tarsus in Cilicia, a diocese of the Byzantine Empire, which was also the birthplace of Apostle Paul.

St. Theodore's childhood experienced devastating wars between Byzantium and the Persian Empire, which resulted in the capture of Antioch, Damascus, and Jerusalem in 613-14; Tarsus was captured by Persian forces when Theodore was 11 or 12.

It is most likely that he first studied at Antioch and then moved to Constantinople focusing on astronomy, ecclesiastical computus, medicine, Roman civil law, Greek rhetoric and philosophy.

At some time before the 660s St. Theodore had come to Rome and was living with a community of Eastern monks, likely at the monastery of St. Anastasius. At this time, in addition to his already profound Greek intellectual inheritance, he became learned in Latin literature, both sacred and secular. In 667, when Theodore was 66, the see of Canterbury was vacant. He was chosen and consecrated as archbishop of Canterbury in Rome on 26 March 668, and sent to England with Abbot Hadrian, arriving on 27 May 669.

Theodore conducted a survey of the English church, appointed various bishops to sees that had been vacant for some time, and then called the Synod of Hertford to institute reforms concerning the proper celebration of Easter, episcopal authority, itinerant monks, the regular convening of subsequent synods, marriage and prohibitions of consanguinity, and others.

Doctrinal confusion was perhaps all too common in a place like Britain in the seventh century—remote from the great ecclesiastical centres, with little in the way either of learning or of general consciousness of the mind and life of the rest of the Church. St. Theodore, with his renowned erudition, his background in the ecclesiastical circles of Asia Minor, Constantinople and Rome, and his backing

by the authority of the Church of Rome during a period when that Church was singularly steadfast in her Orthodoxy, was well-equipped to disseminate sound Orthodox teaching to the people of Britain.

Theodore and Hadrian established a school in Canterbury resulting in a "golden age" of Anglo-Saxon scholarship. They attracted a large number of students, into whose minds they poured the waters of wholesome knowledge day by day. In addition to instructing them in the Holy Scriptures, they also taught their pupils poetry, astronomy, and the calculation of the church calendar. St. Theodore also taught sacred music, introduced various texts, knowledge of Eastern saints, and may even have been responsible for the introduction of the Litany of the Saints, a major liturgical innovation, into the West. Of immense interest is the text, recently attributed to him, called *Laterculus Malalianus*. Overlooked for many years, it was rediscovered in the 1990s, and has since been shown to contain numerous interesting elements reflecting Theodore's transmediterranean formation. He called other synods: c. 679 at Hatfield and c. 684 at Twyford (near Alnwick). Lastly, a penitential composed under his direction is still extant.

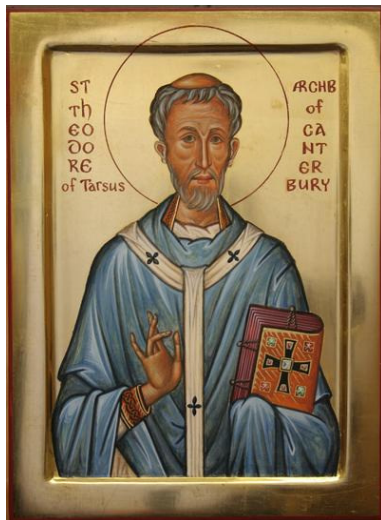
Like many Saints both before and after him, St. Theodore is known to have foretold his own death at the age of 88. He reposed peacefully in 690 and was buried in the church of St. Peter at Canterbury.

Additional reading: <http://www.antiochian-orthodox.co.uk/Theodore/theodore.htm>

Sources:

http://www.thyateira.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=125&Itemid=123

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



OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

Last month we received very happy news about two of our old Stavronians and would wholeheartedly like to congratulate Bassem and Marian for the birth of their newly born son Youssef. May God grant him Many Years!



MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

6th Oct: The Holy Apostle Thomas

9th Oct: The Holy Apostle James, son of Alphaeus

12th Oct: St. Wilfrid, Bishop of York

19th Oct: St. John of Kronstadt

26th Oct: The Glorious Great Martyr Demetrius the Myrrh-bearer of Thessalonica

For the lives of Saints please visit the Calendar of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America: www.calendar.goarch.org

TIMETABLE OF SERVICES

DATE	TIME	ROOM	PURPOSE
3/10 – Sat.	09:00 - 13:00	RC	Holy Liturgy
3/10 – Sat.	13:00 - 15:00	QR	Light refreshments and a film on Orthodoxy
10/10 – Sat.	09:00 - 13:00	RC	Holy Liturgy
15/10 – Thurs.	18:30 - 20:00	RC	Choir Practise
17/10 – Sat.	09:00 - 13:00	RC	Holy Liturgy
22/10 – Thur.	18:30 - 20:00	RC	Choir Practise
25/10 – Sun.	09:00 - 15:00	QR	Holy Liturgy and lunch
28/10 – Wed.	19:00 - 21:00	RC	Talk on Orthodoxy
29/10 – Thurs.	18:30 - 20:00	RC	Choir Practise



For further information please contact:

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