

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)*

NEW DEACON IN THE PARISH

Mark 9:35 *Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all".*

On 5th December Archbishop John is to ordain Chris Neill deacon in the Cathedral Church of St. Etienne in Paris to serve in our Parish of the Holy and Life Giving Cross, Lancaster. The role of the deacon *Diakonos* has both a Liturgical and Pastoral role as we see from the earliest days of the Church. The word deacon means **servant** for he serves God in ministering in offering the prayers at the Holy Liturgy and through his ministry to the needs of the Parish which is the outworking and fruit of that grace filled relationship with God. We pray that God will grant many blessed years to our new Deacon in His service as we all (clergy and laity) work to be servants to one another. I offer these words for Chris from Elder Macarius: *"Pray Simply. Do not expect to find in your heart any remarkable gift of prayer. Consider yourself unworthy of it - then you will find peace. Use the empty, cold dryness of your prayer as food for your humility. Repeat constantly: 'I am not worthy, Lord, I am not worthy!' But say it calmly, without agitation. This humble prayer will be acceptable to God".*

For those of us who are called to the mystery of the sacred ministry they are a challenge and an encouragement: **Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us! Amen!**

Axios!



There will be a celebration of Chris' ordination after the Holy Liturgy on Sunday 13th December in the Chaplaincy.

All welcome!

SYMBOLS

The recent (3rd Nov.) decision of the European Court of Human Rights, that crosses should be removed from Italian schools so as not to insult the religious freedom of choice, has caused an uproar in Italy. In Greece, the president of the Teachers' Federation said "School should ensure equal opportunities to all, without any students feeling disadvantaged because of origin, race or religion". A member of the Workers Federation of Secondary Education (OLME) also said "Respecting the religious freedom and the fact that students attending schools are of different religions or irreligious, there should be no icons or other religious symbols in schools". What a distorted understanding of Christ, faith, spirituality, everything symbolised by the Cross. Instead of feeling safe, welcome, embraced, accepted in its presence, regardless of religious and cultural background, they're trying to convince people (and maybe it's not very difficult, given the history of western church) that the Cross is a symbol of exclusion, rejection and potential hatred. It makes you wonder, who is offended by the presence of the Cross? Obviously not those who believe in it, so it has to be the politically correct atheists who side with the European court. It begs the question, why they are not offended by all the other symbols and semiotics of western society. We are surrounded, bombarded and brainwashed by symbols: political parties

symbols, fashion labels, company logos. We see them everywhere, we have even been convinced that we should carry them on us, as we walk around displaying, for free, the symbols of consumerism, feeling distinguished and prestigious, often looking down on those who cannot afford them. Is the aim for us to be left only with advertising symbols? Is it because these symbols ensure that consumers will keep consuming? Already, McDonald's Ronald is the second most recognised symbol following Coca Cola's Santa Claus, and the shopping mall has replaced church for many (open on Sundays, too). The only people who are offended by religious symbols are those who feel hostile towards the religious beliefs of others. On the one hand we say that our society is tolerant and on the other it is almost racist to those of faith. The daily parade of plastic surgery mutilated flesh, shopaholics, fashion victims, IT people, mindless violence, wannabies, a-b-c-d-celebrities, talentless talent competitions, stars, kings and queens of bubblegum moozak, has become the norm and Christ the risk.

The church of Christ is not in danger by the "apokathelosis" of symbols. We can wear them and venerate them in churches and our homes. Nor are we under the illusion that the icons in public places, strengthen the faith of those who don't have any. But we regret the gradual despiritualisation of our society. This opens the door to more confusion and allows different sects and cults to confuse the world.

Now is the time to get missionary morale. Instead of shouting fanatically and feeling disappointed, we can realize that we are called to become apostles of Christ, to become an example for those around us, to become a smile, an embrace and a tear for those around us,

imitators of Christ, missionaries of His love ...

Info from:

http://www.taxiarhes.blogspot.com/2009/11/blog-post_06.html

WHAT'S IN MY NAME?

*What's in a name? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;*
W. Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet

Sunday 20th December; On this Sunday before Christmas we remember the righteous forefathers of Christ. St. Matthew begins his gospel with a genealogy tracing Christ's ancestry back to Abraham to show that Jesus is indeed the long awaited Messiah of the Davidic Line.

Our modern interest in tracing our own family tree shows that we need to know who we are. The passage would be a monotonous list except for one thing that God knew all of them by name and called them into existence for His divine plan of salvation. Here we see the unique dignity of each individual, God calls each of us by name into that dialogue with Him within that ministry and calling that he has given to each. As Isaiah wrote: *The Lord called me before I was born from my mother's womb he pronounced my name Is. 49:1.* Our name gives us our identity. One can hear the groans of empathy in the common room at school when one recites the antics and utters the name of a certain boy. The character and personality is conveyed through the name. How important it is we call each other by name for it shows that we care. The fear of being unknown, unimportant, unloved destroys us and withers our soul. Yet it is this fear that Our Lord addresses

to those he meets on the periphery of society, the blind man, the woman of Samaria, the woman caught in adultery, Zacchaeus. "I have called you by name, you are mine" says God to the prophet Isaiah Is 43:1.

JAH

CHURCH IN PISCULESTI

Fr. Bogdan Georgescu has sent us a few pictures of the new church being built in Pisculesti, Romania. The works have been progressing and we hope that the new church of the Dormition of the Theotokos will help, by God's Grace, the spiritual efforts of our brothers and sisters in Romania to fulfill the goal of coming in communion with the creator of all in this new spiritual home.



The building site



Parishioners working on the site



Parishioners working on the site

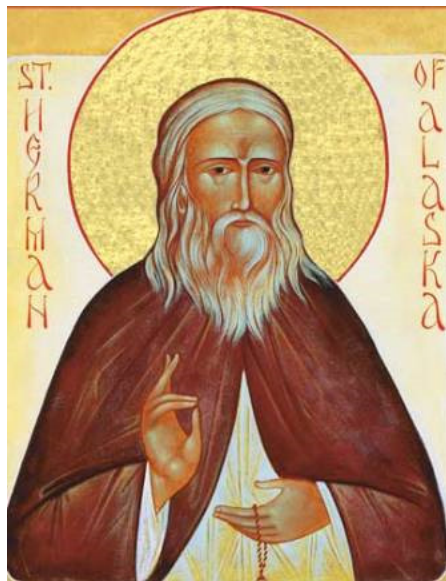
ST. HERMAN OF ALASKA

Saint Herman (his name is a variant of Germanus) was born near Moscow in 1756. In his youth he became a monk, first at the Saint Sergius Hermitage near Saint Petersburg on the Gulf of Finland; while he dwelt there, the most holy Mother of God appeared to him, healing him of a grave malady. Afterwards he entered Valaam Monastery on Valiant Island in Lake Ladoga; he often withdrew into the wilderness to pray for days at a time. In 1794, answering a call for missionaries to preach the Gospel to the Aleuts, he came to the New World with the first Orthodox mission to Alaska. He settled on Spruce Island, which he called New Valaam, and here he persevered, even in the face of many grievous afflictions mostly at the hands of his own countrymen in the loving service of God and of his neighbour. Besides his many toils for the sake of the Aleuts, he subdued his flesh with great asceticism, wearing chains, sleeping little, fasting and praying much. He brought many people to Christ by the example of his life, his teaching, and his kindness and sanctity, and was granted the grace of working miracles and of

prophetic insight. Since he was not a priest, Angels descended at Theophany to bless the waters in the bay; Saint Herman used this holy water to heal the sick. Because of his unwearrying missionary labours, which were crowned by God with the salvation of countless souls, he is called the Enlightener of the Aleuts, and has likewise been renowned as a wonderworker since his repose in 1837.

Additional reading:

<http://www.oca.org/FS.NA-Saint.asp?SID=4&Saint=Herman>



RECIPE: HONEY & SPICE CHRISTMAS COOKIES

Melomakarona, in Greek μελομακάρονα, are to the Greek Christmas table what mince pies are to the British. These honey-soaked cookies (also called *Phoenikia*) are a Christmas tradition all

over Greece. The recipe is very forgiving except in two areas: the dough should not be overworked or the cookies will become too dense; and the shape should be rounded, not flat or they will harden during baking. The baked cookies should have a texture slightly more dense than spice cake in order to absorb the syrup.

Ingredients:

- * 1 ½ cups of oil
- * 1 cup of sugar
- * ¾ cup of fresh orange juice
- * ¼ cup of brandy
- * 3 cups of all-purpose flour
- * 1 cup of fine-ground semolina
- * 1 teaspoon baking soda
- * grated peel of 1 orange
- * ½ teaspoon of cinnamon
- * ½ teaspoon of cloves

Preparation:

Preheat the oven to 160C with a convection oven, or 180C with a conventional oven.

Dissolve the baking soda in the orange juice. Put all the dry ingredients (flour, semolina, sugar, spices) in a bowl and mix until blended with a whisk. In the middle, create a well and add the liquid ingredients (oil, brandy, orange juice). Knead the dough until it sticks to your hands.

To shape the cookies, take a fistful of dough and make it into a log. Press the dough gently with your fingers on one side to flatten slightly. The shape of the cookies can be rounded, oval, or a small log shape like those shown in the photo (you can then lightly press the cookie on a grater to texture the surface, it's a *melomakarono* pattern!).

Place the cookies well spaced in a greased cookie sheet (or on parchment

cooking paper, or on a non-stick cookie sheet), place on the middle rack in the oven and bake until browned (about 15-20 minutes). Remove from the oven and allow to cool on baking racks.



For the Syrup and Topping:

- * 2 cups of water
- * 2 cups of sugar
- * 2 cups of honey
- * 1 stick of cinnamon
- * 3-4 whole cloves
- * 2 cups of finely chopped walnuts

The cooled cookies will be dipped in the hot syrup, so don't start the syrup until the cookies have cooled.

Put the water, honey, sugar, cinnamon stick, and cloves in a wide pot (like a deep frying pan) and bring to a boil over medium-high heat for 2-3 minutes. Turn the heat down to low (as soon as it starts to boil, foam rises to the top - scoop this off and throw away). Remove the cinnamon stick and cloves.

Put in cookies (as many as will fit on the bottom) into the hot syrup and use a spatula to hold them down for about 45 seconds to a minute, depending on how syrupy you want them to be. Once the cookies have been soaked, remove them

with a slotted spoon, letting some of the syrup drip, place on a large serving plate in layers, sprinkling each layer liberally with the finely chopped walnuts before adding another layer on top.

Melomakarona are not refrigerated. Cover them well with plastic wrap to keep for several days or store in tins so they don't dry out, and they'll last for weeks or months - if they aren't eaten by then.

Yield: about 24-30 cookies

pieceofcake

Source:

<http://greekfood.about.com/od/dessertspastriesweets/r/melomakarona.htm>

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

4th Dec: **Great Martyr Barbara**

5th Dec: **St. Sabbas the Sanctified**

6th Dec: **St. Nicholas the Wonderworker**

9th Dec: **The Conception of our Most-Holy Theotokos**

11th Dec: **Hieromartyr Seraphim Chichagov**

12th Dec: **St. Spyridon**

13th Dec: **Sunday of the Forefathers, St. Herman of Alaska Wonderworker of all America**

20th Dec: **St. John of Kronstadt**

25th Dec: **The Nativity according to the flesh of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**

27th Dec: **St. Steven the first Martyr**

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



TIMETABLE OF DECEMBER SERVICES

DATE	TIME	ROOM	PURPOSE
Sat. 5 th	09:00 - 13:00	RC	Holy Liturgy
Thurs. 10 th	18:30 - 20:00	RC	Choir Practise
Sun. 13 th	09:00 - 13:00	RC	Holy Liturgy
Thurs. 17 th	18:30 - 20:00	RC	Choir Practise
Sat. 19 th	09:00 - 13:00	RC	Holy Liturgy
Thurs. 24 th	23:00 - 02:00	RC	Holy Liturgy

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



For further information please contact:

Father Jonathan Hemmings
67 Sibsey Str., Fairfield, Lancaster, LA1 5DQ
Tel: +44 1524 840759, +44 1524 580600
Email: frjah@yahoo.co.uk
www.antiochian-orthodox.co.uk

