

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.

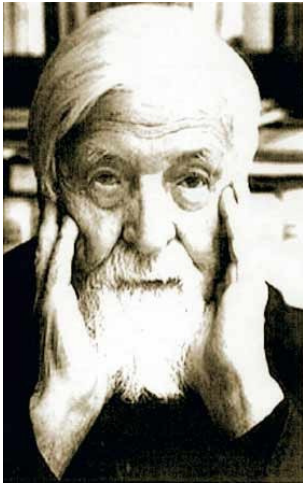
The Patriarch is His Beatitude Ignatius IV.

*The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch
(Acts 11:26)*

AN EXPLOSION OF JOY

I. Cor. 15:14: *And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.*

One of the great Romanian Orthodox Theologians Fr. Dumitru Staniloae described Easter as "... an explosion of joy, the same joy which the disciples felt when they saw the risen Saviour. It is the explosion of cosmic joy at the triumph of life, after the overwhelming sorrow over death."



This joy, as the holy Apostle St. Paul explains in his letter to the Corinthians is not just because Christ has overcome death and trampled it down in his embittering of Hades but because this harrowing of Hell has implications for us, for our life here on earth and for our future life. We are mortal helpless and powerless in the face of death but in the Icon of the Resurrection we see Christ extending his arms to Adam and Eve and to all human kind who look to Him in faith. Because of Christ's resurrection our whole view on life is changed! We are freed from the chains of hell and death is

annihilated as St. John Chrysostom proclaims in his Paschal sermon! We can truly live without fear and hopelessness, we can live this present life boldly and victoriously. So when Our Lord says "Do not be anxious" he means it!

So many people seek for pleasure in this world to try and escape the fear of death but we Christians know that Christ has destroyed death by death. Our resurrection faith is far more than passing pleasure and greater than happiness, it is an explosion of joy because we know that Christ is risen from the dead, He has blown Hades apart and has bestowed to us life everlasting.

Glory to the Risen Lord

JAH

ICONS AND ICONPAINTING

Icons are seen as the characteristic of Orthodoxy. It is something most visitors comment on. Protestants get very concerned about it all, quoting the commandment against graven images and accusing us of worshipping the image. Actually this debate was settled by the 7th Ecumenical Council a long time ago.

Christ became man and lived amongst us. It follows that he could be depicted in pictures. We can depict God in the person of Christ. Anything less denies the reality of the incarnation.

St. John of Damascus writing outside the Byzantine empire whilst the arguments over icons raged and Icons were destroyed, says "Of old, God the incorporeal and uncircumscribed was never depicted. Now, however, when God is seen clothed in flesh, and conversing with men, I make an image of the God whom I see. I do

not worship matter; I worship the God of matter, who became matter for my sake, and deigned to inhabit matter, who worked out my salvation through matter. I will not cease from honouring that matter which works my salvation. I venerate it, though not as God. How could God be born out of lifeless things? And if God's body is God by union, it is immutable. The nature of God remains the same as before, the flesh created in time is quickened by, a logical and reasoning soul."

There is a distinction to be made between honour and worship. We do NOT pray to icons. We treat them with honour, because what is done to the image is done to the person depicted. Hence we reverence them, and so reverence the person shown, etc. If the idea of treating the person by treating the image causes difficulty, think of taking a photo of a person you love and erasing the eyes. It is a disturbing thought, but instinctively we know that would be a form of violence against the person we love. When we pray in front of icons we are placing ourselves in the presence of the saint shown. We ask the saint to pray for us, but the only one we pray to properly is God, very often Christ. Even there we do not pray to the icon.

Icons are not symbols they are images. We do not have much symbolism in the Orthodox Church, the taking of Holy Communion is a taking of the body and blood of Christ, not a mere memorial. So here, we honour the saint, or Christ, via the icon. We participate in their being present with us.

There are ways of reading icons. Christ is usually seen in a blue garment over a red one, the heavenly enfolding the earthly, the Panagia is usually seen wearing a red, her earthly flesh, over blue, as she bore Christ with her. Perspective is not absent in icons, it is usually reversed. Thus the central point

is in front, not behind as in western attempts at illusionist perspective, the figures come towards us. This is most clearly apparent when we have furniture or buildings, as in the Rublev Trinity. This involves the viewer in the space. <http://www.orthodoxresource.co.uk/orthodoxy/trinity.htm>

Even figures show this to an extent.





tradition. (I write as one who has difficulties being organised.) However so far results are encouraging, and one thing that is apparent is that whilst we all produce things from the same pattern they all show individuality and that under guidance the most unskilled can make something beautiful. Pigment, egg and board can truly reveal something of spiritual reality if used correctly.

Father Deacon Christopher

If you would like to join the courses please contact Fr. Dc. Christopher via email at: c.c.neill@gmail.com.



Litsa (Evangelia) and I have been attending a course on Icon writing with the Manchester Parish, taught by Ephrem Carrasco, who is a very skilled writer of Icons (<http://home.clara.net/orthodox/Multimedia/i-cons-carrasco.htm>). As part of great Lent it has been interesting, as we make the journey from fumbled beginnings to the realisation that paint can begin to show iconographic representation (so far, of garments and outlines). As in any spiritual endeavour it means discipline and working within a tradition, and like the Orthodox life itself the best results come when one strives to do it well, within the





Fr. Dr. Christopher writing the icon of Christ at the Icon Painting course currently being held at St. Aidan's church at Manchester.

HOW THEN IS THE SOUL CURED?

First we must emphasise right faith. We Orthodox attach great importance to preserving the faith, just because we know that when faith is distorted, the cure is automatically distorted. Theology should be interpreted as medicine. Medical science has the healthy person in view

when it tries to guide the sick person to health by various therapeutic methods. We can say the same thing about theology. Theology is the teaching of the Church about spiritual health, but also about the path which we sick must follow in order to be healed. That is why we Orthodox give great weight to keeping the doctrine intact, not only because we fear the impairment of a teaching, but because we could lose the possibility of a cure and therefore of salvation. Furthermore, *"the conflict between Palamas and Barlaam was not so much about the type of doctrine as about its methodological foundation. Barlaam based himself on metaphysics, metaphysical epistemology and logic, while Palamas took as his basis empirical verification and confirmation and their demonstrable results"*.

Now in order to be cured it is essential to feel that one is ill. When a sick person is not aware of his illness, he cannot turn to a doctor. Self-knowledge is one of the first steps to a cure. St. Maximus teaches: *"The person who has come to know the weakness of human nature has gained experience of divine power"*, and he is eager to achieve some things and has achieved other things through this divine power. Peter of Damascus, describing the great value of prayer at night, says: *"Practice of the moral virtues is effectuated by meditating on what has happened during the day"*, when we meditate on the lapses that occurred *"in the confusion of the day"*, *"so that during the stillness of the night we can become aware of the sins we have committed and can grieve over them"*. Only when we know our state can we grieve about it.

It is an indisputable fact that most Christians today are unaware of their spiritual condition. We are *"dead in trespasses"* and not only do not perceive it but even have the feeling that we are

filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, adorned with virtues. Unfortunately, this self-satisfaction which plagues us is destroying the work of salvation. How can Christ speak to a person who justifies himself? We are like the Pharisee in the time of the Lord who did not feel the need of a physician. How can the great gift of repentance and mourning unfold in a heart which does not feel its desolation, when the inner life is unable to develop?

fr. John Romanides

Additional reading:

http://www.pelagia.org/htm/bo2.en.orthodox_psychotherapy.01.htm

OLD STAVRONIAN NEWS

It was a delight to have a visit from one of our Old Stavronians in March, Gianna Nassiopoulou, who studied for her M.A. at Lancaster (1998-1999). She and her friend Despina were able to meet members of the present community of Holy Cross. We thank her for the gifts of Komboskini and ask that God grants her many years!

We have also received gifts for the Church from Chrysovalando Alexandrou, Eftychia Schini, Sophocles and Angeliki Ioulianou from Cyprus, Tatiani Rapatzikou and Thomas Tziortziotis from Greece. We wholeheartedly thank them all for their kindness and wish them a spiritually rewarding Pascha on the steps of the Apostles.

We would also wish to thank again Sophocles and Angeliki Ioulianou and their Parish, especially Fr. Michael the Parish Priest, for their act of generous kindness in publishing and donating 600 books of the life of St. Lioba to our Com-

munity free of charge. The book on St. Lioba was translated in Greek by our Community. May God give the reward!

RECIPE: GREEK EASTER KOULOURAKIA

On Holy Thursday morning, Greek households are busy little beehives: mountains of eggs need to be dyed red, *tsourekia* (sweet Easter bead) to be platted, millions of *koulourakia* to be shaped. The house smells of vinegar, vanilla, masticha and machlepi. Everyone in the house is having a go, everyone is covered in flour and has red fingers.

To make a basketful of *koulourakia* (about 50 medium ones) you will need:

- * 250g. butter, room temperature
- * 200g. sugar
- * 2 eggs
- * zest and juice of an orange or lemon
- * 3 tbsp milk
- * 1-2 tsp baking powder
- * 400-600g. all-purpose flour and
- * 2 egg yolks, mixed with some water, for brushing

Beat the butter with the sugar until pale and fluffy. Add the eggs, then the zest, the juice, and the milk, beating constantly.

Mix the flour with the baking powder and gradually add to the mixture, as much as you'll need to achieve a very soft consistency, stop adding flour as soon as the dough isn't too sticky. Do not overwork as this will result in hard *koulourakia*, and what you want is light and crumbly ones. Rest your dough for about half an hour, this will firm it up (so don't be tempted to add more flour, this will too

result in "breadly" *koulourakia* instead of crispy ones).



Now you're ready to shape your *koulourakia*: cut off a small chunk, roll out in a thin sausage, and then form circles, plaits, tight s shapes, anything you want. It is important that they're all the same size so that the bake evenly.

Place on lined baking trays, brush with the egg wash and bake in preheated oven, 200 C, 10-15 min. Allow to cool

completely and store in tins until Anastasi. Kalo Pasha!

piecefcake

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1st Apr.: Holy Thursday, Mary of Egypt

2nd Apr.: Holy Friday

3rd Apr.: Holy Saturday

4th Apr.: Great and Holy Pascha

11th Apr.: Thomas Sunday

23rd Apr.: St. George the Great Martyr
and Triumpant

25th Apr.: St. Mark the Apostle &
Evangelist

28th Apr.: Mid-Pentecost

30th Apr.: St. James the Apostle and
brother of St. John the Theologian

For the lives of Saints please visit the
Calendar of the Greek Orthodox Archdi-
ocese 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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