



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)*

POLITICS AND THE BIBLE

I was on the train recently with the president of a local chamber of commerce. He was a buoyant individual and our conversation ranged widely from religion to economics and politics. Oscar Wilde said a cynic is one who knows the cost of everything and the value of nothing. It is easy to be cynical in today's society because the currency of the good life is valued by money, celebrity status, power and wealth. On the eve of an election with the backdrop of recession and politicians "expenses" it is easy for people to be disillusioned.

Sooner or later people grow disappointed with their politicians. This probably tells us more about people's expectations than the failure or human limitations of leaders.

The Psalmist sounds the note of caution and realism with his sound advice in: Psalm 146:3; *Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.*

This is not to say we shouldn't have high expectations of leaders, or do what the financier Bernard Baruch advised and "vote for the person who promises least because he'll be the least disappointing". But disappointment with leaders is so universal it's probably wise to reevaluate our expectations of them.

From football coaches to Presidents people are looking for the *special one* who will change everything and deliver the result. It is important to be reminded that leaders are just human with all the faults and weaknesses of humanity.

In the book of Samuel, when the people of Israel -wanting to be like other nations and disenchanted with a lack of leadership- asked for a king, God agrees but warns them of the consequences in 1 Samuel 8: 10 *So Samuel told all the words of*

the LORD to the people who asked him for a king. 11 And he said, "This will be the behaviour of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots. 12 He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, will set some to plough his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13 He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers. 14 And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. 15 He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. 16 And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work. 17 He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants.

Several empires later, when disappointment had crushed the people of Israel, a different kind of leader appeared on the scene. He had an attitude to politics not based on wealth, power or status but upon love, mercy and compassion. He practised what he preached. For those who could read His signs he was and remains today the Messiah-the Christ. But the scene of his defeat was to be the scene of his greatest triumph which was to leave future leaders a challenge that continues to question prevailing interests.

We are conditioned to be dependent on those systems which finances power but there is another way of thinking! Jesus himself said when someone tried to trap him into condemning political authority "Give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar and unto God the things that are God's".

Ghandi once said: There are seven "sins" in the world:

Wealth without work
Pleasure without conscience
Knowledge without character
commerce without morality
science without humanity
worship without sacrifice
politics without principle

It's easy to be cynical, understandable to be pessimistic, but it's better to be optimistic and best to be realistic and engaged. St Paul in his letter to the Romans addresses our Christian responsibilities and duties in politics; he urges us to be engaged and to pray for those in authority, as we do at each and every Liturgy, when he writes: Romans 13:1, 5-7; *1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God... 5Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. 6This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. 7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour.*

JAH

OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

We would like to extend our thanks to Ioanna Leontiou, Kyriakos Tempriotis, Kostas Papakonstantinou, Ioanna Nassiopoulou and Alexandros Palaios for their gifts of white candles, candle holders and komboskini that they sent for our community. Many thanks also to Eftychia Schini for her gifts of books, CD and video on Meteora and for the komboskini

and phylacteria. It is so good to have our family of Old Stavronians remembering us by their kindness and donations. Thank you once again!

It would be good to have an official branch of *Old Stavronians* in Greece, Cyprus and Russia, as well as other countries, who could network, meet up and recall their shared experiences in Lancaster. There are indeed many of you!!

PARISH NEWS

We extend our warm congratulations in the Risen Lord to Iryna and Bart on the birth of their baby girl. She was born Sat. 10th of April, 8 minutes after midnight weighing in at 3.5Kg. Two days later Vera-Nina and Konstantinos were also happy to receive their baby girl for which we also extend our congratulations and best wishes in Christ!

As you most probably know the book on the life of St. Lioba written by fr. Jonathan and translated in Greek by our community is already published in Cyprus. For those of you who would like to acquire a copy, please contact fr. Jonathan or Panagiotis Georgopoulos.

ST. CONSTANTINE AND ST. HELEN

The Church calls St Constantine (306-337) "the Equal of the Apostles", and historians call him "the Great". He was the son of the Caesar Constantius Chlorus (305-306), who governed the lands of Gaul and Britain. His mother was St Helen, a Christian of humble birth.

At this time the immense Roman Empire was divided into Western and Eastern halves, governed by two independent emperors and their corulers called "Caesars". Constantius Chlorus was Caesar in the Western Roman Empire. St Constantine was born in 274, possibly at Nish in Serbia. In 294, Constantius divorced Helen in order to further his political ambition by marrying a woman of noble rank. After he became emperor, Constantine showed his mother great honour and respect, granting her the imperial title "Augusta".

Constantine, the future ruler of all the whole Roman Empire, was raised to respect Christianity. His father did not persecute Christians in the lands he governed. This was at a time when Christians were persecuted throughout the Roman Empire by the emperors Diocletian (284-305) and his corulers Maximian Galerius (305-311) in the East, and the emperor Maximian Hercules (284-305) in the West.



Bronze statue of Constantine I in York, England, near the spot where he was proclaimed Augustus in 306.

After the death of Constantius Chlorus in 306, Constantine was acclaimed by the army at York as emperor of Gaul and Britain. The first act of the new emperor

was to grant the freedom to practice Christianity in the lands subject to him. The pagan Maximian Galerius in the East and the fierce tyrant Maxentius in the West hated Constantine and they plotted to overthrow and kill him, but Constantine bested them in a series of battles, defeating his opponents with the help of God. He prayed to God to give him a sign which would inspire his army to fight valiantly, and the Lord showed him a radiant Sign of the Cross in the heavens with the inscription "In this Sign, conquer".



A mosaic image of Constantine the Great from the church of Hagia Sophia, Constantinople.

After Constantine became the sole ruler of the Western Roman Empire, he issued the Edict of Milan in 313 which guaranteed religious tolerance for Christians. St Helen, who was a Christian, may have influenced him in this decision. In 323, when he became the sole ruler of the entire Roman Empire, he extended the provisions of the Edict of Milan to the Eastern half of the Empire. After three

hundred years of persecution, Christians could finally practice their faith without fear.

Renouncing paganism, the Emperor did not let his capital remain in ancient Rome, the former centre of the pagan realm. He transferred his capital to the East, to the city of Byzantium, which was renamed Constantinople, the city of Constantine (May 11). Constantine was deeply convinced that only Christianity could unify the immense Roman Empire with its diverse peoples. He supported the Church in every way. He recalled Christian confessors from banishment, he built churches, and he showed concern for the clergy.

The emperor deeply revered the victory-bearing Sign of the Cross of the Lord, and also wanted to find the actual Cross upon which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. For this purpose he sent his own mother, the holy Empress Helen, to Jerusalem, granting her both power and money. Patriarch Macarius of Jerusalem and St Helen began the search, and through the will of God, the Life-Creating Cross was miraculously discovered in 326. (The account of the finding of the Cross of the Lord is found under the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, September 14). The Orthodox Church commemorates the Uncovering of the Precious Cross and the Precious Nails by the Holy Empress Helen on March 6.

While in Palestine, the holy empress did much of benefit for the Church. She ordered that all places connected with the earthly life of the Lord and His All-Pure Mother, should be freed of all traces of paganism, and she commanded that churches should be built at these places.

The emperor Constantine ordered a magnificent church in honour of Christ's Resurrection to be built over His tomb. St Helen gave the Life-Creating Cross to the

Patriarch for safe-keeping, and took part of the Cross with her for the emperor. After distributing generous alms at Jerusalem and feeding the needy (at times she even served them herself), the holy Empress Helen returned to Constantinople, where she died in the year 327.

Because of her great services to the Church and her efforts in finding the Life-Giving Cross, the empress Helen is called "the Equal of the Apostles".



St. Helen's sarcophagus in the Museo Pio-Clementino, Rome.

The peaceful state of the Christian Church was disturbed by quarrels, dissensions and heresies which had appeared within the Church. Already at the beginning of St Constantine's reign the heresies of the Donatists and the Novatians had arisen in the West. They demanded a second baptism for those who lapsed during the persecutions against Christians. These heresies, repudiated by two local Church councils, were finally condemned at the Council of Milan in 316.

Particularly ruinous for the Church was the rise of the Arian heresy in the East, which denied the Divine Nature of the Son of God, and taught that Jesus

Christ was a mere creature. By order of the emperor, the First Ecumenical Council was convened in the city of Nicea in 325.

318 bishops attended this Council. Among its participants were confessor-bishops from the period of the persecutions and many other luminaries of the Church, among whom was St Nicholas of Myra in Lycia. (The account about the Council is found under May 29). The emperor was present at the sessions of the Council. The heresy of Arius was condemned and a Symbol of Faith (Creed) composed, in which was included the term "homoousios (one in essence) with the Father", confirming the truth of the divinity of Jesus Christ, Who assumed human nature for the redemption of the entire human race.



One might possibly be surprised by St Constantine's grasp of theological issues during the discussions at the Council. The term "homoousios" was included in the Symbol of Faith at his insistence.

After the Council of Nicea, St Constantine continued with his active role in

the welfare of the Church. He accepted holy Baptism on his deathbed, having prepared for it all his whole life. St Constantine died on the day of Pentecost in the year 337 and was buried in the church of the Holy Apostles, in a crypt he had prepared for himself.

Source:

<http://ocafs.oca.org/FeastSaintsLife.asp?FSID=101452>

Pictures and captions taken from Wikipedia.

RECIPE: RUSSIAN FISH TORTE

Very easy to make, doesn't need baking, just prepare the layers and put between waffle sheets.

Ingredients:

- * 1 package of waffle sheets (you can buy it in Polish or Russian supermarket)
- * 1 can of Pink or Wild Salmon
- * 8 hard boiled eggs
- * 1 ½ package of Dairy lea triangles cheese 12 triangles or other semi soft cheese
- * 1-2 cloves of garlic
- * 1 bunch of spring onions
- * hard cheese (parmesan or cheddar)
- * 1 big jar (500g) of mayonnaise

Method:

First Layer:

Put waffle sheet on a plate. 12 cheese triangles grated, 2 hard boiled eggs grated, 1-2 cloves of garlic minced or grated, add 150g mayonnaise. Mix all ingredients and put on waffle sheet, then cover layer by second waffle sheet.

Second Layer:

1 can (big) of Salmon, open and put in a bowl with fish canned juice and mash by fork. Put it on a first layer and cover by third waffle sheet.

Third layer:

6 hard boiled eggs grated, add spring onions chopped finely and 150g of mayonnaise. Mix together, put on second layer and cover by fourth waffle sheet.

Fourth layer:

Put 150g of mayonnaise on fourth waffle sheet and cover by 100g grated hard cheese.

Finished! Put Fish Torte in a refrigerator for 6 hours or overnight for soaking. Serve and enjoy!

Alla Ganshyna

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

8th May: St. John the Theologian

11th May: Sts. Cyril and Methodius the equal to the Apostles

13th May: The Holy Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ

21st May: Sts. Constantine and Helen the equal to the Apostles

23rd May: The Holy Pentecost

24th May: Monday of the Holy Spirit

30th May: Sunday of All Saints

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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