



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

Meeting at the Chaplaincy Centre of Lancaster University

Newsletter



*Ἐρθρονος Χριστός, Ζωοδότης.
(9. 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)*

BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH YEAR SEPTEMBER 1

Christ our God, Your kingdom is an everlasting one and Your lordship is over all. You have made all things with wisdom and have established proper times and seasons for our lives. We give thanks to You in all circumstances and for all things. Lord, bless the beginning of our Church year with Your goodness. Grant that this liturgical year be for all of us a year of grace. Make us worthy with purity of heart always to praise you. Lord, glory to You!

Bless, O Lord, the crown of the year with Your goodness!

HOSPITALS OF SOULS

Some years ago now I took some inner city school students to a Monastery. Although a few of them had a nominal Christian faith background none of them had ever encountered the religious life. I don't think I exaggerate to say that through the cycle of prayer, work and silence the days spent there had a transforming effect on those teenage boys. They went a rather sceptical and desultory group of grudging volunteers they returned focussed, energised and eager to relate more to their new found spiritual family.

The monastic life is not lived for oneself of course but for God and for others. Whenever one goes to Orthodox countries one can see how important monasteries are in the lives of ordinary people.

Monasteries serve an educational vision. For example: St. Tikhon's Monastery when founded in the USA established an orphanage and a place for spiritual nourishment.

It made provision for preparatory coursework to those individuals who would later apply for formal seminary training attached to the monastery.

Christians out of compassion have cared for the sick, taking on the task as a sacred, moral duty. Because the "leper" the sick, the poor, the wanderer, the pilgrim, and the insane were beloved of Christ, so they should be beloved of all Christians. Likewise men and women of faith have founded schools, hospitals and hospices as part of this sacred duty.

In 17th century Russia Patriarch Nikon strengthened the status of monasteries not only as spiritual centres and refuges from the ravages of the world for monks but as places that provided a place of respite for travellers, as safe havens from epidemics, as shelters for soldiers going to and returning from war and even taking the role as prisons for adjustment back into society. It is these latter aspects which may address our present day reality.

In a modern context we see that our secular society offers little in the way of familial or social readjustment for those returning soldiers traumatised by war and conflict situations. How important is this role of a place to re-order the mind, to warm the heart, to recondition the body and give peace to the soul.

A study published in New England Journal of Medicine 2004 found that one in eight returning soldiers or marines from Iraq suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Once called shell shock or combat fatigue, post-traumatic stress disorder can develop after witnessing or experiencing a traumatic event. Symptoms include flashbacks, nightmares, feelings of detachment, irritability, trouble concentrating and sleeplessness.

In Orthodox monasticism a perfect therapeutic treatment exists -consisting of purification,illumination and theosis. The

monastery as a hospital of souls is not simply for monastics but for all.

JAH

ST. HERBERT OF DERWENT WATER

Psalm 17:7-9

7 Show the wonder of your great love,
you who save by your right hand
those who take refuge in you from their foes.
8 Keep me as the apple of your eye;
hide me in the shadow of your wings
9 from the wicked who assail me,
from my mortal enemies who surround me.

Set in the blue Iris of Derwent water
Island of Herbert, ascetic pupil of Light
Where surrounding fells are no heavens dorter
But awake, loud-speak the hermit's vigils of the night.

Keep me as the apple of your Eye
Keep me in the Shadow of your wings
In joy, in sorrow and with wearying sigh
Throughout intrusions of busy mundane things.

Friend of Cuthbert of Holy Isle from Iona's youth
Spiritual in brotherhood to meet once each year
From different cells but of the one Lamb's Blood in truth
Seen and Heard by His Unsleeping Eye and Ear.

Keep me as the apple of your Eye
Keep me in the Shadow of your wings
In mystery's hour near to your breast to lie
Untroubled by what worldly voyage brings.

The foundations of your home can still be seen
A Beehive for your spiritual labour's busy round
Within those circled stones poor troubled souls to clean
The souls of pilgrims who row across love's gentle sound.

Keep me as the apple of your eye
Keep me in the Shadow of your wings
Protect me as I grow to fledge and fly
Raven like with bread to Elijah's springs.

St. Cuthbert said, "Brother Herbert, tell to me now all that you have need to ask or speak, for never shall we see one another again in this world. For I know that the time of my decease is at hand." Then Herbert fell weeping at his feet and begged that St. Cuthbert would obtain for him the grace that they might both be admitted to

praise God in heaven at the same time. And St. Cuthbert prayed and then made answer, "Rise, my brother, weep not, but rejoice that the mercy of God has granted our desire." And indeed Herbert, returning to his hermitage, fell ill of a long sickness, and, purified of his imperfections, passed to God on the very March 20, 687 on which St. Cuthbert died on Holy Island.

JAH, August 2010



The icon of Sts Herbert & Cuthbert painted by our iconographer Dimitrios Hakim.

THE HISTORY OF ST HILDA'S DOUBLE MONASTERY AND ITS OLD CELTIC ORTHODOX TRADITION

St. Hilda of Whitby (c. 614–680) was an important figure in the conversion of England to Christianity, she was abbess at several monasteries and recognised for the wisdom that drew kings to her for advice.

Hilda's original convent is not known, except that it was on the north bank of the River Wear. Here, with a few com-

panions, she learned the traditions of Orthodox Celtic monasticism through contact and influence in her very formative years by great Celtic people like St. Aidan of Lindisfarne (who called her to the religious houses at Wear and Hartlepool) and St. Finan (Whitby) and later St. Cuthbert. After a year Aidan appointed Hilda as the second Abbess of Hartlepool Abbey. No trace remains of this abbey, but its monastic cemetery has been found near the present St. Hilda's Church.

In 657 Hilda was encouraged by St. Aidan to become the founding abbess of a new double monastery at Whitby Northumbria, then known as Streonshalh; she remained there until her death. Archaeological evidence shows that her monastery was in the Celtic style, with its members living in small houses, each for two or three people. The tradition in double monasteries, such as Hartlepool and Whitby, was that men and women lived separately, but worshipped together in church. The exact location and size of the church associated with this monastery, is unknown.

This practice survives today at the Monastery of St. John the Baptist in Essex which was founded in 1959 by Elder Sophroniy (Sakharov), under the jurisdiction of His Eminence Metropolitan Anthony, Metropolitan of Sourozh and ruling Russian bishop in England, with six monastics from a number of nations; soon after, in 1965, the Monastery moved under the direct jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Five men from St. Hilda's monastery became bishops and two also joined Hilda in being revered as saints - Saint John of Beverley, Bishop of Hexham, and St. Wilfrid, Bishop of York. They rendered untold service to the Anglo-Saxon Church at this critical period of the struggle with paganism.

Hilda's monastery was of such renown that it was chosen as the place where

the Synod of Whitby was held in 664 A.D. Unlike the Orthodox portion of the early church, the decision of this Synod was to place northern England and its Celtic Christians under the authority of the Bishop of Rome, an act initiated by king Oswiu under fears that religious differences would threaten to destabilize his kingdom.



The ruins of the present abbey reputedly near the site where Hilda had her first monastery Streonashalh on the headland at Whitby. The present ruins are from an abbey built by the Norman knight Reinfrid in 1070s which was rebuilt in 1220s and sacked as part of the Dissolution of the Monasteries on 14 December 1539

The submission of the Anglo-Saxon church to the Bishop of Rome thus ended the Celtic Church's historic independence and existence in England. With the conclusion of the Synod of Whitby, St. Hilda's creative Celtic rule and her contributions to the development of Christian religious life were lost. Double monasteries were forbidden. A woman was no longer allowed to hold ecclesiastical office with authority over men, as had so often occurred among the Celtic believers. The traditional Celtic monastic orders were eventually replaced by Roman Catholic. Monks who would not accept this, withdrew to the Celtic monastic community on the island of Iona in Scotland, and to Ireland, which would retain its independence for

another 500 years. Except of course that the concept of the double monastery was not lost forever nor the underground springs and waters of Celtic spirituality - 1300 years later it is a reality and life giving.

Sources:

<http://www.wilfrid.com/saints/hilda.htm>

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

http://www.prayerfoundation.org/favorites/monks/favorite_monks_hild_of_whitby_painting.htm

http://orthodoxwiki.org/Patriarchal_Stavropegic_Monastery_of_St_John_the_Baptist_%28Essex,_England%29



ORTHODOX COURSES ON A CD/DVD & PRESENTATION

Dear All,

We are delighted to let you know that the Introductory Course to the Orthodox Faith, *THE WAY*, will be launched as a DVD & CD boxset on 7 October 2010. The

course is published by the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies and distributed by Gazelle, and it will contain a CD entitled 'How to Run THE WAY' and four DVDs of the original speakers (Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, Professor David Frost, Fr. Michael Harper, Miss Gladys Bland, Dr. Christine Mangala Frost, Fr. Raphael Armour, Fr. Demetrios Bathrellos, Mr. John Bazlinton).

Please accept our invitation to the formal launch, which will take place at **7 p.m. on Thursday, 7 October 2010** in the Hall of St Botolph's Church without Bishopsgate (close to Liverpool Street Station). The presentation will be over by about 8 p.m. and will be followed by refreshments.

The aim of this set of CD and DVDs is to serve as a model for local presenters of how to run the course in their parishes. The published course offers all necessary materials, instructions and advice on a range of topics, from publicity and brochures to catering or the handling of the 'Q & A' sessions. The text of all talks and student handouts are in pdf files, for convenient printing. Visual aids that accompany the talks are included, both in PowerPoint format for projection and as jpg files for print-outs or for making into slides.

More information on THE WAY course can be found on the IOCS website at www.iocs.cam.ac.uk/theway

We would very much value your help in spreading the news about this forthcoming event. Please confirm your participation to this event by replying to aeclaudia@yahoo.com as it is important for the caterers to know the number of participants. Also do not hesitate to direct any questions to the above email address.

Looking forward to meeting you all there,

With best wishes,

Claudia Asimionoei, Event Organiser

ST. SYMEON STYLITES

Our righteous Father Symeon was born about the year 390 in a village named Sis, in the mountain region of Cilicia and Syria. He is known formally as St. Symeon Stylites the Elder to distinguish him from Symeon Stylites the Younger and Symeon Stylites III.

Having first been a shepherd, he entered the monastic discipline at a young age. After trying various kinds of ascetical practices, both in the monastery and then in the wilderness, he began standing on pillars of progressively greater height, and heroically persevered in this for more than forty years; the greater part of this time he spent standing upright, even when one of his feet became gangrenous, and other parts of his body gave way under the strain.



6th century depiction of Symeon on his column. Christ is shown at the top blessing Symeon; the serpent represents demonic temptations (presently at the Louvre).

He did not adopt this strange way of life out of vainglory, a charge that some of his contemporaries made against him

at the first: because he was already famous for his asceticism and holiness before ascending his first pillar (in Greek, style, whence he is called "Stylite"), many pious people came to him wishing to touch his garments, either for healing or for a blessing; to escape the continual vexation they caused, he made a pillar about 3 meters high, and then higher and higher, until the fourth and last was about 15 meters high. The Church historian Theodoret of Cyrrhus, an eyewitness of his exploits who wrote of him while Symeon was yet alive, called him "the great wonder of the world."



God gave him the grace to persevere in such an astonishing form of asceticism that multitudes came to see him from Persia, Armenia, South Arabia, Georgia, Thrace, Spain, Italy, Gaul, and the British Isles. Theodoret says that he became so famous that the Nomadic Arabs by the thousands believed in Christ and were baptized because of him; the King of Persia sent envoys to inquire into his way of life, and the Queen asked to be sent oil that he had blessed.

He also was a great defender of sound doctrine, and confirmed the Orthodoxy of the Holy Council of Chalcedon for many who had been beguiled by the teachings of the Monophysites, including the Empress Eudocia, widow of Theodosius the Younger.

After a life of unheard-of achievements and struggles, he reposed in peace at the age of sixty-nine, in the year 459. He is commemorated by our Church on September 1st.

The ruins of the vast edifice erected in his honour and known in Arabic as the *Qalaat Semaan* ("the Fortress of Symeon") can still be seen. They are located about 30 km northwest of Aleppo and consist of four basilicas built out from an octagonal court towards the four points of the compass to form a large cross. In the centre of the court stands the base of the style or column on which Symeon stood.



Ruins of the Church of Saint Symeon with remains of his column (centre, now topped with boulder), Syria.

A statue commemorating St Symeon's asceticism can be found in Grimsby town centre, UK. The town's thriving Orthodox Syrian Christian community commissioned the statue, which has a jade motif of 39 concentric circles representing each of St. Symeon's years atop the pillar.



OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

It was good to welcome once more Li-Ying, Sub Deacon Razvan Petru and Vanessa to the Holy Liturgy on the 29th August for the Feast of the Beheading of the Forerunner John the Baptist. We thank Fotini Dimitra for her gifts of wine, incense and the book on Orthodox Spirituality by Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and for other peoples' generous donations of money and candles for the church.

Thank you to Tatiani Rapatzikou, one of our first parishioners (1995-1996) for the gift of candles, incense, floating wicks and charcoal. It is always good to know that we are remembered.

PARISH NEWS

My thanks to Maria and the students of the Cypriot summer camp for the gift of the Icon of the Last Supper painted on a roof tile! It surrounds one of my house plants in my kitchen and sits next to the hand painted hand-censer that they made last year. The Icon is a symbol as St Peter says that we are all part of the Body of Christ: 1 Peter 2:5, "**you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ**".

May God bless you all for this spiritual gift.

fr. Jonathan



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
11th Sept: St. Euphrosynus the Cook
14th Sept: The Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross
17th Sept: Martyr Sophia and her three daughters, Faith (Pistis, Vera), Hope (Elpis, Nadezhda) and Love (Agape, Lyubov)

19th Sept: St. Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury
24th Sept: The Conception of the Holy, Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John, St. Silouan the Athonite.
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

Services during September

Sun. Sept. 5 th	10.00 am	Liturgy in Q.R. followed by coffee instead of a meal
Sat. Sept. 11 th	10.00 am	Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. Sept. 18 th	10.00 am	Liturgy in R.C.
Sun. Sept. 26 th	10.00 am	Liturgy in Q.R. followed by Parish lunch at 2:30pm

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



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