

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

The Stavronian

a monthly magazine & newsletter published by the 'Holy Cross Synodia Press'



*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 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)*

A FRIEND IN NEED

Mark 2:1-12

"A friend in need is a friend indeed". A version of this proverb was known by the 3rd century BC; Quintus Ennius wrote: *'Amicus certus in re incerta cernitur'*. This translates from the Latin as 'a sure friend is known when in difficulty'. It is said that one can count the number of true friends on one hand. For the paralyzed man in the Gospel account for today this was certainly true. Their belief and resolve for their disabled friend was invested with zeal, determination and inventiveness; they would stop at nothing - even to dismantling a roof and ingeniously lowering him down directly in front of Jesus in order for him to be healed. A friend is someone who helps in all circumstances - he is a friend not in word alone but in deed also! What the householder must have thought at his roof being removed one can only imagine but Our Lord recognises their strength of faith. How important it is for us to have faithful friends and friends with faith.

Our Lord in the farewell discourse to his disciples in St John's Gospel says: John 15:15-17; *"But now I call you friends because I have told you everything I heard from my Father. You did not choose me; I chose you. And I gave you this work: to go and make fruit. I want this fruit to continue {in your life}. Then the Father will give you anything you ask for in my name. This is my command: Love each other."*

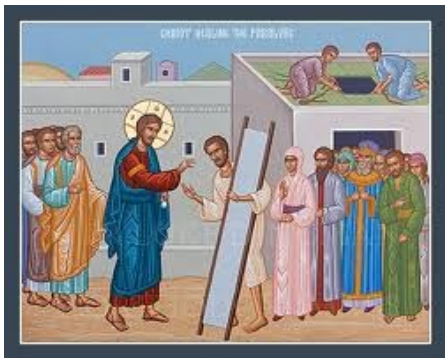
As Jesus' disciples we are called to be friends to one another - and this is how we are to be known and recognised: *"See how they love one another"*; these are the words Tertullian noted (Apology [39.6]) in the Third Century, as spoken by some of the Pagans of the time regarding Christian communities. The great disease of our modern age is loneliness, of which

isolation and abandonment of the elderly is just one example. The adversary likes nothing more than separation - for he knows that where two or three are gathered together in Jesus name - Jesus himself is present. If the real support systems of friends who cared were present there would be far fewer patients in our psychiatric hospitals.

Seeing the paralyzed man Jesus says, *"My son your sins are forgiven"*. This drew a reaction from the crowd and the authorities for this man, as they saw it, needed healing not forgiveness. Our Lord brings both forgiveness of sins and healing of body to this young man for He has the authority to do both. Here we see an important reminder of the connectedness which makes us whole -the heart, mind, body and soul are interrelated- they interact with one another and together give us personhood. Our Lord himself reminds us of this when in answer to the question *"What must I do to inherit eternal life?"* answers *"Love God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul and with all your strength and love your neighbour as yourself."* Anxiety, regret, anger, nervousness, over work, stress, all have an effect on the body. The body is the sounding board of the soul and that is why our churches are truly hospitals for souls offering, as they do, for the faithful Christ's forgiveness as well as healing.

Sometimes we need to go to extraordinary lengths to be healed of those wounds that have been inflicted upon us and that we have suffered or that we ourselves have caused; but our restoration and health will be effected all the quicker with the help of friends, for it is within the community of those with faith that we grow and are warmed in love and activated from our own particular paralysis. It is difficult if not impossible to make our earthly pilgrimage of faith on our own - we are interdependent upon one another. There are many forms of

paralysis from which we need the healing power and forgiveness of Christ like the spiritual malaise of accidie where listless melancholy, blank lack of care, restless boredom and a sense of hopelessness paralyse us from doing anything. At such times we need the support of others who care and pray for us and can carry us into Christ's presence.



St Gregory Palamas whom we commemorate on this second Sunday of Lent writes: *“If, then, the time of this life is for repentance, the very fact that a sinner still lives is a pledge that God will accept whoever desires to return to Him. Free will is always part and parcel of this present life. And it lies within the power of free will to choose or to reject the road of life or the road of death... for it can pursue whichever it wishes. Where, then, are the grounds for despair, since all of us can at all times lay hold of eternal life whenever we want to?”*

This choice for life was exercised most powerfully by the Paralyse man through the loyalty and help of his four friends.

The roof was coming down and Our Lord was ushering in a new era through this miracle. The Kingdom of God was breaking into the lives of the poor, the outcast, and the sinner. No wonder the crowd excited by the witness of this life

changing event with astonishment said *“We have never seen anything like this!”*

This choice is ours too, and we are not alone, by the grace of God we have friends on earth and friends in heaven to help us choose, healing, forgiveness and eternal life. A friend should not be seen as a blessed nuisance but as a God given opportunity for our salvation. I am called to carry you and you are called to carry me and when we do, it is then that we carry Christ to others.

John 13:34-35 *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

SAYINGS OF ST SILOUAN ON CRITICISM

Among the stewards (of St Panteleimon Monastery) was a certain monk, Father P., who was outstandingly capable, yet somehow always unlucky - his initiatives usually met with no sympathy among the fathers, and his undertakings often ended in failure. One day, after such an enterprise had resulted in disaster, he was subjected to sharp criticism at the stewards' table. Father Silouan was present with the others but took no part in the 'prosecution'. Then one of the stewards, Father M., turned to him and said: *‘You are silent, Father Silouan. That means you side with Father P. and don't care about the interests of the Monastery... You don't care about the damage he has caused the community.’*

Father Silouan said nothing, quickly finished eating and then went up to Fr. M., who by that time had also left the table, and said to him:

'Father M. how many years have you been in the Monastery?'

'Thirty-five.'

'Have you ever heard me criticise anyone?'

'No, never.'

'Then why do you want me to begin on Father P.?'

Disconcerted, Father M. replied shame-faced:

'Forgive me.'

'God will forgive you.'

p.61, "The Monk of Mount Athos: Staretz Silouan 1866-1938", by Archimandrite Sophrony, trans. Rosemary Edmonds (London: Mowbrays, 1973).



NOT GOODBYE BUT GOD BE WITH YOU!

Father Deacon Christopher will be moving to Manchester in March where he will assist our Dean Archpriest Fr. Gregory in St Aidan's Parish. We thank God for Fr. Dc Christopher's presence amongst our Community of the Holy and Life Giving Cross; for the opportunities of growth in fellowship and broader Liturgical experience that his diaconal ministry has given. He will be always welcome to help out in Lancaster which has been his home and an axial place in his spiritual development. We wish him every blessing in his relocation and we will keep him in our love and poor prayers knowing that Old Stavronians (clerics and laity) are part of that greater communion to which God has called us.

OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

We would like to thank Sophocles and Angeliki Ioulianou for the beautiful *Sfragida*, Prospora seals, from the Holy Mountain which we received by post; they are so lovely and we really appreciate these gifts. May God grant you a Holy Lent!

Katerina Dokou from Kassandra, Greece, as well as Alla and Andrei Ganshyn from Ithaca, U.S.A., send their warmest regards to everybody in the Community of the Holy Cross.



SWALLOWING THE NEEDY

Amos 8: 4 Hear this, you who swallow up the needy, and make the poor of the land fail, 5 Saying: "When will the New Moon be past, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may trade wheat? Making the ephah small and the shekel large, falsifying the scales by deceit, 6 that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals— even sell the bad wheat?" 7 The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob: "Surely I will never forget any of their works".

Woe to you who make mammon great and mercy small
Who today eat the apple of financial Fall
Who use the Sabbath to plan and cheat the more
Whose deeds white heat the flaming sword at Eden's door!

Ah the flaming sword! You see there is no way back;
Not until you renounce excess and recognise the lack
In your brother's life.

When will the market open so to satisfy our greed?
When again gratify desire and ignore a need?
Poor men have no names, the heedless suffer fools to dream
Whilst God places at the East a bar - the Cherubim!

Oh the Cherubim! Whose faces guard four ways,
Affording plutocrats no bliss for all the days
of their little, mortal life.

They will rue the moments when they made mammon great.
When they closed their hearts to love and welcomed hate
They chose the serpent's wiles over heaven's gifts, too late
Espy eternal treasures through the guarded gate.

Alas the gates to Paradise! Are to some locked tight
Who choose outer darkness, the world's whirlwind - an endless appetite
in their future life.

And God still looks at the rich through the needle's eye
And walks in the garden and calls with a sigh
He sews with this needle those garments of need
And God still loves Adam and all of his seed.

Oh the love of God a garment of light, a consuming fire
Depending upon Who, what and where lies our consuming desire
In this life.

"Wealth... is like a snake; it will twist around the hand and bite unless one knows how to use it properly."

— Clement of Alexandria, "The Instructor," 3.6.34

JAH, 23rd February 2011

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1st Apr: St. Mary of Egypt

16th Apr: Lazarus Saturday

17th Apr: Palm Sunday

22nd Apr: Holy Friday

23rd Apr: Holy Saturday

24th Apr: Great and Holy Pascha

25th Apr: St. George the Great Martyr &
Triumphant

29th Apr: Theotokos of the Life-Giving
Font

30th Apr: James the Apostle & 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



Services during April*

Fri. 1st	6:00 pm	Akathist to the Mother of God at R.C
Sat. 2nd	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy at R.C.
Fri. 8th	6:00 pm	Akathist to the Mother of God at R.C
Sat. 9th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy at R.C.
Sun. 17th	10:00 am	Palm Sunday, Holy Liturgy at Q.R.
Mon. 18th	6:30 pm	Holy Monday, Bridegroom Mattins at R.C.
Wed. 20th	6:30 pm	Holy Wednesday, Holy Anointing at R.C.
Thu. 21st	6:30 pm	Holy Thursday, Mattins of the 12 Gospels at R.C.
Fri. 22nd	10:00 am	Holy Friday, Royal Hours at R.C.
	12:00 pm	Preparation of Epitaphion & Confessions
	3:00 pm	Vespers & Deposition
	6:30 pm	Mattins & Burial Procession
Sat. 23rd	10:00 am	Holy Saturday, Holy Liturgy of St Basil at R.C.
	11:00 pm	Easter light and Holy Liturgy of the Resurrection at R.C. followed by Paschal Meal.
Sun. 24th	~3:00 pm	Paschal Vespers of Love at R.C.
Sat. 30th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy at R.C.

*Help setting up the church before the Holy Liturgy is greatly appreciated and starts 45min before the service.



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