



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

### ***The Stavronian***

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*Ἰσθρονος Χριστός, Ζωοδότης.  
(Φ. Κόνιγγλου, 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 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 THIRST FOR LIFE

Sunday of the Samaritan Woman: John  
4:5-42

Whoever saw the potential of marketing water by bottling was indeed an entrepreneur. The bubble of this ideology is somewhat burst by the hyperbole of advertising... fresh, sparkling highland water drawn from the timeless wells of Cumbria's ancient fells whose medicinal qualities have been known from time immemorial and then you read-the best before date- consume by the 28th May 2011! My students, bless them, have a bottle of water with them at all times-taking a drink to energise their minds and bodies. I seem to manage fine between break time and lunch but not today's youth it seems. In my student days water came from taps and the very thought of buying water in bottles would have been considered a joke.

In today's Gospel Jesus teaches that the waters of this world still or sparkling (power, money, pleasure, fame) do not satisfy the soul. *Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again.* You taste them and find that they are not what they seemed to be, yet you desire more even though paradoxically they are not what you really want.

The Samaritan woman in today's Gospel knew all about desire and dissatisfaction for she had had five husbands and was living with another man. Her duty of carrying the water had brought her to a strange meeting where she would find herself at the crossroads of her life and see clearly what was really missing.

The prophet Jeremiah wrote: *"My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves,*

*broken cisterns that can hold no water."*  
Jer. 2:13

Since we were made by God only God can satisfy our deepest needs. The Psalmist knew this when he wrote: *"As a hart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for Thee O God."* Psalm 42.

In Greek mythology King Tantalus was chained to a lake but whenever the waters came to his chin they withdrew. Heavy laden fruit lay above his head but as soon as he reached his neck towards the branches-they drew back. His name is immortalised in the word tantalize. So too are the blandishments of the world tantalizing-without Christ our efforts are futile.

This woman was searching for meaning to her life and she is surprised when this Israelite Rabbi engages her in conversation. We are told that even Our Lord's disciples were astonished on their return from the villages to see Him speaking with a woman.



I am always impressed how the Evangelist John introduces his readers to the disciples of Jesus and I do not mean simply the 12 or the enigmatic Beloved Disciple, I mean Martha and Mary and their brother Lazarus, Nicodemus, the man born blind and this Samaritan woman who through the process of realisation becomes the first evangelist to

the Samaritans. The fourth gospel writer deftly paints for us portraits in profile of the way followers come to know Christ-some begin as admirers, some are supporters of Christ's mission and some are secret disciples like Joseph of Arimathea who revealed his loyalty at literally the crucial moment.

Not all conversions are immediate some have a longer gestation period before the new birth from above.

This Samaritan Woman enters into a Theological discussion with Our Lord discussing the merits of the Samaritan claim of ancestral authenticity and patriarchal authority. This was Jacob's well after all and Samaria was formerly the capital of Israel when David's line had chosen Jerusalem as the capital of the southern kingdom of Judah. Our Lord's insight into her past impresses her and at first she perceives that he is a prophet but as the conversation unfolds her faith increases and she comes to understand her relationship to Jesus not as the disciple of a Rabbi or a Prophet but as the Messiah.

The claims that Christ makes are in complete harmony with the signs that He does. She forgets all about the water and rushes off to her village to tell them the good news. It is this deeply personal encounter that she has with the living God that changes her life and that was eventually to lead her to become an evangelist in Carthage and to die as a martyr for Christ under the Emperor Nero-baptised with the name Photini-the enlightened one.

Metropolitan Antony Bloom in "Meditations" writes: *"Blinded by the world of things we forget that it does not match the depths of which man is capable. Man is both small and great. When we think of ourselves in an ever expanding universe-immeasurably big or infinitely small- we see ourselves as a speck of dust, transient, frail of no account; but when we*

*turn inwards we discover that nothing in this immensity is great enough to fill us to the brim-the whole created world falls like a grain of sand into the depths of our being; we are too vast for it to fill or fulfil us. God alone Who has made us for himself...can do that."*

Our Lord says to the woman: *"Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."*

If only we could bottle this water and sell it... but then we do not need to and it is not for sale because it is that most precious gift of the well spring of the Holy Spirit that is in you and that bubbles up to eternal life. This gift is so abundant that it not only continuously springs up in you but it overflows to others.

The Samaritan Woman had looked for meaning in her life-she hadn't found it, she had looked for joy in her life and she hadn't found it, she had looked for peace in her life and she hadn't found it-but she found God in her life and she found all three.

JAH



## O JOY SET FREE

Matthew 11:28 *"Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*

O joy set free from earthly toil  
To the Father House we're bound  
Christ's promise firm  
That nought can spoil  
Land us safe on heavenly ground.

We honour and praise His sacred name  
Who out of His mercy and love  
Bows low to heal  
The contrite heart  
Restored to His mansions above.

Esteemed by faithfulness and truth  
Meek hearts that are broken shall mend  
The flower will fade  
Earth pass away  
But His words shall never end.

For those who pass within the veil  
Deaths terrors and fears will flee.  
The Lord's own death  
His solemn pledge  
Adam's children from prison set free.

Thy gates O Zion now open wide  
To heavens great vaulted dome.  
In God's light remade  
The darkness dispelled  
To welcome the believers home.

*"O name of Jesus, key to all gifts, open up for me the great door of your treasure-house so that I may enter and praise you with the praise that comes from the heart in return for your mercies which I have experienced in latter days; for you came and renewed me with an awareness of the New World".*

Prayer of St. Isaac the Syrian

## ST. NEDELYA CHURCH IN BATAK, BULGARIA

On 3rd April, 2011, Sunday of St. John of the Ladder, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church added to its unity of Bulgarian Saints Christians from the town of Batak who were martyred for their Christian faith during the Ottoman times. "Our lives we give, our faith we don't" is what for centuries the ancestors from Batak have passed down.



"Bless and sanctify these icons of the Batak and New Selo martyrs, that all those who honour them will receive the blessings of the Most High" said the Bulgarian Patriarch in his first prayer, during the Liturgy on which he sanctified the icons of the martyrs.

On 16th of May, the icon was taken to the town of Batak, where a vigil and a Liturgy the next day was done in the presence of thousands of people and clergy.





The list of official guests included representatives from the Council of Ministers, Parliament, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Prime Minister Boiko Borisov, and other government officials. The list of clergy included the whole of the Bulgarian Holy Synod, Metropolitans: Pavel representing the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Theodor (Alexandrian Patr.), Ilarion, (Moscow Patr.), Bishop Antony (Serbian Patr.), Bishop Ambrosius (Romanian Patr.), Nectarius (Cyprus Archbishopric), Procopii (Greece Arch.), Gregory (Polish Metropolitan), Ignatius (Albanian Archb.), Georgius Sakur (Antiochian Patr.), Archpriest David MacCaffy (American Orthodox Church), Plamen Todorov (Czech Archbishopric).



For more about the city of Batak and their citizen's martyrdom please click [here](#) and [here](#). More photos of the service of the martyrs being canonised as Saints could be found [here](#).

Holy Martyrs of Batak, pray to God for us

*Katerina Tisdall*

## PhD IN ANTROPOLOGICAL PHILOSOPHY

The Community of the Holy Cross would like to congratulate fr. Bogdan Georgescu for being appointed a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Bucharest. We include Fr. Bogdan's letter below:

My Dear All,

Yesterday, Thursday, 26th of May, at the University of Bucharest I got in a public session the title of PhD in Philosophy (with a application in Cultural Anthropology, or Anthropological Philosophy how it is known in USA). In this context I want to transmit all my respect to all those who helped me or kept me in their prayers.

Special thoughts to Fr. Jonathan Hemmings and Catherine M. Spiro who really helped me giving me information about some directions in this field of research in the Institute for Orthodox Studies "Patriarch Athenagoras" from Berkeley, California.

I keep you all in my prayers.

May God bless you all!

Christ is Risen!

*Fr. Bogdan-Costin Georgescu*



## PHOTOS OF BEN SERAPHIM'S CHRISMATION



## OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

Elpida Galataki, one of our Old Stavronians, is getting married on the 19th of June at 6pm at *Metamorfosis tou Sotiros* church in Anthoupolis, Nicosia. She would like to say that of course everybody in the Community is welcome to attend or at least it would be nice if the couple knew that the Community is thinking of them at that time. For more details please contact Elpida at [elpidagalataki@gmail.com](mailto:elpidagalataki@gmail.com).

Ionut Uliniuc sends his warmest regards to everybody at the Community. Ionut, Maria Anastasiou and fr. Jonathan went to St. Herbert's island during Easter. The island is included in a new publication by Nick Mayhew Smith of Britain's Holiest Places. You can see the book [here](#).

Andrei, Alla and Masha Ganshyn send greetings and best wishes to fr. Jonathan and all at the Community of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross. They've been on holidays at Sarasota, Florida, U.S.A. from where they send a few beautiful photos plus a gardener's prayer included below:



*a Gardener's prayer*

## MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1<sup>st</sup> June: Apodosis of Pascha

2<sup>nd</sup> June: The Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ

5<sup>th</sup> June: Hieromartyr Boniface of Crediton, Archbishop of Mainz

9<sup>th</sup> June: St. Columba of Iona, Enlightener of Scotland

12<sup>th</sup> June: Holy Pentecost – Trinity Sunday

16<sup>th</sup> June: St Tychon the Wonderworker

17<sup>th</sup> June: St. Botolph, Abbot of the Monastery of Ikanhoe

19<sup>th</sup> June: All Saints

22<sup>nd</sup> June: St. Alban, Protomartyr of Britain

24<sup>th</sup> June: Nativity of the Forerunner and Baptist John

26<sup>th</sup> June: Appearance of the Icon of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos of Tikhvin

29<sup>th</sup> June: Peter and Paul, the Holy Apostles

30<sup>th</sup> June: Synaxis of the Twelve Holy Apostles

For the lives of Saints please visit the Calendar of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America: [www.calendar.goarch.org](http://www.calendar.goarch.org)



### Services during June\*

Sat. 4 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sun. 12 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in Q.R. followed by Parish lunch
Sat. 18 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 25 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.

\*Help setting up the church is greatly appreciated and starts from 9.15 a.m.

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“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](mailto:frjah@yahoo.co.uk)  
[www.antiochian-orthodox.co.uk](http://www.antiochian-orthodox.co.uk)

