

**The Orthodox Parish  
of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,  
Lancaster, U.K.**

***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)***

## STILLNESS

*Acquire a peaceful spirit and then thousands of others around you will be saved. --- St Seraphim of Sarov*

Have you ever caught a glimpse of yourself when passing a shop window? Well, I am sure you have. Indeed, our houses have mirrors precisely to check out our image. We may not like what we see there, but nevertheless, there is a reflection (albeit imperfect) of our image! But what did people do before mirrors? Vanity is not a modern phenomenon, it is as old as time. Highly polished copper mirrors were used as long ago as 4000 B.C. in Mesopotamia. Before that you would need to find a still pool of water! Narcissus knew all about that! A picture by Caravaggio captures the image perfectly!

We seem to be afraid of quiet, stillness and silence. In our life today we are bombarded by noise and distractions. Indeed, we are embarrassed by awkward silences and need to fill them with sound whatever that noise may be. This was brought home to me recently when I was visiting elderly relatives who have no computers, internet or mobiles.

The embrace of stillness is beneficial to our mind and soul; to use the analogy of the pool we can only see ourselves when the pool is still and when light shines on it. Equally, true self evaluation begins with stillness and with the Light of Christ. Stones of insults and winds of change may upset our equilibrium. Constant movement can be a convenient way to avoid meeting ourselves and examining the blemishes in our character that need attention. We require a calm stability at the centre of our being if we are going to progress as Christians.

Saint John of the Ladder says: *Silence is always beneficial. One may speak, of*

*course, but not idly. It is necessary to speak only that which we sincerely feel.*

*Fr. Jonathan*



*Drawing of an Orthodox priest praying by Matthew*

## CHRIST IS THE SOLUTION

I have been living in Atlanta for almost two years now and I found that its most famous contribution to the world, apart from Coca-Cola, Delta airlines and CNN, is the civil rights movement initiated about 50 years ago. I went to the Martin Luther King Memorial Hall located at the black neighbourhoods to have a first-hand experience of what it was like and maybe learn a few more things about the American culture. The exhibits in the memorial hall really moved me.

Pain and injustice caused hatred but there was one man who had a different view and approach. As I started reading a few of his quotes, I realised that he was not a politician or a journalist, nor a celebrity or a scholar but a simple pastor. My favourite quote of Martin Luther King is: *“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that”*. It is such a powerful message which never loses relevance with the world. Close to that time I was also listening to the music of

“Les Miserables” and I was reminded of the tragic figure of Javert committing suicide because he couldn't simply accept the fact that a common criminal (Jean Valjean) could have such a generous and loving heart to save the life of his worst enemy.

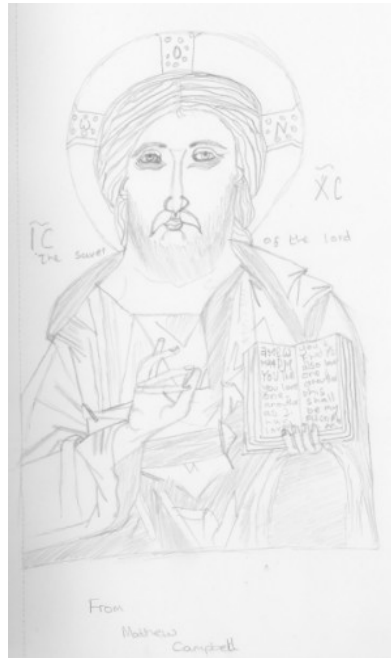
Both Martin Luther King and Victor Hugo could aim spiritually well in huge contrast to the targets aimed by the dog-eat-dog political/financial/social approaches imposed by our leaders today, which is certainly not the only solution as we often hear. The law of the jungle is not the solution. The darkness of hatred is not the solution. Love and light and Christ is the solution and it is a personal solution for everybody, anytime and forever.

*Thodoris Papadopoulos*

*Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath shone forth the light of knowledge upon the world; for therein those who worship the stars have been taught by a star to worship Thee, the Son of righteousness, and to know Thee, the Dayspring from on high. O Lord, glory be to Thee.*

The Troparion for the Feast proclaims Christ as the true Light that Lightens the world turning those who worshipped material created things to the Creator. In the icon of the Nativity we see Christ born in the darkness of the cave which also represents the mind and heart of man. The eternal God empties himself into the frame of history as a baby for our salvation. The darkness of the ego and ignorance is enlightened by this mystery and material things are transfigured in the light of this miracle; so that those of faith see stars, the sun, earth and money not as idols but as signs made for the glory of God and for stewardship within His plan of salvation.

*Fr. Jonathan*



*Drawing of Christ by Matthew*

## **GLOSSARY OF ORTHODOX TERMS: -C-**

**Cathedra:** the Bishop's throne located in the altar directly to the east of the Holy Table.

**Circular Prayer:** (kyklike proseuche - κυκλική προσευχή): St. Dionysios the Areopagite refers to three forms of prayer: direct, spiral and circular- which alone is without deception. It is called circular prayer because as the perimeter of a circle returns to its starting point, so also in this circular movement the nous (mind) returns to itself and becomes one." The movement of the soul is circular because it leaves the externals, enters into itself, and unites its noetic powers in a circular movement which

keeps the soul from deception." (Divine Names Ch.4)

**Consent:** Consent is one of the stages of temptation. St John of the Ladder describes the stages as follows: Assault is a simple conception or an image encountered for the first time which has entered the heart. Coupling is conversation with what has been encountered, accompanied by passion or dispassion. Consent (sygata-thesis - συγκατάθεσις) is the yielding of the soul to what has been presented to it.

**Contemplation** (theoria - θεωρία): The Holy Fathers use the word theoria in three different ways. Its first meaning is simply seeing or beholding physically. Its second meaning metaphorically refers to intellectual perception, that is consideration, speculation or philosophical contemplation.

Its third meaning refers to noetic contemplation which is the highest state of prayer.

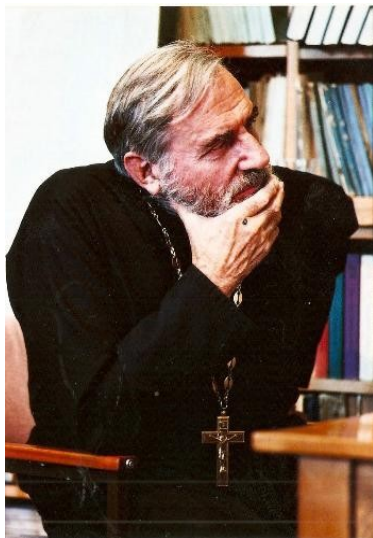
## HARPER FOUNDATION

It is a joy to let you know that a Foundation in memory of Fr. Michael Harper has been launched on November 8<sup>th</sup>.

You can find more information about the Foundation [here](#). The website contains articles, interviews, a number of Fr. Michael's books which can be downloaded free, a biography, many personal memories from friends, many photos and other items from his huge legacy. We hope you will be able to enjoy some at least of this offering from him.

Peace and Joy to you!

*Jeanne Harper*



*Fr. Michael Harper of blessed memory*

## OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

We would like to congratulate [Stephen Ullstrom](#) (2006-07) for his graduation in Nov 24<sup>th</sup>. Stephen received a BA in Creative Writing and Political Science from the University of British Columbia. He is now working at a publishing company near Vancouver which specialises in books with themes that focus on the west coast of Canada. We wholeheartedly wish him all the best in Christ for his new endeavours!

[Katerina Dokou](#) sends her kindest regards to the community of Holy Cross. She is teaching English to primary school children in Greece. We wish her every blessing in education and that Christ may guide her in her vocation.



## MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

4<sup>th</sup> Dec: Great Martyr Barbara

6<sup>th</sup> Dec: St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia

9<sup>th</sup> Dec: The conception of the Most-Holy Theotokos by the Righteous Anna

11<sup>th</sup> Dec: Hieromartyr Metropolitan Seraphim (Chichagov)

12<sup>th</sup> Dec: St. Spyridon the Wonderworker, Bishop of Tremithus

13<sup>th</sup> Dec: St. Herman of Alaska, Wonderworker of All America

25<sup>th</sup> Dec: The Nativity according to the flesh of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

27<sup>th</sup> Dec: Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen

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 December\*

Sat. 3 <sup>rd</sup>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 10 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 17 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 24 <sup>th</sup>	8:00 pm	Christmas Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 31 <sup>st</sup>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.

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

---

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

- Elder Ephraem -



*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)

