



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

The Stavronian

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*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)***

TROPARION OF THEOPHANY (Tone 1)

When You, O Lord were baptized in the Jordan
The worship of the Trinity was made manifest
For the voice of the Father bore witness to You
And called You His beloved Son.
And the Spirit, in the form of a dove,
Confirmed the truthfulness of His word.
O Christ, our God, You have revealed Yourself
And have enlightened the world, glory to You!

OUR SPIRITUAL HOME AND SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

John 14:16 : *And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.*

Two aspects of our spirituality are **hesychia**—the still, quiet centre and peace we have in Christ and **theosis** which is acquiring the Holy Spirit who moves us on in Christ. These two aspects of our Christian life are complementary and not incompatible. Christ himself said that he is the Way - which involves a journey and movement; so we must ask where is that still centre?

John 14:6 : *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

There is a saying in English from an anonymous source that "*Home is where the heart is!*" One can interpret this as meaning that it is not a place but a feeling of attachment to a person. As disciples of Christ we are attached to Him. We may be attached to a place and like to call it *Home sweet Home*—as a place of security and a space away from the ravages of the world but it is not permanent. Things change. As we grow up we

grow away from home and that which seemed large as a child may seem very small when we are adults. The large fish in a small pond becomes a small fish in a large ocean. Leaving home may be an emotional as well as a geographical separation from that which we have known but in order to grow and become mature we have to leave that which has given us the building blocks to build our own home. St Paul expresses this sense of growth in 1 Corinthians 13:11:

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

We read in John 1:14 that... *the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us*. The Greek word εσκήνωσεν brings to mind God's presence in the Tabernacle of the Ark of the Covenant in the Old Testament. This was placed in a tent so that the semi-nomadic people of Israel in the time of Moses could move with God before them into the promised land. In the fullness of time, Christ sets up His tent on earth to dwell with humanity in order to lead us to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Faith moves us on and with the Light of Christ and the warmth of the Holy Spirit we grow towards the Father in heaven; like little plants we must grow for it is in the nature of our being. It is a temptation to remain in a cosy place, in that which is dark and familiar but dying to the past and living in the present is the point where *kairos* enters *chronos*. We shall find Christ's peace at that very point on the axis where the horizontal plane of time and place meets the vertical plane of our spiritual journey.

John 12:24 : *Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and*

dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

Christ is our security and we must acknowledge the need for our will to work with the movement of the Holy Spirit in order to grow in holiness.

St. Isaac the Syrian: *A life of spiritual endeavour is the mother of sanctity; from it is born the first experience of perception of the mysteries of Christ—which is called the first stage of spiritual knowledge.*

The great theologian and author C.S. Lewis wrote *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe* in which four children enter the land of Narnia and have many adventures. In one of the sequels, Lucy finds a magic book and as she reads she finds herself living the story rather than simply reading it. She says:

“That is the loveliest story I’ve ever read or shall ever read in my whole life. Oh I wish I could have gone on reading it for ten years. At least I’ll read it over again!”

However, she finds that she can not turn back the pages - she can only go forward and turn the pages that lie ahead. Like life itself, there is no turning back and the story is so lovely that we must read on until we ourselves enter fully into that beautiful Gospel narrative of salvation.

Spiritual growth is about being conformed to the image of God. Our still centre and Way is Christ, our movement and our living memory within the Church is the Holy Spirit—our home, Our Father in Heaven.

Fr. Jonathan



ORTHODOX PERIODICALS

If you look at the most successful companies of any type or legal form, you will surely see that they do something or quite a lot in fact to ensure, what we call, public relations (PR). This promotion has entered the backbone of any business or organisation seeking to keep a stable contact with people. However, if we look harder, or even deeper, one can distinguish that this aspiration to build PR has nothing to do with sincere care for people but is urged by quite earthly goals, that is to say, someone may merely want to sell more products or attract more clients to yield, in the end, greater proceeds. This kind of promotion normally is based on advertisement activities. Periodicals can also be used for this matter. Furthermore, periodicals are often seen as lucrative businesses working for the benefit of people. ‘Great’, perhaps you would say. But, why this caring for people? Is it because businesses and readers pay?

Despite this prevailing conception, there are, nevertheless, periodicals that do not serve this purpose of promotion at all. Just the other way round, these periodicals are not in search for anything for themselves or for their owners. Whatever one can try, we will never find what they are after if we approach this question from the point of view of getting material gains. Nothing of the kind!

Regular newsletters of Orthodox parishes are exactly what I am talking about. I am happy indeed my parish in Russia has its own newsletter, too. Does anybody have any idea what it requires to have a newsletter issue done? I would restrain from enumerating numerous works even though I understand something of it.

I am asking for forgiveness that I do not contribute to Orthodox newsletters the way I can. Why? Because I owe so

much to the Lancaster Orthodox Parish and, subsequently, to the Russian one, to which I belong now. Because here I learned that a man can say 'No' to death. Because since I entered the Church, I have known that life is so meaningful however broken life may look to laymen. At last (honestly, far from the last...), in this place, there are people who come to me asking for nothing and care to leave me in good time but they truly (not synthetically!) rejoice that I exist. And, I do the same towards them. Can such a place be called my home where love is the only thing to govern? Yes, it can.

We are all surrounded by circumstances. Sometimes and more often, this 'vanitas vanitatum' or too much fuss about things swallows me up, not leaving a second to give back to the Creator. A friend of mine told me once: The devil does not take my faith, he just takes my time, and - he wins me...

I really want to give something from myself to the Lancaster Parish which was my home some six years ago. Not a day passes that I remember how it all began for me, and for some continues, there. I know I owe nothing but I feel like I do.

It is incredible that the newsletter of the Orthodox Parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross has been in release for over five years every month! Each issue is a new friend for thirty days until the next issue comes or even longer. But here's the good news! We are able to help make this friend ourselves! Sorry, I am not an example to follow.

Let's do our little something to help this true friend come to us, because this friend shares wisdom and makes us feel at home - even though for a short while! Orthodox periodicals do not seek to take but they give many-fold more than somebody gives to them.

Pavel Zlobin



The three Hierarchs: St. Basil the Great, St. John Chrysostom and St. Gregory the Theologian.

ROWING BACKWARDS TO HEAVEN

As I was rowing back from St Herbert's Island, Derwent water, on a beautiful autumn day in October, I reflected on the seemingly absurd notion that I was rowing backwards in order to reach my destination at the marina on the mainland. I could not see where I was going but I could see where I had been. Ironically, the only way to see the path ahead was to look over my shoulder. It struck me then, that this was a microcosm of the life of faith—the journey requires strength, a constant adjustment in direction and a persistent awareness and vigilance towards those prevailing conditions that shape our path. It is useful to have another person on board the boat facing in the right direction -by analogy this is where a *spiritual father* can tell you where you

need to be going- pointing you in the right direction.

In mastering the law of the road when learning to drive one of the first things you hear from an instructor is mirror, signal, manoeuvre. It is essential to see what is going on behind you in order to overtake in front.

In a real sense science also moves forward through failed experiments and an assessment of past results.

John Henry Newman once said. *“We advance to the truth by experiencing error, we succeed through failures, we know not how to do right except through having done wrong... we do not see the truth at once and make towards it... we grope around by touch not by sight. Such is the process by which we succeed, we walk to heaven backward.”*

In the Legend of Orpheus and Eurydice, Orpheus, that celebrated musician of Thrace, followed his recently dead wife, Eurydice, to the other world and obtained her release on one strict condition. He must not turn back, to take even a fleeting glimpse of his beloved, until they were both safely home. But as Christians we must look back - not with nostalgia or sentiment but in the love of Christ for when we do, we can forgive, be forgiven and reconciled.

We learn from our sins and they become opportunities for advancement, if we acknowledge them through repentance in that spirit of humility which recognises in ourselves the need to change course. The Psalmist says in Psalm 50: *For I acknowledge my transgressions,*

And my sin is always before me.

With mistakes and failure our life goes into reverse enabling us to see where we have gone wrong. Acknowledgement is important but it is equally important that we do not despair and

give up hope. We fall and we rise and as God revealed to St Silouan the Athonite: *Keep your mind in hell and do not despair.*

Faith is not about knowing but believing.

C.S. Lewis said: *“We all want progress, but if you're on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; in that case, the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive.”*

It is no coincidence that one of the earliest symbols for the Christian church was the boat or ship. It signifies the church as the household of faith -the oikoumene- the world wide community, conveying its members to safe harbour with the cross as the mast. It has obvious connections with the salvation through Noah's ark, the fishermen of the earliest disciples and Jesus' calming of the storm (Mk 4:37).

Let us all row together -backwards- to the promised land!

Fr. Jonathan



GLOSSARY OF ORTHODOX TERMS: -D-

Dikerion: The two-branched Episcopal Candlestick which denotes the two natures of Jesus Christ (human and divine)

Diptychs: a list of the living and the departed who are commemorated during the divine services.

Discernment: Discernment is a spiritual gift of the nous (see I Corinthians 12:10) whereby one is able to discern the spiritual state and able to distinguish between the energies of God and the evil one and also between the energies of God and the psychosomatic energies of man.

Disciple: A follower of Christ but more specifically one who follows the instruction of a spiritual father.

Diskos: the raised plate upon which is placed the Eucharistic Bread (Lamb).

Dispassion: (apatheia - ἀπάθεια) The state of the soul when it is directed completely towards God.

Doxastikon: A Doxastikon is a type of hymn found in the Divine Services which is chanted between: “*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.*” and “*Both now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.*”

PARISH NEWS

We would like to congratulate Genovefa Kefalidou who was awarded a Ph.D in Psychology and Olga Lukashuk who was awarded an M.Sc in HR and Knowledge Management. They both graduated on December 14; may God guide you in your future pursuits.

We now have Holy Cross Orthodox Incense for sale! Small packets cost £1.50 in various types: Rose, Carnation, Lemon, Russian etc. Contact Fr. Jonathan.



OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

We would like to congratulate our Old Stavronian Maria (Verra) and Spyros for the Baptism of their son Georgios (Yiorgos) which took place in the Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos at Voula, Athens, last November. We wish him and his family Many Years!

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1st Jan: St. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia

6th Jan: The Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

9th Jan: St. Adrian and St. Brithwald, Archbishops of Canterbury (†710 and †731 A.D.)

17th Jan: St. Anthony the Great

18th Jan: St. Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria

20th Jan: Righteous Euthymius the Great

24th Jan: St. Xenia, the Fool-for-Christ of St. Petersburg (†1803)

25th Jan: St. Gregory the Theologian

28th Jan: St. Ephraim the Syrian

30th Jan: Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian & John Chrysostom

For the lives of Saints please visit the Calendar of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America:

www.calendar.goarch.org





Services during January*

Sat. 7 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 14 th		No Liturgy as Fr. Jonathan will be at the Deanery Clergy meeting in London.
Sat. 21 st	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sun. 29 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in Q.R. followed by Parish lunch

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

Home blessing at Theophany! Please contact Fr. Jonathan

“God cares for everyone. Despair is in effect a lack of faith”
- St. George Karslides -



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