

**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'



*Βῆθρονος Χριστός Ζωωδότης.
(Φ. 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 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)***

WOUNDED BUT NOT DISABLED

Do not be despondent because of the sorrows of this life; this is our lot, this is the judgement of God.

--- St Nikon of the Optina Fathers

We all bear wounds whether they are emotional, physical, psychological or spiritual. Being wounded does not mean that we are disabled. Indeed, rather our wounds may be the stripes that enable us to sow the seed of faith in the soil of humility which is the ground of salvation.

When one is wounded there is the temptation to wish one was someone else, as if others were devoid of suffering. No one escapes suffering. God has two hands with one He strikes and with one He strokes. Justice and mercy spring from the hands of God.

It is impossible to pass your entire life without temptation and sorrows, and to always be happy and without a care. Know that God is caring for you when He sends sorrows and grief and with them He is trying to make you more wise in spiritual understanding. Without sorrows we cannot be humble or acquire spiritual understanding.

--- St. Makarius of the Optina Fathers

The wounds in Our Lord's Risen body were not only the signs of God's love for the world they were the means of its salvation. For Thomas who had not believed in the testimony of the apostles, seeing Christ's wounds became the means to overcome his own spiritual wound of pride and doubt. Christ's wounds poured out grace. From His side flowed water and blood:

John 19:34 *But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.*

The water became for the Church the mystery of Baptism and the blood the mystery of the Eucharist. His loss becomes our gain and a divine transfusion for Life. When we mark ourselves with the sign of the cross we proclaim His wounds, death and Resurrection until he comes again.

The vicarious suffering of the Messiah was seen and foretold by the prophet Isaiah in his Suffering Servant passage:

Isaiah 53:5 But He was **wounded** for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

The apostle Paul was plagued by a "thorn."

2 Corinthians 12:7 *And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.*

This wound, obstacle or condition that is not specified clearly caused him great anguish. God didn't remove this thorn at Paul's request, and St. Paul came to view its continuance as a way of keeping him humble and Christ centred such that the power of Christ was manifested in his weakness (v.9)

St. John Chrysostom wrote, "*The Church is a hospital.*" The Church is full of casualties, if it were not so it wouldn't be the Church.

Yet the mission statement of Christ at the outset of His ministry, when reading in the synagogue in Nazareth from the prophet Isaiah addresses His authority over a list of ailments:

Luke 4:18, 19

The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,

*Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;*

Healing calls for the patient to work with the Physician of our souls in faith, obedience and humility and with the divine medicines of the Holy Mysteries, the Gospel, Repentance and Prayer.

If you want to find consolation amid sorrows, with your heart quickly turn to the Lord, the One Comforter... Repent... The more you pray to God in time of sorrow, the sooner you will feel sweet consolation. Cast your sorrows on the Lord and He will nourish you.

--St Anthony of the Optina Fathers

Christ promised us His peace and assured us that He has overcome the world. Our healing is to be measured not just in the dimension of time but of eternity for Christ is the Alpha and the Omega.

Wounds have an eternal dimension and this is why St John Chrysostom could proclaim on his deathbed "*Glory to God for all things.*" Between the Paradise of heaven and the veil of tears on earth there is the Ladder who is Christ, the bringer of Peace and Victory; such a double assurance of God's love for us is accessed by our wounds and won by His!

Fr. Jonathan



ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGIST BY VOCATION

Dedicated to all Orthodox Christians who live in Blessed England: Greeks, Romanians, Serbians, Bulgarians, Russians and Ukrainians but also to all those wonderful priests who converted to Orthodoxy (and in the memory of Fr. Michael Harper)

During a long period of time which ended with a PhD in Philosophy (Cultural Anthropology) I studied some behaviours in the context of a comparative study on the European Christian rituals. I was especially interested in the way in which the human being (the *person*¹, not the *individual*!) is still tackled by some European Churches and the way in which this is expressed in all the forms of Christian Culture: ecclesiastic art, architecture, music (cultic music, of course, mainly, but also the symphonic music having Christian inspiration), sculpture and painting etc. And at a certain moment I realized the "disadvantage" which I had because by this research I was missing something very important in the anthropological method: *the field-work*. But very soon I understood that one of the greatest anthropologists, Sir James George Frazer, this great Scotsman who is often considered to be the father of modern Anthropology, didn't have a very precise *field-work* and this was not an obstacle for him to develop a huge perspective on the pioneering anthropology². Very soon after this I realized that, in fact, in a way

1 We will use the term *person* and not *individual* because a *person* presumes in an implicit way the religious conscience so a *person* belongs by its nature to a community with a clear identity of its traditions and customs despite the fact that an *individual* doesn't have the conscience of its identity; we can call the *individual* a *countable one*.

I have done a kind of *field-work* all this time by vocation, by the nature of my mission as an Orthodox priest — because I am absolutely convinced now that some Orthodox priests, even involuntary, make a kind of field-work when they involve themselves in the lives of their parishioners or making pilgrimages, knowing different Christian communities and making comparisons or visiting monasteries of different Orthodox countries.

That is why in just a few paragraphs I want to describe this experience as I remember in this context my beautiful meeting with Rev. Father Jonathan Hemmings...

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In a certain number of a very popular Orthodox magazine published here in Romania which tries to connect the Orthodox Tradition with the newest and “trendy” perspectives of this unpredictable *political correctness* that influences even the spiritual life of the Orthodox Church³ I could read an interview with His Eminence Metropolitan Kallistos Ware who is in the present moment the most important Orthodox Theologian from Great Britain and one of the most respected representatives of Orthodoxy at the international level.

He was mentioning about the new tendencies and academic efforts of the Theologians from “Saint Serge” Institute in Paris, Prof. David Frost in Cambridge at IOCS, and the Americans from “Patriarch Athenagora” Institute from Berkeley,

2 He is called an *office anthropologist* but despite this, he was one of the most important professors from Cambridge and very important for the beginning of Anthropology as an independent academic discipline.

3 Adrian Agachi. 2011. “Antropologia, subiectul central al teologiei actuale”, *Lumina de duminică* 307, 39: 8-9 (“Anthropology, the central topic of the contemporary Theology” in *The Sunday Light* 307, 39: 8-9).

California, in tackling the anthropological methods in the studies of present day Orthodox Christian communities. This tendency, Metropolitan Kallistos says, could become very productive in collecting data about the Universal Orthodox Culture.

In the above-mentioned context I remembered that not too many years ago, when I knew Fr Jonathan Hemmings as a teacher at Lancaster Royal Grammar School, we started a cultural European project involving our students who had the beautiful privilege to get to know and understand each other and to exchange information on their native cultures visiting places from England and Romania. From 2004 (during a period of four years) we participated at the Pisculesti Summer Camp, in a village situated few kilometres from Ploiesti, where I was first ordained priest to build a parish church. The children from that village had the possibility to learn English better speaking every summer with their British friends. Years passed and they became very good friends who still are in contact. They visited together the Romanian Orthodox monasteries, guided by Father Jonathan Hemmings and me and accompanied by some other Romanian teachers from the National College “Mihai Viteazul” from Ploiesti. They learned traditional dances from UK and Romania, they visited together museums and they saw the rural, traditional life in the Romanian villages near the monasteries and the old historical sites in the “Land of Dracula” or the “Robin Hood’s forests”. Isn’t this cultural exchange an exercise of anthropology, a kind of little field-work done altogether, in a way? Oh, I think it is. As long as some British boys have chosen to go and study Romanian language and culture at University College London⁴ or

4 Like that wonderful boy, Chris Duncan, former student of Fr. Jonathan Hemmings, who even

learned alone⁵, isn't this a little cultural anthropological exercise? Oh, I think yes, it is.

By their pastoral mission the Orthodox priests, especially the parish priests from the countryside, where the life still preserves archaic customs and very early Orthodox traditions who enrich the treasure of Romanian folklore and ancient popular art and culture, really make a kind of cultural anthropological field-work. They have to know the problems of the families who are under their pastoral and spiritual assistance. If they are spiritual fathers they have one more reason to be more attentive with those human beings because they have to guide their growth into real Orthodox persons who are conscious they bear the face of Christ, *the archetypal face of God*⁶. Visiting their houses during the fast periods for bless them, giving spiritual assistance and the Holy Communion to the old ones, reading prayers for different needs, the parish priests build a special bridge of communication between persons and they collect even involuntary information concerning the traditions and mentality of the community in the middle of which they live and preach. I remember the fact that

had a stage of two years in a job here in Romania as a journalist for a British magazine edited and published here...

- 5 Like another wonderful one, the actual economist Andrew Sainsbury who liked Romanian culture and civilization and uses to come again very often to visit us...
- 6 In fact this is one of the most important key for understanding a central anthropological teaching of the Orthodox Theology: how to re-become bearers of this *archetypal face of God* which transforms us from countable *individuals* into real Christian *persons* with spiritual and unique identity. Practically for being a Christian *person* we have to feel Christ in us as like Saint Apostle Paul felt Him in him.

among the first pioneers in the Cultural Anthropology were also the missionaries who very often lost even their lives trying to give the Gospel message to the wild civilizations; but those who succeeded to convert the unbelievers have regularly collected precious data about these wild people. Their diaries are sometimes very good sources for the anthropological approach.

That is why I consider some Orthodox parish priests from the villages are also kinds of anthropologists by their mission, by their vocation...

But Father Jonathan Hemmings also makes involuntary Orthodox Cultural Anthropology because he is in the middle of his parishioners who come from all the Orthodox countries to make their studies at that prestigious University of Lancaster and he is also the only one Orthodox priest in an area of one hundred kilometers⁷. By this mission he has to know something from all these Orthodox traditions of different Eastern European people: Greeks (there are many continental Greeks or Cypriots at Lancaster; I can say they really make an important cultural community over here, in Lancaster), Romanians (just a few in comparison with the Greeks but having families here, in the North of England), Bulgarians, Serbians, Russians, Ukrainians etc.

I remember as a joke the moment when I told Fr Jonathan that if I would have been richer I would have opened in Lancaster a traditional Romanian pub called "Dracula's Chariot" where red Romanian wines together with a barbeque to be served by waiters dressed in Tran-

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- 7 I know the case of a Romanian woman who comes every Sunday in Lancaster from an impressive distance only to join to this community who has every Sunday the Holy Liturgy at the "Holy and Life-giving Cross Church". The nostalgia of their native Orthodox Christian Churches puts its bookmark on the souls of the immigrants.

sylvanian costumes. I think the pub would have been very popular in a few weeks from opening and the money would have been used for building a wooden church in a Transylvanian style for the Parish of "Holy and Life-giving Cross". Even this joke has an implicit cultural anthropological hidden spirit.

I had the privilege to participate at an *agape* after a Holy Liturgy held in the chapel of Lancaster University and after that I was invited to continue it in the house of Bart (a Belgian married with Iryna from Ukraine). There were many Greeks over there, Romanians (Cristina Denice and Alexandra Petrescu), British of course and some Russians. The atmosphere was a real delicious feast sprinkled with fabulous wines from France and Romania but also sprinkled with impressive thoughts from the Orthodox mentality and traditions of the people where all these persons come from. And for all to be very well realized, the end of this very familiar meeting was enriched with chants from the folklore of Ukraine (the splendid voice of Iryna) to which I added a short popular ballad from the times when the people of Transylvania were fighting against the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This was a difficult time in our history when the Orthodox Romanian monasteries were destroyed and a lot of those unique and wonderful wooden churches were burned which are now under the protection of UNESCO cultural heritage because they express the vestiges of a very ancient original Christianity. Behind my long joyful phrases I want to say how important it is for these Christians to have the privilege to share their cultures — in this way they definitely make a kind of cultural anthropology.

I remembered that atmosphere this summer in Maliuc, where we held the first edition of an Orthodox Christian Cultural Anthropological Summer Camp, in the middle of the Danube Delta, in a very

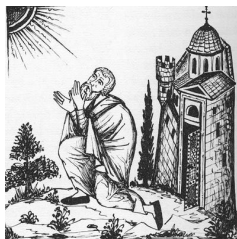
picturesque landscape surrounded by wild forests fed by the waters, full of wonderful species of wild birds, rare animals and fish, full of stories, legends and fairy tales narrated by different minorities (Ukrainians-Hutzuls, Russians, Bulgarians, Tatars, Turks, Kazaks etc.) who many centuries shared altogether episodes of their common Romanian history building a splendid cultural anthropological treasure in this part of Europe.

I am convinced today that all these convert Orthodox fathers from the England that I love, like many Orthodox parish priests from here, all these Orthodox minorities represented by the immigrants in different parts of the Western Europe, make a very impressive treasure of customs and traditions that has to be more attentively studied in the future. I respect their efforts in bringing a spiritual Orthodox Christian light in their houses and lives, making in this sense a kind of *Orthodox anthropological field-work*, as Father Michel Harper has done.

I can hardly wait to return someday to my Beloved England in that legendary Lake District and that fabulous Lancashire which was blessed by the feet of St. Patrick, St. Herbert and other Saints and is a special area to be investigated from a cultural Christian anthropological perspective.

May God bless all the Orthodox Christians in Great Britain!...

*Fr. Bogdan-Costin Georgescu
Romania*



BAPTISM

On January 7, 2012, on the day of St. John the Baptist, I was Baptised and Chrismated by Fr. Jacob Myers at St. John the Wonderworker Orthodox Church in Atlanta, GA, USA. On this special day, I was received into the Holy Orthodox Church.

For weeks, I had been preparing for the important day of my life. The more I read, the more I realized how precious the treasure I was going to receive from the commitment. I was nervous yet expectant. I prayed God would open the doors for me and permit the Holy Spirit to enter and abide in me.

The Baptismal service went well and I was deeply touched at several moments. The weather forecast said there would be fifty percent chance of rain on the day. When I saw the Sun shone into the church during the Liturgy right before my Baptism, I felt that the Holy Spirit was around me and I was truly blessed. After the Baptism, wearing the white robe, I felt that I was pure and light like a baby and wished that the purity and innocence I felt on this day would stay with me forever!



I gladly acknowledge Fr. Jonathan's words of encouragement in our email correspondence after the Baptism: *'The Holy Spirit moves where He wills and the seed*

was sown maybe as far back as your time in Lancaster or beyond, and now it has reached the blossom of Baptism and you will experience the fruits thereof. Remember the Christian Life is a battle, we fall and we rise but God is at our side as are His saints, His angels and His dear Mother. You are not alone.' I will keep this in mind and do my best to let the flower bloom firmly and healthily. I may flounder still, but I know now who and where I can turn to.

*Theophania (Yufang)
Taiwan*

GLOSSARY OF ORTHODOX TERMS: -E-

East The direction one faces towards the Iconostasis

Ecstasy (exstasis - έκστασις) With the synergy of grace one detaches the nous from reason and the surrounding influences and brings it into the heart *from where the nous ascends to God and into a spiritual realm* according to St Gregory Palamas.

Eisodikon A hymn chanted as the clergy enter the altar during the Little Entrance of the Divine Liturgy.

Enarxis The opening part of the Divine Liturgy "Blessed is the Kingdom..."

Engolpion A pectoral Icon worn by Bishops

Eothinon Resurrection gospel and hymn chanted at Sunday Orthros.

Epanokalymaukion monastic black hat and veil.

Epigonation Diamond or Lozenge shaped vestment worn by Bishops and certain priests.

Epimanikion Liturgical wrist cuffs common to Bishops Priests and Deacons.

Epicopal Throne Bishops Throne situated to the south of the Solea.

Epitaphios Winding sheet or large cloth with an icon of the entombed Christ or Theotokos.

Epitrachelion A liturgical stole worn by Bishops and priests.

Eros Although “eros” can mean sensual love, in the patristic sense it means the longing or desire that impels man towards union with God.

Evlogitaria Hymns having the refrain *Blessed art Thou O Lord teach me Thy statutes*

Exaposteilarion Hymn chanted after the Canon and before the Praises at Orthros.

Exorasson black outer cassock or clerical robe with long wide sleeves.

OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

The Akhtyrka Icon of Mother of God

“*Orthodox Life*”, journal published by Holy Trinity Monastery, No. 4, p.16, July-August 1989.

When I saw a box of old books that the Orthodox Sunday school teachers had put out to distribute for people for free, I saw many books, mostly in Greek. Then suddenly I noticed the *Orthodox Life*

Journal in English and on the front page I read about The Finding of The Akhtyrka Icon of the Mother of God. I was more than surprised because Akhtyrka it is a small Ukrainian town which is located very close (20 kilometres) from the village where my Dad's parents were living and where my Dad was born there. When we were kids we very often visited our grandparents and our route passed through Akhtyrka (we saw Churches there, but unfortunately we didn't go inside). In the article the author wrote that Akhtyrka was in the Kharkove province of Russia (according to the 17th Century geography). Now it is Ukraine and Akhtyrka is part of the Sumy district. Our home city of Kharkov is a relatively large place with a population around two million people and it is about 100Km to Akhtyrka.

It is interesting that being Ukrainian for the first time I read about the Akhtyrka Icon of the Mother of God in USA.

*Albina Ganshyna
Ithaca, USA*

(Editorial comment: It is perhaps more than interesting but providential that the Holy Spirit goes before us to prepare the way for our arrival. He reminds us that wherever we are we will find the Orthodox Church which is Universal and that we are part of that great Communion of Saints of which the Mother of God is our Champion Leader.)



PARISH NEWS

Our parish has produced a [youtube video](#) of our Pilgrimage to St. Herbert's Island set to music *O give thanks unto the Lord*. Please click [here](#) to watch it! May God bless this for the advancement of His Kingdom on earth. Thanks be to God for all things!

2nd Feb: **The Meeting of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Temple**

3rd Feb: **St Nicholas, Archbishop & Enlightener of Japan**

5th Feb: **Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee: [Triodion Begins Today](#)**

10th Feb: **Hieromartyr Charalampus**

18th Feb: **St Colman**

24th Feb: **First & Second Finding of the Venerable Head of John the Baptist**

26th Feb: **St Photine, the Samaritan woman**

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1st Feb: **St Bridget of Kildare**

For the lives of Saints please visit the Calendar of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America: www.calendar.goarch.org

Services during February*

Sat. 4 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 11 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 18 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sun. 26 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.

“God cares for everyone. Despair is in effect a lack of faith”

- St. George Karslides -



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