

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

***The Stavronian***

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*Ἐθρονος 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.  
The Patriarchate of Antioch is third senior of the Orthodox Churches.  
The Patriarch is His Beatitude John X.*

***The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch  
(Acts 11:26)***

## **FOUNTAINS IN THE DESERT: Advice from the Fathers for the New year - Be Vigilant**

**Our good intentions and expectations need to be grounded in spiritual preparedness**

*Abba Antony said to Abba Poemen, "This is the great work of man: always to take the blame for his own sins before God and to expect temptation to his last breath".*

Abba Antony would have been well versed in the Psalms which draw from the very depths of our being and which so eloquently give voice to the state of the human spirit: Psalm 51:3, *"For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me."*

There is always the temptation to blame others for our sins or to hold the mitigating circumstance responsible for our actions; we look for excuses when seeking to justify our wrong doing. Placing the blame on others is as old as mankind. Adam when caught eating the forbidden apple does not own up to his own transgression, instead he accuses the woman and even God as the cause: Genesis 3: 12 , Then the man said, *"The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."*

Acknowledging our transgressions does not simply mean recognising what we have done wrong but making them known and announcing them in penitence before God. We should not seek to hide or conceal our sins but to confess them before the Sinless One. Once recognised, (i.e. seen for what they are) when like the Prodigal **we come to our right mind**, our sins will constantly trouble our conscience until we return to Our Father. The memory of our guilt repeats itself over and over again like an old vinyl

record which is scratched. In such a predicament the only balm for such wounded anguish, the only true refuge, the only hope for peace of soul is the mercy and forgiveness of God.

Later in v.17 the Psalmist goes on to say: *"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."*

When the heart and spirit is full of self interest then there is no room for God, our ego excludes him; but when the heart and spirit are broken the Divine Physician of our souls and bodies may enter, restore us and save us.

We must all expect temptation until our last breath so we need to be watchful and vigilant. The evil one never sleeps and he lies in wait for us. 1 Peter 5:8-9 , **Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.**

Our Lord was tempted in the wilderness yet without sin and we read that the evil one left him only for a while. Luke 4 :13, *Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time .*

Even until Our Lord's last breath He was tempted. Mark 15:29-32, *And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself, and come down from the cross!" Likewise the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe."*

Indeed, we hear the echoes of Satan from those earliest temptations before

Jesus began his ministry... If you are the Son of God.....

As Jesus' disciples we must expect nothing less. We do not need to seek evil out for the father of lies will surely come to test us in subtle whispers: *Go on try it, it won't hurt you... prove yourself!* If we find our self in a comfortable place as Christians then we can be sure we have already been caught in the adversary's net. Christ did not promise his disciples comfort but the strength and grace to persevere and His peace to survive all the darts that will be thrown against us.

*The safest road to hell is the gradual one; the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts --- C.S. Lewis*

*Fr. Jonathan*

## **ST. BASIL THE GREAT**

Saint Basil the Great was born about the end of the year 329 in Caesarea of Cappadocia, to a family renowned for their learning and holiness. His parents' names were Basil and Emily. His mother Emily (commemorated July 19) and his grandmother Macrina (Jan. 14) are Saints of the Church, together with all his brothers and sisters: Macrina, his elder sister (July 19), Gregory of Nyssa (Jan. 10), Peter of Sebastia (Jan. 9), and Naucratius. Basil studied in Constantinople under the sophist Libanius, then in Athens, where also he formed a friendship with the young Gregory, a fellow Cappadocian, later called "the Theologian." Through the good influence of his sister Macrina, he chose to embrace the ascetical life, abandoning his worldly career. He visited the monks in Egypt, in Palestine, in Syria, and in Mesopotamia, and upon returning to Caesarea, he departed to a hermitage

on the Iris River in Pontus, not far from Annesi, where his mother and his sister Macrina were already treading the path of the ascetical life; here he also wrote his ascetical homilies.

About the year 370, when the bishop of his country reposed, he was elected to succeed to his throne and was entrusted with the Church of Christ, which he tended for eight years, living in voluntary poverty and strict asceticism, having no other care than to defend holy Orthodoxy as a worthy successor of the Apostles. The Emperor Valens, and Modestus, the Eparch of the East, who were of one mind with the Arians, tried with threats of exile and of torments to bend the Saint to their own confession, because he was the bastion of Orthodoxy in all Cappadocia, and preserved it from heresy when Arianism was at its strongest. But he set all their malice at nought, and in his willingness to give himself up to every suffering for the sake of the Faith, showed himself to be a martyr by volition. Modestus, amazed at Basil's fearlessness in his presence, said that no one had ever so spoken to him. "Perhaps," answered the Saint, "you have never met a bishop before." The Emperor Valens himself was almost won over by Basil's dignity and wisdom. When Valens' son fell gravely sick, he asked Saint Basil to pray for him. The Saint promised that his son would be restated if Valens agreed to have him baptized by the Orthodox; Valens agreed, Basil prayed, and the son was restored. But afterwards the Emperor had him baptized by Arians, and the child died soon after. Later, Valens, persuaded by his counsellors, decided to send the Saint into exile because he would not accept the Arians into communion; but his pen broke when he was signing the edict of banishment. He tried a second time and a third, but the same thing happened, so that the Emperor was filled with dread, and tore up the document,

and Basil was not banished. The truly great Basil, spent with extreme ascetical practices and continual labours, at the helm of the church, departed to the Lord on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, in 379 at the age of forty-nine.

His writings are replete with wisdom and erudition, and rich are these gifts he set forth the doctrines concerning the mysteries both of the creation (see his Hexaemeron) and of the Holy Trinity (see On the Holy Spirit). Because of the majesty and keenness of his eloquence, he is honoured as "the revealer of heavenly things" and "the Great."

Saint Basil is also celebrated on January 30<sup>th</sup> with Saint Gregory the Theologian and Saint John Chrysostom.



## GLOSSARY OF ORTHODOX TERMS: -P-

**PARABLE** A story told to illustrate a greater truth through images related to the daily lives of the hearers. Christ's

teaching is filled with parables (see article, "Parables," at Matt. 13; Matt. 13:1-54).

**PARADISE** The place of rest for the departed in Christ. The original Paradise, seen in Gen. 2:8-14, will be restored in its fullness following the Second Coming of Christ. See Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 12:4; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 2:7; 21:1.

**PARADOX** That which is true, but not conventionally logical: for example, that a virgin could bear a Son and yet remain a virgin, as did Mary; or that God can be One, yet three Persons. The Christian faith is full of paradoxes, because our intellect is not sufficient to comprehend the mind of God (see Is. 55:8, 9).

**PASCHA** Greek for "Passover." Originally Pascha designated the Jewish Passover; now, it is the Feast of the Resurrection of Christ. Christ is the Lamb of God whose sacrifice delivers the faithful from death, as the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb delivered the ancient Jews from slavery and death in Egypt (Ex. 12; 13; 1 Cor. 5:7, 8).

**PASSION** (1) A term used to describe the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. (2) Holy Week is often called Passion Week, describing Christ's struggle and suffering in Jerusalem. (3) Passions are human appetites or urges -such as hunger, the desire for pleasure and sexual drives- which become a source of sin when not controlled or directed by submission to the will of God (Rom. 1:26; 7:5; Gal. 5:24; Col. 3:5).

**PEACE** (Heb. shalom) Tranquillity, harmony with God, self, and other people made possible through Christ, who unites human beings to God and to each other. See Rom. 14:17; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 2:13-16; Phil. 4:6, 7.

**PENTECOST** Originally an OT harvest festival celebrated fifty days following the Passover. In time, Pentecost became the commemoration of the giving of the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai. Pentecost took on a new meaning with the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles at Pentecost. Through the Sacrament of Chrismation, Orthodox Christians experience their own personal Pentecost. Every Divine Liturgy becomes a Pentecost through the descent of the Holy Spirit on the faithful and the gifts (the bread and wine), transforming them into the Body and Blood of Christ. See Ex. 23:14-17; Lev. 23:15 21; Acts 2:1 41.

**PERSON** (Gr. *prosopon*; Lat. *persona*) Regarding the Holy Trinity, there are three Divine Persons: God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Person of God the Son became Man, Jesus Christ, "for us and for our salvation" (Matt. 28:19). See also **HYPOSTASIS**.

**PHARISEES** One of the parties of first-century Judaism. The Pharisees favored strict legalistic application of traditional interpretations of the Law stemming from oral Jewish traditions. Unlike the Sadducees, they believed in angels and in the resurrection of the dead. The Pharisees were generally hostile to the mission of Christ, who condemned their excessive legalism and their preoccupation with outward forms, ignoring true righteousness of the heart. See Matt. 3:7; 12:14; 22:34; 23:13-36. See also **SADDUCEES**.

**PILGRIM** One who makes a journey to a religious shrine or a spiritual journey from sin and suffering in this life to eternal life with Christ in heaven. See Ps. 42:4; Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 2:11.

**POWER** (1) A divine attribute or energy (Matt. 6:13; Luke 1:35; Rom. 1:16). (2) The authority and ability to act (Matt.

9:6). (3) A category of angelic beings (Eph. 1:21).

**PRAISE** To glorify and give thanks to God or to speak highly of someone or something (Judg. 5:3; Ps. 9:1-14; Rom. 15:11).

**PRAYER** Communion with God through words of praise, thanksgiving, repentance, supplication, and intercession. Prayer is "raising up the heart and mind to God" (St. John of Damascus). Usually prayer is verbal. However, prayer of the heart or in the Spirit, the highest form of prayer, is without words. See Matt. 6:5-13; 21:22; Rom. 8:26; Phil. 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:17.

**PRESBYTER** Literally, "elder"; now generally called "priest." Presbyter is one of the three orders of the ordained ministry of the Church: bishop, presbyter, and deacon (see article, "The Four 'Orders' in Church Government," at 1 Tim.; Acts 14:23; 15:4 23; 1 Tim. 5:17-19; Titus 1:5). See also **BISHOP**.

**PROCEED** To come forth from or come to. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, the fountainhead of the Holy Trinity (John 15:26).

**PROPHET** One who proclaims the will of God and/or who foretells the future, especially the coming and mission of Christ, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. See Deut. 18:18; Acts 28:25.

**PROPITIATION** An offering that results in atonement, redemption, and reconciliation. Christ offered Himself on the Cross as a propitiation for our sins, to liberate humanity from sin and death. See Rom. 3:21-26; Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10.

**PROSELYTE** Literally, "one who comes toward." A proselyte is a convert to the Faith, usually from another religion. In

the New Testament, the word usually refers to a Gentile convert to Judaism (see Acts 2:10; 13:43).

**PROVIDENCE** God's sovereign care in governing His creation, especially His care for the faithful (Rom. 8:28).

**PURIFICATION** The Old Testament rite whereby one is cleansed of ritual impurity caused by such things as contact with leprosy or a dead body, or sexual functions. This cleansing consisted of making a sacrifice or being sprinkled with "water of purification" (Num. 19:9). Christ liberated the faithful from these rites. Christians are purified by the sacraments and by their spiritual struggle towards transforming their passions. See Lev. 12:6; Num. 19:9-21; Matt. 15:11; Luke 2:22-33; Acts 10:9-16; 15:1-29.

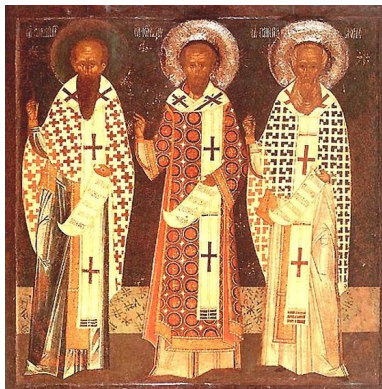
Please click [here](#) for the original text.

## OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

Katerina Dokou is sending her warm greetings from Greece. She is now teaching in a high school at a tiny village on the mountainous part of Arcadia, in the Peloponnese. We wish that God will give her patience and strength to keep working with teenagers in a soul-beneficial way according to His will. Also Nikolaos Andrielos, his wife Maria and their two children Manolis and Stella send their best wishes from Greece. We wish that our Lord Jesus Christ bless this family and keep them safe in His holy spiritual flock.

Our many thanks in Christ are extended for the kind and generous offerings that Nikolaos Georgopoulos has given to our Community - for the candles, wine, incense, charcoal and donation.

May God bless the gifts and reward the giver!



The [Three Hierarchs](#): Basil the Great, John Chrysostom and Gregory the Theologian.

## MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1<sup>st</sup> Jan: St. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia

6<sup>th</sup> Jan: The Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

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

17<sup>th</sup> Jan: St. Anthony the Great

18<sup>th</sup> Jan: St. Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria

20<sup>th</sup> Jan: Righteous Euthymius the Great

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

25<sup>th</sup> Jan: St. Gregory the Theologian

28<sup>th</sup> Jan: St. Ephraim the Syrian

30<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.calendar.goarch.org)





✝ Home blessing at Theophany! Please contact Fr. Jonathan

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### Services during January\*

Sat. 5 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 12 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 19 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sun. 27 <sup>th</sup>	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.

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



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