

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

The Stavronian

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*Ἐθρονος Χριστός Ζωοδότης.
(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)***

IT IS TIME TO READ THE BIBLE

Now if we are willing to examine the Scriptures in this way, carefully and systematically, we shall be able to obtain our salvation. If we are unceasingly preoccupied with them, we shall learn both correctness of doctrine and an upright way of life (Hom 53 On John).

--- St John Chrysostom

As my wall clock rings the “Westminster chime” and I am made all too aware of the passage of time. I must hurry or I will be late for an appointment. The tinkling bells remind me of where I have to go, what I have to do, whom I have to see, and when I have to be there. The trouble with time is that it is always on the move and constantly changing pace - rushing when we are enjoying life and “dragging its feet” when we find ourselves in difficult situations. It would be so much easier if we could create time. As created and creative beings made in the image of God we do have the capacity to make time within the span of years given to us by God. We are able to step out of time and live according to a different measurement; awakened as if out of slumber to another life-enhancing pace, at the same time both exciting and peaceful. We can make time to meet with God at the Holy Liturgy, in prayer, by studying the lives of His saints and through reading His word - then, time (*chronos*) stops and we come to another dimension *kairos* (opportunity) - and enter into His realm of the eternal present.

When I read the Bible, I never cease to be amazed by the consonance of events in the Old and New Testaments. The prefiguring, the typology, the sign and symbolism of God’s presence throughout, the unfolding pattern of salvation history, the merciful revelations of God to patriar-

chs, prophets, wise men and women, His call and commission to Apostles and Evangelists and unworthy as we are - to you and to me in this present generation! This then is the *kairos* - the opportune moment that God affords to each and every person to be with Him daily and to work with Him in harmony of will. The Bible is more than a history book and greater than a moral manual or framework for the good life - it is a medicine for salvation and God’s love letter to the world. When we read it we are enfolded in the embrace of the Holy Spirit who is the Church’s guide and living memory.



“Listen, I entreat you, all that are careful for this life, and procure books that will be medicines for the soul... get at least the New Testament, the Apostolic Epistles, the Acts, the Gospels, for your constant teachers. If grief befalls you, dive into them as into a chest of medicines; take from there comfort for your trouble, be it loss, or death, or bereavement of relations; or rather do not merely dive into them but

take them wholly to yourself, keeping them in your mind.” (Hom. IX On Colossians)
--- St John Chrysostom

When studied with faith the events speak to us existentially - that is why the Church in her great Liturgical feasts insists on saying “Today...! Not in years past, not an historical event -*Today the celestials join with the terrestrials*- as we said at Theophany! In the Great Fast we fast with Christ, in Holy Week we suffer with Christ and we are raised with Christ because of His Resurrection.

Today God invites us to take time out to be with Him and to take hold of His word that it may abide in us.

Blessed Seraphim of Platina said: *It is later than your think, hasten therefore to do the Will of God!*

How can we know what the Will of God is for us unless we first read, learn, mark and inwardly digest it?

Fr. Jonathan

THE THEOLOGY OF SAINT ATHANASIUS

"The Son of God became man so that we might become God." --- Saint Athanasius of Alexandria

For an uninformed reader the above quote may look either like a dangerous heresy, unfortunate misprint, or at the very best - as some bizarre, Zen-like riddle. In fact, it should be seen as a distilled essence of the Orthodox Christian theology in one single (but amazing) sentence.

To my understanding, biblical anthropology places the event of the Fall of Man, as being an important marker in the history of salvation. We lost our divine privilege of being in close communion with our Creator, and being able to parti-

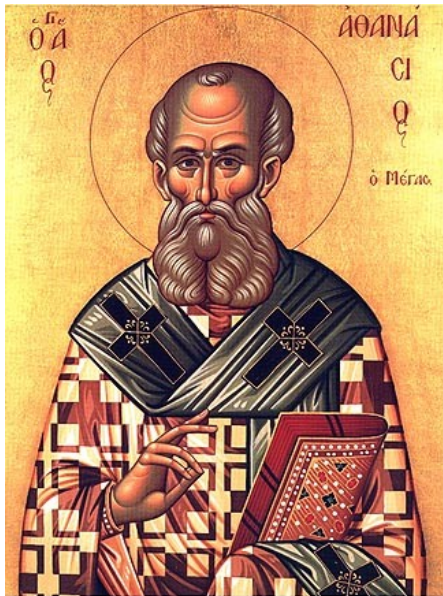
cipate in His divine Life. Although the Spirit of God never deserted the human race completely, our true return to the original, pre-fallen condition has started at the moment of the Holy Annunciation. Fathers didn't only imply pre-fallen state as our destination; they positioned humankind much higher than we ever were in the Garden of Eden. It is such a tired cliché to say that every defeat has a seed of opportunity in it, but it just may be the case when it comes to the reality of Ancestral Sin.

Holy work and example of Christ is a clear and inspiring pointer for all of us who aspire to live Christian lives, but can we really expect to ever attain the paradisiacal state in this world; one that is so full of corruption and falsehood? Example of the Holy Saints of our Church is encouraging enough, but is it realistic today, in 2013, in consumerist, secular England?

I believe that we need to become much more acutely aware of the presence of the Spirit of God in the world, if we would ever be able to discern the ways of returning into desired communion with Him. In the Church, His presence is communicated *explicitly*, through the Holy Mysteries and through the life of prayer (liturgical and personal). Although the Spirit is abundant within a Church, we must never attempt to stop seeking and identify Him outside her boundaries. To do so would mean that we are trying to impose our created criteria (however carefully constructed) on Uncreated Reality; and that could be dangerous for our dignity and freedom.

If we look at the Nature around us, we are looking at the work of the Spirit, proclaimed *implicitly* in the sacred silence of God. If the image of God has been darkened, but never destroyed in human being; then by the same token, the image of the first Garden is diminished, but never absent from the nature. And this

‘Apothatic witness’ that we can find everywhere, has little to do with ‘pantheism’; it is only a timely reminder of a certain pan-sacramental ‘set of mind’ that needs to be rediscovered and reapplied.



Even in the secular, ‘all too human’ activities like the art and the artistic creation, we should still be able to trace and discern the sacramental value, which communicates the Holy Presence *symbolically*. Communal and incarnation –like nature of art has, at least, latent potential of conveying this value in its all precious meaning and purpose for us.

However, with all the explicit, implicit and symbolic ways of reaching for it, we still must acknowledge in deepest humility, that the Real Life, one attained and lived in and through the Spirit, will still stay elusive and distant to many of us, because it’s a free gift from God – one that can only be waited upon.

At the beginning of 20th century, great psychologists (Freud, Jung and Klein) came to the conclusion that human

beings are looking for the pleasure everywhere. They called it a pleasure principle. Much earlier, famous Roman Catholic theologian Thomas Aquinas (13th century) said: ‘If man give up on looking for the spiritual pleasures, he will seek out for the physical ones, for no man can live without the pleasure.’

The eternal joy of being in the company of God in the Garden of Eden is our deepest memory, buried in our DNA – waiting to be unearthed. And our deepest desire is to be in His presence again; human ‘addiction’ to pleasures, only testifies to that. While modern psychologists reduced this desire to pre-natal and early childhood experiences; various theologians (modern and pre-modern) attempted to diminish the sheer blind forcefulness of our (misplaced) desire - to our own peril.

Fathers of the Orthodox theology elegantly exposed our vocation and purpose, with their perfect intuition... Our task today is to ‘unpack’ the layers of the meaning; not in some scholastic manner, but as a living and breathing experience. Church Fathers theological legacy also poses considerable existential challenge to us. We can decide to ignore it or we can aspire to explore it, and make it relevant for our own age.

Aleksandar Miljkovic

GLOSSARY OF ORTHODOX TERMS: -R-

RAPTURE The gathering of the Church on earth in the presence of Christ when He comes again to judge the living and the dead (1 Thess. 4:15-17). Orthodox theologians reject the recent minority view that the Church will be taken out of the world before the time of trouble

preceding the Second Coming. Christ specifically teaches the faithful will experience the trials of tribulation (Matt. 24:>28). See also SECOND COMING.

RECONCILIATION The removal of hostility and barriers between humans and God, and between individuals, accomplished by Christ (Rom. 5:11; 2 Cor. 5:18, 19).

REDEMPTION The deliverance of humanity from sin and death by Christ, who assumed humanity by His Incarnation, conquered sin and death by His life-giving death and glorious Resurrection, releases those who are in captivity to the evil one, and unites humanity to God by His Ascension (Gal. 3:13; Heb. 9:15).

REMEMBRANCE (Gr. anamnesis) Making present by means of recollection. The Eucharist is not merely a calling to mind but a remembrance of and mystical participation in the very sacrifice of Christ, His Resurrection, His Ascension, and His coming again (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

REMISSION The forgiveness and putting aside of sins. As the faithful are released from their sins through the sacramental life of the Church, they in turn are called to remit the sins of any who have offended them See John 20:23; Acts 2:37, 38.

REPENTANCE Literally, "a change of mind" or attitude, and thus of behavior. God is the author of repentance, which is an integral part of baptism, confession, and ongoing spiritual life. Repentance is not simply sorrow for sins but a firm determination to turn away from sin to a new life of righteousness in Jesus Christ. See Matt. 4:17; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 1:9.

RESURRECTION The reunion of the soul and body after death which will revitalize and transform the physical body into a spiritual body. Jesus Himself is the firstfruits of perfect resurrection; He will never again be subject to death. Because He conquered death by His Resurrection, all will rise again: the righteous to life with Christ, the wicked to judgment. See John 5:28, 29; 1 Cor. 15:35-55.

RIGHTEOUSNESS Being good, just, and blameless. All are called to a life of humble obedience to God. However, acts of righteousness cannot earn salvation. Rather, righteousness is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and the way in which Christians respond with living faith to God's gift of salvation. See Matt. 5:6, 20; Rom. 4:3; Gal. 5:22; James 2:14-26.

RITES Forms of worship, music, vestments, and architecture. Most Orthodox Christians follow the liturgical practice of the ancient Churches in the east (Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria), the rite commonly known as the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. However, some Orthodox follow a Western Rite, forms that developed in the west before the separation of Rome from the Orthodox Church.

RITUAL Ceremonies and texts used in the worship of the Church. Having her roots in the temple and synagogue, the Church has employed ritual in her worship from the very beginning. See also LITURGY and WORSHIP.

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



OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

Panagiotis Georgopoulos followed a project meeting at Ghent, Belgium, and had the opportunity to meet for a weekend with Old Stavronians Theodoros and Theophania Papadopoulou at the city of Liege, Belgium. We include a few photos below.

Stephen Ullstrom from the British Columbia, Canada, sends his warm greetings in Christ to the community of Holy Cross. We send back our best wishes in the Lord for his future endeavours in creative writing!



MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1st Feb: St Bridget of Kildare

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

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

10th Feb: Hieromartyr Charalampus

18th Feb: St Colman

23rd Feb: St Polycarp the Holy Martyr & Bishop of Smyrna

24th Feb: Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee: Triodion begins today

26th Feb: St Photine, the Samaritan woman

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





Services during February*

Sat. 2 nd	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 9 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 16 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sun. 24 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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