



**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'*



*Εὐαγγέλιος 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)***

## NEW ACADEMIC YEAR

As the new academic year is now at its beginning, we would like to extend our warm welcome to the new students who are entering Lancaster University full of hopes and expectations. We pray that their journey to the Northwest of England will be rewarding in knowledge as well as spiritual growth in our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen, so be it!

## HEARING WITH YOUR EYES

Luke 8:21; *But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."*

In a doxology as much as a prefiguring to the Word made flesh, the word of God is spoken, preached, proclaimed, sung (in Psalms) read and intoned in our churches and homes. Reading the Bible is an exercise where we see the hand of the living God. Every encounter in scripture speaks in relationship to believers as members of Christ's family. The word of God brings an existential dimension to our human condition; as we bring our particular situation and life experiences in faith to the verse and live out the message which is returned to us.

In a recent exchange of e-mails with one person and later that same day, by "coincidence", in a telephone conversation with another, the subject of how we bring our creative energies to reading a text came under discussion.

Wearing my editorial hat, I had pared down and shaped a particular worthy article to fit the confines of a newsletter. The writer was very generous and accepting of my excisions and alterations. He wrote: *Just like in music, little changes in the text often make for dramatic improve-*

*ments. I was on the brink of deleting the article, but now I'm glad I didn't - it reads so much better now!*

I often suspect (although is hard to say for oneself) that it is us readers who also give the special creative dignity to the text in front of us.

The lovely phrase "creative dignity" set me thinking about how the Church as the Bride of God brings a dignity to the Bridegroom in this Divine-human dialogue through the Gospel.

Indeed, sensitivity and discernment is called for when reading a book, whether that is Holy Scripture or the latest best seller; sensitivity, so that we can empathise with the plot and characters but discernment so that we may not lose ourselves vicariously and inadvertently become a slave to our own passions.

We must always be aware of the danger of *eisegesis* - reading into the text something that is not there, but that which suits or "reinforces" our own opinion, will, prejudice or neurosis. Yet we are given a creative imagination by our Creator Father to see our own life in Christ through the mirror of scripture. We possess a rational mind (and the mind of Christ) plus the support of the Holy Spirit to read the word within the spiritual framework and discipline of the preaching and tradition of the Church.

The art of hearing with our eyes and seeing with our ears is not a blurring of the senses, it is a special charisma. It is the gift of Love which the Creator gives to us in order that we may see the world and ourselves in the way that He sees us; but first we must become like little children, who looking at illustrations in a picture book, hear all the words that the pictures (icons) convey, or listening to a story being read by their father see the image of every word that is heard. Investing ourselves in the word of God is the creative art of faith, putting it into

practice is the application of true science (knowledge).

*Fr Jonathan*



## THE KINGDOM OF TEMPTATION AND WORRY

Observation that ‘most people live lives of quiet desperation...’ made by American transcendentalist [Henry David Thoreau](#) 150 years ago, was prophetic in its character, as we are learning increasingly day by day. Only now this despair is not so ‘quiet’ anymore. It is enough to turn on the TV, or check the faces of the people on the public transport or at the shops, and you will see what I mean. The despair is ever-present in our society, so much so, that even a pleasure-loving pop culture cannot escape from it. For example, it is impossible to imagine that in 21<sup>st</sup> century we could have anything as optimistic and joyful as a Woodstock festival, or the advent of disco music. We couldn’t even have that energy present in constructive anger of early punk groups. So, despair is paralysing even the most banal and simplest possibilities of the creative expression. In our culture today, we are witnessing the very end of those vital and life-giving narratives that give to human lives meaningful direction.

How did we find ourselves in this place? Where is all of this leading us eventually?

It is for the others to attempt to answer this complex questions; I will just be glad if I could point towards two of the most immediate and obvious problems - those of *temptations* and the *worries*.

Most of us know part of the Gospels where Christ is tempted in the desert, He resist the temptations and defeats the devil. On the later occasion, He gently warns the apostles against excessive worry and concern about the future. He leaves everything in the hands of the Father, who lovingly looks after all of His creation. Fine, but how is all of this relevant for us, today - the question arises? For human beings, who are also created in Christ’s image - He Himself is the ultimate psychologist and the anthropologist. In other words, He knows the very root of the human problem and He also gives us the access to that needed and the most precious remedies.

We know from the Gospels that whenever Jesus visited people’s homes during His travelling ministry, the most prevalent feelings experienced are those of Peace and Joy. This was very often followed with the gesture of repentance, like in the story of Mary Magdalene or the Publican. Desire for a God-like power and control over the life of others (and our own destiny) is very basic human temptation, one that is the essence and also the gravest consequence of the fall of the man. We can never find a true Peace for ourselves if we don’t renounce and banish it from our lives forever .

In a similar manner, constant worry and anxiety reduces dramatically, our very chances to ever experience a pure God-given Joy. Even over-emphasised concern about one’s own sinfulness is paradoxical if it goes against the joyful fact and the miracle of our existence and

our most divine redemption. Maybe, examples of repentance in the Gospels, has something to teach us about that.

Peace and joy experienced by those who encountered Jesus in person, or after His holy Ascension - in the life of Spirit, was once the natural state of our Being; one that was intended for us by our Creator. Human tendency to worry and to invent different ploys in order to secure and gain more power, are basically two sides of the same coin. In our fallen, post-Eden condition, temptations and worries are like phantoms that haunt our lives to the point of despair. Attempts, to gain some kind of control or a different perspective which will give us comfort, will stay fruitless - if we don't decide to bring our lives to the light of Truth. Any culture or civilisation, which makes a conscious decision to cut-off itself from the source of that Light is condemned to witness its own ending. All of it beginning, of course, with the life of quiet and very manageable... Despair.

*Aleksandar Miljkovic*

## GLOSSARY OF ORTHODOX TERMS: -Z-

**ZEAL** Devotion; enthusiastic obedience to God; a quality of divine diligence or fervor. Christians are a) called to follow Christ with enthusiasm and zeal (Acts 18:25; Rom. 12:10, 11) and b) warned against misguided enthusiasm, a zeal "not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10:2).

**ZEON** The hot water used by the priest for the Eucharist. It is added to the chalice during the Communion hymn in commemoration of the water that flowed out of the side of the crucified Christ when he was pierced with the spear.

**ZONE** The belt or girdle worn by the priests on his sticharion. It signifies the power of faith.

For the original text please click [here](#) and [here](#).

## OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

Fr. Jonathan received news from Maria-Vera (OS 1993-2001) from Athens, Greece. Part of her letter is included below:

*In August we had a short holiday in Constantinople with my mother and the children and we had a good time. I am attaching some photos of the Orthodox Patriarchate, where we were blessed to attend the service and the children to receive Holy Communion.*

*All our love,*

*Maria, Spyros, Faye, Yiorgos.*





## PARISH NEWS

On Holy Cross day (Sept. 14), the Parish was delighted to see the newly illumined Zakhary Firth enter the Orthodox Faith. His baptism was held at the Chaplaincy Centre after the liturgy of the Holy Cross. We wish little Zachary many years and every blessing in our Lord Jesus Christ! There are a few photos included below of the family and godparents.



We would like to send our love and prayers to Angelos, Dimitri, Katya and Luca as well as Yevgeniy who have now moved from Lancaster. We would like to thank them for their help and support and wish them every blessing in Christ towards their new start!

We would like to welcome Thodoris and Theophania (OS 2002-2007) back to our community after 6 years that they have been away in various parts of the world!

Fr. Bogdan from Romania sent us the next letter with a photo of his Anglophile cat!

*My Dears,*

*Even our cat is filo-British. TOMITZA is a tom-cat; he likes the Union Jack flag.*

*In Christ,  
Fr. Bogdan*



*The Anglophile Tomitza from Romania!*

## MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

6<sup>th</sup> Oct: Holy Apostle Thomas

7<sup>th</sup> Oct: Sts Sergius & Bacchus the Great Martyrs of Syria

10<sup>th</sup> Oct: The 14 Holy Elders of Optina Monastery in Russia

12<sup>th</sup> Oct: St. Wilfrid, Bishop of York (+709)

18<sup>th</sup> Oct: Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke

19<sup>th</sup> Oct: St. John of Kronstadt

26<sup>th</sup> Oct: The Glorious Great Martyr Demetrius the Myrrh-bearer of Thessalonica

28<sup>th</sup> Oct: The Holy Protection of the Theotokos

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 October\*

Sat. 5 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C. followed by “meet & greet” with the Orthodox if new students attend.
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.

---

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



*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.orthodox-lancaster.org.uk](http://www.orthodox-lancaster.org.uk)

[www.antiochian-orthodox.co.uk](http://www.antiochian-orthodox.co.uk)

