

**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'*



*Ἰσθρονος Χριστός, Ζωοδότης.  
(Φ. Κόντογλου, 1962).*

*The Parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,  
belongs to the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland.  
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)*

## FAREWELL

In some cultures, when young males (it is usually just males as these societies are male dominated) leave their small village to seek employment or education in the big cities, the whole village congregates and offer gifts to the bus driver in exchange for his extra careful driving so the young man reaches his destination safe and in good spirits. In these close knit societies the departing young man is 'adopted' by the whole village, which take pride in his future achievements and anticipate benefiting from his good fortune in the future. In this particular instance that I want to talk about, there is no expectation on the young man, other than he will be happy, successful and healthy, and maybe visit us once in a while.

Panos has been an integral part of our little community in Holy Cross in Lancaster for many years. He arrived in Lancaster in 2006, and immediately made an impact in the Liturgical life of our community, offering his tireless service to Fr Jonathan helping with every -laity- aspect of the process of preparing for, carrying out and returning things to their original state before, during and after almost every Holy Liturgy since. Panos has been setting up our Church, singing, serving and clearing up again every week, as well as maintaining the Parish's website, Facebook page and publications. Not a simple task, keeping in mind what else Panos has been doing with his time.

Having graduated top of his class in his native Greece on the field of Computer Science and Telecommunications (collecting numerous scholarships from various private and public sources each academic year), he went on to receive an MSc EPSRC Studentship in the Computing Department here at Lancaster University. He completed this with a distinction (an impressive 74/100 overall grade).

Naturally, a second studentship was to follow, this time for a PhD (again from EPSRC to be carried out in the Computing Department here at Lancaster University).

Having moved to a postdoc post in the same department he completed his MSc and PhD, Panos continued to set the church up, sing, serve and tidy up for another 18 months, approximately. Then in July of this year, Panos mentioned to me that it was probably time for him to move on to a different institution, most likely abroad. Inevitable, I know. There is only so much a small University can offer to a mind as gifted as the one Panos has been blessed with (but works extremely hard to develop even further). Panos has been offered a substantial promotion in his academic career, asked to join one of the leading universities in Europe in his area of work, the University of Zurich, Switzerland's largest university in the country's -in my opinion- most beautiful city. So the bus has arrived for Panos, it is time for him to board it for greener pastures further afield.

But hold on! When I was describing the rituals some communities perform when their brightest and greatest leave, I neglected to mention that they do have a ritual for when these young men return to their village. The whole village congregates again, and each and every member of the community patiently awaits for their turn to shake the bus driver's hand in gratitude for bringing the young man back safe, wiser, stronger, successful and ready. Whilst I might not offer any gifts to the pilot who will fly Panos to Zurich, I certainly commit -God willing- to pick him up from the airport when he returns to take up a much deserved professorship in the North West, maybe even here in Lancaster.

Panos is a modest, well spoken, kind, extremely sharp and intelligent young man, someone who earns other people's

respect and affection within minutes of meeting him. A very dedicated Orthodox, a good friend who will be missed greatly. Auf Wiedersehen, mein Freund. Εἰς τὸ επανειδεῖν ἀγαπητέ.

*Konstantinos Arfanis*



## SPIRITUAL FIREWORKS

The night sky will be lit up over Lancaster on 2<sup>nd</sup> November in a display of bursting colour with rockets whizzing, booming and exploding from the free firework display that is held near the Castle. No doubt throughout the land people will be holding bonfire parties, waving sparklers and eating hot sausage rolls to keep warm in the depths of our northern winter. There is something life enhancing to celebrate light against the prevailing darkness. Yet the historical origin of the winter bonfire and fireworks, Guy Fawkes and his companions contriving to blow up Parliament, is hardly reason for celebration:

*Remember, remember!  
The fifth of November,  
The Gunpowder treason and plot;*

*I know of no reason  
Why the Gunpowder treason  
Should ever be forgot!*

I remember as a little boy finding the experience of people making images of a Guy and then throwing it on to a bonfire frightening and distasteful. Thank goodness this practice has largely ceased. Sadly, political intrigue, war and conflicts in which explosions are only too real and horrific have not ceased in our wounded world. The true explosion of Light is to be seen in the nativity of Christ at Christmas and in His self emptying humility. The Word became flesh in the darkness of a cave for the healing of the nations. This illuminating Presence lights up our life so that we burst with joy, not just for one night but for ever. As we approach with holy fear this Most Divine Mystery of Christ's Nativity in the flesh, let us prepare in our hearts a place for the Christchild to be born and to fill our life with His Light. Now that is a cause for celebration and spiritual fireworks!

*Fr. Jonathan*

## HOW DO PEOPLE OF FAITH CONTRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF THE UNIVERSITY?

Isaac Alston gave a talk at Faithshare during freshers week at Lancaster University. The talk was given last month representing the Orthodox Christians of the University. Please follow the [link](#) to read his very interesting talk!



## **“A TEAR IN THE CURTAIN”**

### **BY JOHN SYMONS**

*Book review by Fr. Jonathan*

A teacher and his family invite some foreign students for a holiday.

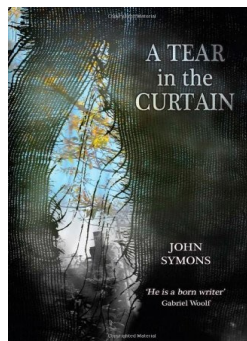
In this historical novel we follow the lives of these families in Britain, Hungary and Russia set against the backdrop of Cold War Europe. The title poetically illustrates the conditions that limit us and the openings that provide opportunities.

Fast moving and easy to read, John Symons' well researched novel imprints finely drawn characters on to factual and historical world events, much like an icon painter would write images on a well prepared base. The reader is invited to peep through the veil between east and west and espy the irrepressible grace and indomitable strength of the human spirit which is always stronger than the most unbending and seemingly immutable political ideology. This is more than an interior monologue or indulgent interest of the author, for he engages and draws from the reader that most authentic response, that hallmark of memory of where we were when we heard about it on the news!

It evoked personal reflections from my own early and later teaching career, one showing a Government film on what to do in the event of a nuclear strike, the other being part of a European student exchange! The threat and the fear in the first was palpable, the hope and the joy in the latter was real. For those of a younger generation such empathy is transmitted by relating to the characters as it were by osmosis, taking up the sap of common human experience.

Charming and sensitive, this is a family read which spans the generations, crossing cultures in its content but timeless in its observations. It has a simple,

sweet economy where enough is an excellent sufficiency and which leaves you food for thought. The writer takes us from black and white snapshots to colour prints, from Newsreel to Newsnight in this journey which spans a most defining chromatic and axial period seen through the lens of the persona. If you want a glimpse into such a time, then this is a book which will furnish bare dates with soul filled insights - it leaves not just a tear in the Iron curtain but it will leave a tear in your eye!



You can read more about the book at the publisher's website [here](#).

## **OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER**

Fr. Jonathan received news from Li-ying Wu from Taiwan, as she was at a conference in Vladivostok, Russia! Her letter follows below:

*Dear Father Jonathan,*

*It is such a delight to have received this email along with the October issue in Vladivostok, Russia, as I have just arrived here for a conference on intercultural communication. The reason why I am particularly happy about coming to Russia is that I know that Russia is an Orthodox country and I do look forward to visiting some Orthodox churches here in this city.*

My accommodation is in a hotel on campus of Far Eastern Federal University overlooking a bay and nearby forests. The scene very much resembles that of Lancaster campus. Yes, it does remind me of the precious time at Lancaster, of which attending the liturgy is always a memorable one. It is great that Yu-fang and Thodoris have moved back to England, close to Lancaster, certainly closer to it than from Taiwan. God always has His plan and we should just wait patiently.

Please give my warmest regards to the Liturgy community, the old ones as well as the new members. I hope that I could go back to Lancaster for a visit soon. Yes, for that, I await patiently.

Best wishes,  
Li-ying

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Fr. Jonathan also received news from Iryna Minakova from Cambridge:

Dear Fr. Jonathan,

I hope to find you in good health. Great hello from Cambridge! At the moment we have all settled well and are happy. We often think about our community in Lancaster, even the children remember it and talk about it but it is wonderful to have a big Orthodox community within walking distance here as well.. Everything seems to be very close to our house: the school, the nursery, sports facilities, parks, city centre, etc. So, there is a lot of choice as for events, culture and sport activities.

Every weekend we spend here is pleasantly intense. We have been to a New Market horse race, to Abbey Gardens. Last weekend we went to a travelling circus. I know that last week there was a big celebration of Ukrainian culture in London where lots of famous fashion designers, artists and politicians were invited. They

introduced Ukrainian culture to British public. Unfortunately, I could not make it ... Recently we bought a digital piano and are all learning to play it now :-). We still have not decided whether we continue to live in this house and build the kitchen extension or buy a new house. Fortunately, we have plenty of time to carefully think about it. Please, pass our regards to all our parish and big hugs to Panos who is moving next week. He has been a family of the church and many will pray for him. I am attaching several photos of our holidays in France, the province of Dordogne.

Kind regards,  
Iryna, Bart, Paul and Anna.





## PARISH NEWS

We would like to thank Konstatinos and Vera-Nina Arfanis for their kind donation of communion wine to the community. May the Lord give the blessing!

Fr. Bogdan sends this picture of a deer who sought protection in the yard of the church in Blejoi, Romania, where he serves. Psalm 42:1; “As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God”.

Dear Father,

Today, during the service of a wedding in the church of our parish a splendid piece of deer entered in the church yard. It was huge (the vet said it was almost 10 years old). It is a rare specie of deer from the Romanian Carpathians. The wonder is not only how she arrived here, escaping from the Bucov zoo garden 6-7 km from Blejoi, but also that she chose to enter the church yard. She was guided by Saint Paraskeve many people said. She could have died many times before coming here; it is amazing how she knew she could find protection with us. She may have came to worship. Unbelievable, unbelievable, unbelievable! I attach a picture here.

In Christ,  
Fr. Bogdan



## MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1<sup>st</sup> Nov: Sts Cosmas and Damian, the Holy Unmercenaries

8<sup>th</sup> Nov: Synaxis of Archangel Michael & Gabriel and the other Bodiless Powers

9<sup>th</sup> Nov: St. Nectarios the wonderworker, Metropolitan of Pentapolis

10<sup>th</sup> Nov: St. Arsenius of Cappadocia

13<sup>th</sup> Nov: St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople

14<sup>th</sup> Nov: St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica

15<sup>th</sup> Nov: Beginning of the Nativity fast

16<sup>th</sup> Nov: Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew

17<sup>th</sup> Nov: St. Hilda, Abbess of Whitby (+680)

21<sup>st</sup> Nov: The Entry of our Most-Holy Lady the Theotokos into the Temple

23<sup>rd</sup> Nov: St. Alexander Nevsky

25<sup>th</sup> Nov: Great Martyr Catherine of Alexandria

30<sup>th</sup> Nov: Holy Apostle Andrew the first called

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 November\*

<b>Sat. 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
<b>Sat. 9<sup>th</sup></b>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
<b>Sat. 16<sup>th</sup></b>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
<b>Sun. 24<sup>th</sup></b>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in Q.R.
<b>Sat. 30<sup>th</sup></b>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C. 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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