



## 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'*



*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)*

## THE GENIUS OF GENEALOGY

*Sunday of the Righteous Forefathers. The Genius of Genealogy - relatively speaking!*

On this Sunday before Christmas we remember the righteous forefathers of Christ. St Matthew begins his gospel with a genealogy tracing Christ's ancestry back to Abraham to show that Jesus is indeed the long awaited Messiah of the Davidic Line born according to the Law and the Prophets.

Our modern interest in tracing our own family tree shows that we need to know who we are. The passage would be a monotonous list except for one thing that God knew all of them by name and called them into existence for His divine plan of salvation. Here we see the unique dignity of each individual, God calls each of us by name into that dialogue with Him within that ministry and calling that he has given to each. As Isaiah wrote: *The Lord called me before I was born from my mother's womb he pronounced my name* (Is. 49:1). The character and personality is conveyed through the name. How important it is we call each other by name for it shows that we care. The fear of being unknown, unimportant, unloved destroys us and withers our soul. Yet it is this fear that Our Lord addresses to those he meets on the periphery of society, Bartimaeus the blind man, Photine the woman of Samaria, Zacchaeus the Tax Collector. *"I have called you by name, you are mine."* says God to the prophet Isaiah (Is 43:1).

When Mary Magdalene came to the tomb at Easter dawn looking for Jesus she saw him standing there and did not recognise him it was only when Our Lord called her by name "Mary" she turned around and said to him Rabboni. Imagine the unspeakable tearful joy that Mary Magdalene had when she heard her

name spoken by Our Lord. Just one word and the whole world changed for her. Death became Life, darkness became light. Everything became new and invested with joyous meaning and purpose.

St Paul at the beginning and end of his letters wishes to be remembered to various people in the church that he had founded whom he names. It is an expression of love and concern that he has for those whom he has met as fellow workers for Christ in His Vineyard. God calls Adam in the garden of Eden by name and he gives to Adam the power to name the animals to have authority over them and responsibility for them just as we name our children. When we want to dehumanise someone we give them a number but God does not count numbers he only calls us by name. My fellow Mercian William Shakespeare in Romeo and Juliet writes:

Tis but thy name that is my enemy;  
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.  
What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,  
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part  
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!  
What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet;

But each rose has its own peculiar hue and scent, its own colour, density, openness, size and height.

At the end of the list of names we find the name above all names -the name of Jesus- that long procession passes through generations until it comes to rest at Bethlehem (the House of Bread) fitting for the One who is the Bread of Heaven who feeds us today in the Holy Mystery. Joseph is told to call Mary's son Jesus the Greek form of Yeshua which means the Lord is my salvation - yes my salvation; for I cannot live my life vicariously because of the faith of my grandparents. He saves his people from their sins through personal encounter. His name speaks of His purpose. The whole story is wrapped

up in that one name - Jesus. Lord Jesus Christ son of God have mercy on me. This is the prayer of the heart that we say as Orthodox Christians - the prayer which has Christ's name at the very centre. Jesus calls us by name, as servants, disciples, followers, friends -his holy nation, his living stones and temples of the Holy Spirit- these titles bestow upon us honour and love but none of them is as important as our name.

**St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Philadelphians*, 4,1 (ANF, Vol. I)**

Wherefore I write boldly to your love, which is worthy of God, and exhort you to have but one faith, and one [kind of] preaching, and one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ; and His blood which was shed for us is one; one loaf also is broken to all [the communicants], and one cup is distributed among them all: there is but one altar for the whole Church, and one bishop, with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow servants. Since, also, there is but one unbegotten Being, God, even the Father; and one only-begotten Son, God, the Word and man; and one Comforter, the Spirit of truth; and also one preaching, and one faith, and one baptism; and one Church which the holy apostles established from one end of the earth to the other by the blood of Christ, and by their own sweat and toil; it behooves you also, therefore, as "a peculiar people, and a holy nation," to perform all things with harmony in Christ.

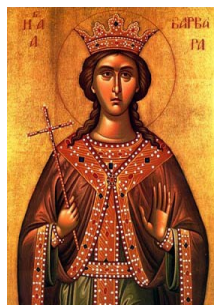
Yes we are a peculiar people set aside for holiness, chosen by God out of the world for an intimate relationship with him as Father and child. Isn't this just wonderful.

Before you were born from your mother's womb I pronounced your name. Christ comes to live with us so that he may be born in our hearts.

In each and every generation God calls men and women to follow him - this is the personalism of the Bible and genius of genealogy. It is important to know who we are, our ancestry, but it is more important to know to whom we belong and where we are going.

I have called you by name, and you are mine. Amen.

*Fr. Jonathan*



## **MY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ORTHODOX CELTIC-BRITISH SAINTS.**

Two years ago God granted me a great treasure. That treasure is the discovery of the British and Celtic Orthodox Saints. Why do I love these saints so much? Why do I have such a strong bond with saints which are not from my country (Greece) and they are completely unknown to the most of my people?

It may sound a little strange but I always felt like I had a strong bond with Ireland and England. I always loved and I still love their traditional music, the castles, their natural environment (although seen it only in photos) and their stories about brave knights in shining armour! I have never been to these places, but I pray to God that one day I will be able to visit.

To be sincere, when I first discovered the Celtic-British saints, I had my doubts about their Orthodox roots. In that time the only thing I knew, or thought I knew, was that England was originally a Roman Catholic country and the first thought I had when I saw the saints in some hagiographies was “are these saints Orthodox?” Yes, now I know that this thought had not any logical basis at all! And you cannot imagine how happy I was when all my doubts about them vanished away! You cannot imagine how happy I was when I discovered that this land I loved so much was full of Orthodox monks, holy martyrs, and hermits!

So I found it really interesting to start searching about these saints, collect their biographies, translate them into Greek and make these saints more popular to the Greek people.

Until today I think that God gave me a great gift. It is a great gift to know about Saint Kevin of Glendalough, Saint Winifred of Holy well and her uncle Saint Beuno, Saint Columba, Saint Etheldreda, Saint Ita and the rest of the Celtic and British saints! These saints make me happy and it is a great pleasure to read their biographies and getting deeper and deeper into their stories. I pray to them when I have hard times in my everyday life and I receive love and compassion.

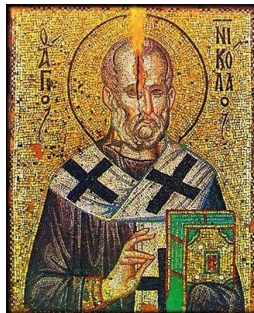
### **A miracle that was forgotten?**

I have faith in God and I believe that one day, a lot of people of these Islands will return to the Orthodox Church! Many Orthodox parishes make their appearance in England already and it seems like an old and beloved tradition that returns from a forgotten time! That's how I see it, even if it is to introduce my thoughts a little poetically!

With respect,

*Christos Vasilopoulos, Greece*

<http://orthodoxy-rainbow.blogspot.co.uk>



## **TIME OF THE SAINTS**

Quite often, as we approach the season of Nativity Fast, my thoughts turn to Holy Saints of the Church. Who are these men and women, and in which way are they different from the rest of us? Could there be any ‘measurable criteria’ applied, in order to distinguish, or even classify them in some meaningful and understandable way? A simple answer to these questions is - probably not. Still, there is a lingering desire to do just that; a nagging curiosity to find out where and how deep is that invisible chasm that separates *us* from *them*. After all, it was mentioned in the writings of the Church Fathers that our human life's goal or *telos* is just that: becoming a one of the holy ones.

Perhaps, a useful way to approach this difficult subject is by involving a ‘third party’ into the equation. Lord's Angels and Archangels have a very special place in the Holy Scriptures. Orthodox Christians celebrate them on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November. We recognise their role as personal guides and guardians, and the *forerunners* of God's holy judgements for us. Finally, they are also *messengers* of an eternal mercy that is flowing out of Heaven towards the Earth, prompting us all upward - away from the many corruptions of the world. In some theological

discourses, Christ himself prefigured is as an 'Angel of the Lord' in the Old Testament (the hospitality of Abraham is one such example).

Having all these celestial vocations, it is easy to forget that angels are also creatures of God (in a sense of having a free will) and that our shared and common Vocation is to proclaim and celebrate God's incomprehensible glory and to pay tribute through ceaseless praise and the spread of love. In that sense, I believe that saints are those unique individuals who are willing to and persistent in their efforts to emulate and imitate these angelic attributes in their earthly existence. Disregarding the fact that angels do not have material bodies like our own, they keep on re-discovering their chosen vocation as guides and guardians of the souls; forerunners and messengers of an everlasting glory that is on offer to all of us.

Eschatological perspective puts saints firmly in the role of the angels. They will fulfil that role in the Second Coming of Christ, when they will announce His return in the last, majestic Advent. The joyous message of the saints to the rest of the humanity will then correspond to and echo the message of an archangel Gabriel to a humble maid from Nazareth, who is to become a divine prototype of the renewed and the redeemed humanity, by gladly obeying the God's will.

Nevertheless, question still remains - what is a making of a true saint, how can they be recognised? If we carry on with the same line of reasoning that we applied earlier, it would be fair to say that saints (just like angels) have a certain transparency in their actions, self forgetfulness in their purposes. They, I feel, could be single-minded to the point of a certain charming and benevolent stubbornness - resembling a spontaneous purity of a small child. The saints also radically renounce the expectations of the world and decide to inhabit the angelic dimen-

sion instead. In this dimension, they live in the intense awareness of God's presence throughout His creation, which keeps them in a constant state of holy repentance and the genuine compassion and love for the neighbour. They are unreservedly known to Christ because they truly live in Him.

Our great hope and joy is their constant and secret dwelling among us that is pulling all inevitably to the otherwise unreachable domain of the sacred. In this domain we will know them at once and fully for what they truly are: a mysterious Advent of the final Harvest of the Lord.

*Aleksandar Miljkovic*



## OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

We would like to thank [Thomas Tziortzis](#) from London, [Mr. Voutsoulides](#) from Patmos island, Greece, [Nikolaos Georgopoulos](#) from Athens, Greece, and [Anastasios Papadopoulos](#) from Servia, Greece, for remembering the needs of the Parish, especially for sending candles, incense and charcoal for the church. May God give the blessing!



Fr. Jonathan received news from Panos Georgopoulos, who sends his good wishes and love to the Parish from Zurich. See a few photos bellow of the church of Saint Demetrios where he attended his first liturgy in the largest city of Switzerland:

*Dear father,*

*I attended the Holy Liturgy yesterday at the St Demetrius church here at Zurich (a few photos from my mobile phone attached). It is a nice church with over 100 people! They had a memorial at the end and a sanctification of the Holy Water as it was close to the beginning of the month. They also have a big meeting space below the Church building where we had coffee, tea and cakes.*

*I also met two of my old friends (from the Church camp in Greece) here that I wasn't expecting! Later on the day I also met the sister of a friend of mine! There are many Greeks around here, which feels nice, but I also want to meet locals and engage with people from other nationalities.*

*I have started my job at the ETH Zurich and I am searching for a house in parallel. Glory be to God for all things!*

*I am sending you my love and regards from Zurich.*

*Your blessings,  
Panos*



*The Church of St. Demetrios in Zurich.*



*The interior of the Church of St. Demetrios in Zurich.*

## MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

4<sup>th</sup> Dec: Great Martyr Barbara

6<sup>th</sup> Dec: St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia

9<sup>th</sup> Dec: The conception of the Most-Holy Theotokos by the Righteous Anna

11<sup>th</sup> Dec: Hieromartyr Metropolitan Seraphim (Chichagov)

12<sup>th</sup> Dec: St. Spyridon the Wonderworker, Bishop of Tremithus

13<sup>th</sup> Dec: St. Herman of Alaska, Wonderworker of All America

20<sup>th</sup> Dec: The repose of St. John of Kronstadt

25<sup>th</sup> Dec: The Nativity according to the flesh of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

27<sup>th</sup> Dec: Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen

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 December\*

Sat. 7 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 14 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 21 <sup>st</sup>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Wed. 24 <sup>th</sup>	6:00 pm	Christmas Liturgy <u>to be confirmed</u> - Please contact Fr. Jonathan
Sun. 29 <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)



Sketches are created at the Holy Monastery of "The Annunciation of the Theotokos" Chios, Greece, courtesy of fr. Theodosios Dendrinos and the Aposinakti Diakonia of the Church of Greece.