



**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 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)*

THIRD TIME LUCKY!

Idioms and proverbs form a rich part of our verbal communication and sometimes need to be explained when speaking with others from different cultures. Yet even for those who have been brought up with them, their meaning can be obscure when subjected to examination.

The origins of sayings are often *lost in the mists of time* yet they have a provenance which is often born of observation and experience. *Third time lucky* is a proverb that has fascinated me. It is variously ascribed to 19th c. figures of literature like Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Letters addressed to R. H. Horne*, 1839: 'The luck of the third adventure' is proverbial. It occurs in Alexander Hislop's *The proverbs of Scotland*, 1862: "The third time's lucky."

However, one suspects that there is an older deed that lies behind the saying. Why is the third time lucky? There are a few suggestions. The most common is that it alludes to the belief that, under English law, anyone who survived three attempts at hanging would be set free. Indeed there was a certain John Lee who in the 19th c., did indeed survive three attempts to have him hanged and he was eventually set free.

Truth is stranger than fiction it seems, yet one suspects that the saying "third time lucky" predates even this strange "twist of fate".

There is a positive general abstract-
ion that one can glean from the saying, that, having hardships, trials and setbacks we ought to persevere and not give up. Indeed this is what the Apostle Paul states in his letter to the Romans 5:3-4; *And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.*

In this sense it echoes the phrase "if at first you don't succeed - try, try again."

Of course luck, chance and fate have little if any bearing on persistence, perseverance and patience - indeed they would seem to be poles apart in terms of attitude and disposition. The saying of something three times adds conviction and determination to the thought rather than charm; the attempt at doing something a third time proves the intention rather than chance.

Our life as Christians is bound up with the third day Resurrection of Christ. Pain, Patience and Paradise is the pattern that we follow.

The Apostle Paul was no stranger to this. His perseverance indeed proved to be not charmed or lucky but providential and powerful: 2 Corinthians 12:12; *Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all **perseverance**, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.*

Fr. Jonathan



WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

Genesis 1:31; *Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.*

The plight of our humble bumble bee
Is bound up with people like you and like me.
Our future or end it seems is at hand
Depending on what we do to the land.

The bees are discerning in what they select
And so are the wise amongst the elect.
Virtue in shadows and nectar in shade
Bring sunlight and sweetness to the world God has made.

Will the bounty of plenty be brought to the hive?
Will growth in the Spirit be found in the shrine?
Hexagonal storerooms are treasures to share,
But without discretion, the cupboard is bare.

As stewards and workers conserving the seed
Acquire just enough for everyone's need!
Judge then with wisdom to take for our good
Employ joyful "could" and dutiful "should."

The future of flora and fauna is tied
To our wilful choice of insecticide
You can plant more flowers or call your MP
But answer the question: "To be or not bee?"

"Into the life eternal the Holy Scriptures lead us, which teach us through divine words. But so long as our immaturity forbids our understanding their deep thought, we exercise our spiritual perceptions upon profane writings, which are not altogether different, and in which we perceive the truth as it were in shadows and in mirrors... Consequently we must be conversant with poets, with historians, with orators, indeed with all men who may further our soul's salvation... Now, then, altogether after the manner of bees must we use these writings, for the bees do not visit all the flowers without discrimination, nor indeed do they seek to carry away entire those upon which they light, but rather, having taken so much as is adapted to their needs, they let the rest go. So we, if wise, shall take from heathen books whatever befits us and is allied to the truth, and shall pass over the rest... Since we must needs attain to the life to come through virtue, our attention is to be chiefly fastened upon those many passages from the poets, from the historians, and especially from the philosophers, in which virtue itself is praised."

--- St. Basil the Great, from Address to Young Men on the Right Use of Greek Literature



Bees respect Holy figures - the image of Christ remains uncovered inside the beehive.

YOU ARE MY ANTI-SPAM HERO

When I was a little boy the only form of Spam was a reconstituted pork product of spiced ham. Some believe the word meant "special processed American meat" or "shoulders of pork and ham". Whatever the acronym stood for, it came in a tin and was served with baked beans and mashed potatoes for lunch or tea. This once ubiquitous product is still available, but today spam is more associated with those equally pervasive unsolicited messages sent over the Internet, for the purposes of advertising, and spreading viruses. So it is with a certain perplexed and amused satisfaction that every time I empty my spam box from my e-mail I am met with a congratulatory message: *You are my Anti-Spam hero!*

Such hyperbole is designed to appeal to the ego and personalised through the use of the possessive pronoun "my." So to who am I a hero? Of course I do not imagine for one instant that a real person sends this each time or that I am the only person to whom the message is sent; it is simply a computer generated response to my deletion. What about the term hero?

A hero was originally in Greek mythology a demi-god, son of an immortal and a mortal - no congruity there then! However, it came to mean one who is a warrior, a protector or defender. Here we begin to see an appropriate application of the word. I am indeed protecting and defending my computer. I am called to be vigilant against attacks of dangerous viruses.

So what has this to do with spiritual awareness? Every day we are bombarded by malicious thoughts (malware) that **does** have an origin with a personal entity. The evil one will send us SPAM in the form of Sleaze, Pride, Avarice, Machination and we must be on our

guard. We are called to be heroes and heroines to defend our faith and protect our soul. The Holy Apostle Paul indeed encourages us to become heroes and heroines as warriors to put on the whole armour of God.

Ephesians 6:10-18 ; Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

By God's grace we have the firewalls of the Holy Theotokos, the saints and guardian angels to protect us, we have the filter of conscience, the hardware of Fasting and Prayer, and the advice of an administrator (spiritual father) to shield us from harm. The Church fathers teach us to be ever vigilant through nepsis and not to dwell on the thought; we should not allow the thought to be accepted or entertained and thus through curiosity or negligence, invade us i.e. **do not** click on the link.

Peter 5:8; νήψατε, γρηγορήσατε. ὁ ἀντίδικος ὑμῶν διάβολος ὡς λέων ὠρυόμενος περιπατεῖ ζητῶν τινα καταπιεῖν – “Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”

Our Christian struggle against the world of passions, corruptions and illusions is in fact asceticism (from the Greek: ἀσκησις = exercise.)

Let us then take every precaution and exercise our mind with discernment today and every day, so that we may indeed become true heroes for the faith!

Fr. Jonathan



TEAR IN THE CURTAIN

Fr. Jonathan is in contact with the writer of the book “Tear in the curtain” for which he wrote a review. The writer, John Symons, has now created a website and sent an email to Fr. Jonathan about it. You may want to read it and have a look at the website below!

Dear Father Jonathan,

You have been so thoughtful and helpful, and you might like to see this.

Two kind friends took the initiative to create this website, live since noon yesterday, four short videos of me talking about my book, with a brief pause between them.

I've never done such a thing before, but my wife commended me for doing it!

My book seems to affect people, and how much I want it to get to the RIGHT people.

*With prayers for the Little Lent,
John*

<http://www.john-symons.com/>

OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

How good is our God and His adopted children by grace that they think of us. We have received candles from Natalja Xazana who brought them back from a monastery in Latvia. The mystery gift of candles was found to be from Anastasia Stamatelatou from London, and we have also received another packet of candles from Sophocles and Angeliki Ioulianou from Cyprus together with a generous donation. This is in addition to the generous donation made by another Old Stavronian who wishes to remain anonymous. For these gifts of kindness we give glory to God and ask a blessing

on those donors whose generous spirit moves us greatly.

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1st Jan: St. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Ceasarea in Cappadocia

6th Jan: The Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

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

17th Jan: St. Anthony the Great

18th Jan: St. Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria

20th Jan: Righteous Euthymius the Great

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

25th Jan: St. Gregory the Theologian

28th Jan: St. Ephraim the Syrian

30th 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

Services during January*

Sat. 4 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 11 th	10:00 am	Hours in R.C. as Fr. Jonathan will be in London
Sat. 18 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sun. 26 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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