

**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'



*Ἦθρονος Χριστός Ζωωδότης.
(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)***

STEREOTYPES AND STEREOVISION

The widely held but fixed and oversimplified image of people as a type is quite misleading and dangerous as much as for ourselves as for those we impose with this category.

The stereotype of women as multi-tasking carers moved by emotion is as general as seeing men as logical, single-minded, careerists. I suspect that there are more differences within the genders than between them and individuals, both women and men, may have many faces in the course of a day depending on the circumstances in which they find themselves.

If we look at the Gospels, we see that our Lord addressed the particular person, his initiatives and responses were always particular and apposite to the character and needs. Certainly the “profiles” of Jesus’ nearest disciples are diverse. The outspoken, headstrong leader Peter, at one time denying His Lord became a wiser and humbler vessel of truth in older age: *John 21:18; Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.*”

What a transition we see between Saul the Persecutor of Christians and Paul the bold ambassador and apostle of Christ to the Gentiles. The doubting Thomas was first to acknowledge the divinity of Christ as “My Lord and My God!” The woman openly weeping at Jesus feet can be contrasted to the women who dared only to secretly touch the hem of his garment- one need look no further than the sisters Martha and Mary to see difference in character between sisters: *Luke 10:38-42; Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a*

certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.” And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”

Both sisters were attentive to our Lord; one is anxious the other quiet, one serves and waits on him with food the other worships him and waits on His word.

When St Elizabeth the New Martyr acquired a small property within the city of Moscow she constructed a hospital; an orphanage for girls and a convent. She named it after St Martha and St Mary. According to the story, the Patriarch of Moscow questioned the dedication wishing to correct it to St Mary and Martha. St Elizabeth was insistent that Martha should take pre-eminence as she saw the nuns ministry as diaconal rather than monastic!

We are all different and that is what makes life so rich and the Church so complementary in its organic structure.

I remember some lines from the film “Robin Prince of Thieves” when a little girl sees the black friend of Robin called Azim for the first time she asks:

“Did God paint you?”

He replies *“For certain!”*

“Why?”

“Because He loves wondrous varieties.”

Indeed, God made us all unique in His image with a wondrous variety.

The one who chooses stereotypes, looks with one eye on a two dimensional cardboard “cut-out” that is paraded be-

fore a self confirming prejudice but those who have stereovision or stereoscopic vision have two eyes and a view interpreted by the brain to see life in three dimensions.

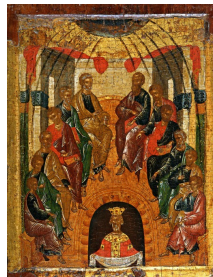
Fr Jonathan

TWO GREAT MO(VE)MENTS

According to our church calendar, the Ascension of Our Lord and the Pentecost are separated by 10 days only; but in that short period the whole Creation is changed forever, and through Holy Scripture we are gracefully offered a key: to understand the mystery of our spiritual inheritance and to unlock the secret of our eternal destiny - which comes about through these Holy Events. In a very brief and rather 'low-key' passage in the New Testament it was recorded: *'So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into Heaven and sat at the right hand of God'* – The Gospel according to Mark, Chapter 16. Also in the book of Acts: *'Suddenly there was a noise from heaven like the sound of mighty wind! It filled the house where they were meeting.'*

Biblical descriptions of both the Ascension and the Pentecost may leave us confused and bewildered (just as the actual events probably left Christ's first disciples) but this is all meant and written in the context of the whole history of our Divine Salvation. It is crucial to remember that in the story of the Fall of Man, in the beginning of the book of Genesis: Adam and Eve were distrustful and also disobedient to God; they eat the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, and by this act they sever the intimate connection that they had with their (and our) Maker – they become alienated from God, whilst still being in the Garden of Eden. Only after blaming the other (being asked for an

explanation), they break the bond of the solidarity between themselves – now they will have to leave the Garden of Eden forever, alienated from one another.



Without loving intimacy with God and trusting solidarity between each other, they find themselves in an alien and inhospitable environment – the one that we inherited and still share to this very day. Although, God in his infinite mercy has gifted our First Parents with 'garments of skin' to cope with the consequence of the fall – it is not difficult to see that the process of 'Re-Eden-ising' of the world is very slow and dubiously efficient. In ten days of the Christ's Ascension and the Spirit's descent at Pentecost, we have achieved simultaneously both: reconciliation with our Creator but also between each other.

In Our Lord's Ascension, as the Fathers teach us, human nature (united with Divine nature in Christ) is elevated to Heaven. Christ's is sitting at the right hand God – pointing towards our human role in a still on-going movement: co-workers in the Kingdom, partakers of the Glory. In Spirit's Pentecost, we see the formation of our Holy Church – the foundation for the future unbroken solidarity of the human race. Just as, through the Ascension, what takes place is a 'repair' of our regression to the point before the Ancestral Sin; in the experience following the Pentecost; the broken trust between all living beings finally gains the potential to be healed through the dynamism of

the Holy Spirit. And again, with Christ's divine example in mind, this newly gained solidarity exceeds Eden's creaturely relationship in a manifold way!

When the 'vertical' movement of Ascension meets the 'horizontal' movement of Pentecost we are (yet again) encountering the Cross of our Salvation. This is a Mystery of all mysteries, a meeting point of the whole Cosmos - infinitely transcending all of our understanding and our futile reasoning. These movements (or moments) in our shared story, would not have the importance and the power that they possess if they were not preceded by the free offering of unconditional Love, gently leading us to the place of our rejuvenation and the limitless freedom.

*Aleksandar Miljkovic
London*

PARISH NEWS

Fr Jonathan spent the 3rd week of May at the islands of Cephalonia and Ithaca, Greece. At Cephalonia he stayed at Sami, where he met with Nikolaos Georgopoulos and Old Stavronians Anastasia Stamatelatu and Ioanna Nasiopoulou. In Ithaca he stayed with Fr Theodosios Dendrinou and made a pilgrimage following in the footsteps of St Joachim of Ithaca and Vatopaedi. It is a blessing for us that the Parish now has soil from the grave of our beloved St Papoulakis! A few photos follow.



The town of Sami at Cephalonia, Greece.



The Catholicicon in the Monastery of Agios Andreas (St Andrew), Cephalonia, Greece.



Fr Jonathan at the old church of Agios Nikolaos above Sami, Cephalonia.



Frescoes from the old church of Agios Nikolaos, Sami, Cephalonia.



The new church of Agios Nikolaos at Sami, Cephalonia.



The Parish with icons of St Joachim of Ithaca and Vatopaedi after the liturgy on Sun. 25th of May. Fr Jonathan brought these icons from Ithaca, Greece. Old Stavronian Thomas Tziortziotis was with us as he visited the Parish from London.

OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

We would like to thank Maria's mother for sending five bottles of Nama wine. May our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ give the reward!

Christos Vasilopoulos from Kozani, Greece, visited the Parish in the beginning of May for a pilgrimage to the Orthodox Celtic sites of Northwest England. He attended the Holy Liturgy on May 10 with us and visited St Herbert's island and St. Patrick's chapel with Fr Jonathan. A group photo after the Liturgy follows.

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

5th June: Hieromartyr Boniface of Crediton, Archbishop of Mainz (†754)

8th June: Holy Pentecost

9th June: St. Columba of Iona, Enlightener of Scotland (†597)

15th June: All Saints

16th June: St Tychon the Wonderworker

17th June: St. Botolph, Abbot of the Monastery of Ikanhoe (†680)

22nd June: St. Alban, Protomartyr of Britain (†304)

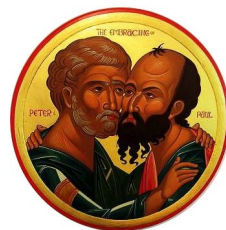
24th June: Nativity of the Forerunner and Baptist John

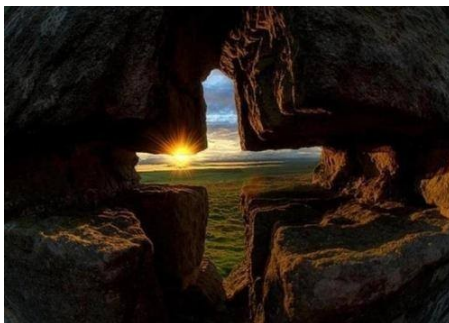
26th June: Appearance of the Icon of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos of Tikhvin

29th June: Peter and Paul, the Holy Apostles

30th June: Synaxis of the Twelve Holy Apostles

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





A photograph sent by Fr. Theodosios Dendrinos

Services during June*

Sat. 7 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 14 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 21 st	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 28 th	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.

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



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