

**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'



*Ἐθρονος 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)*

BEGINNING OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL NEW YEAR SEPTEMBER 1

Christ our God, Your kingdom is an everlasting one and Your lordship is over all. You have made all things with wisdom and have established proper times and seasons for our lives. We give thanks to You in all circumstances and for all things. Lord, bless the beginning of our Church year with Your goodness. Grant that this liturgical year be for all of us a year of grace. Make us worthy with purity of heart always to praise you. Lord, glory to You!

Bless, O Lord, the crown of the year with Your goodness!



NOT UNTO JUDGEMENT BUT UNTO SALVATION

Elder Paisios tells the story of a monk who was a door keeper on Mount Athos. He opened and closed the gates for the pilgrims, but was always very drunk. The pilgrims complained about him and were unhappy with him. When this monk passed away they were pleased to hear it and informed elder Paisios of their relief. The Elder related to them how he welcomed this monk into the monastic life when he was just a young man. His parents used to work in the fields in Asia Minor and when he was just a boy, to stop him crying so they would not be detected and the boy taken by the Turks, they would give him *raki* in his milk to

make him sleep. So he grew up an alcoholic.

When he arrived at the monastery the Elder took him in and gave him the canon to make prostrations every night before the Blessed Virgin in order to help him stop drinking so much alcohol.

After many years of obedience this monk managed to reduce his intake from 20 glasses of this strong drink a day to just 2 or 3 but it would still always make him a little drunk. He did this all the while praying and battling hard. Elder Paisios said to the pilgrims astonishment, that when the monk died, he saw thousands of holy angels attending his body. The pilgrims were upset and said “but he was always drunk how could he get to heaven?” Elder Paisios said, “what you saw was a drunk miserable sinner. But what Jesus saw was a man who fought a very hard battle in order to combat his passion.”

Fr Jonathan

ON CHANGE AND BEING ALERT

The Apostle Peter teaches us to be alert (in Greek “γρηγορείτε”), “to be vigilant” (1 Peter 5:8), but what does this really mean? Do we need to be alert all the time? Can we not just relax for a second?

One of the inevitable things of life is change. Every day, changes happen all around us, in others and in ourselves. Things change and people experience changes in their lives constantly. From small changes, gaining a few pounds or our hair getting longer, to bigger changes, moving out of a flat or getting a degree, to life-changing changes such as getting married, having a child or the death of a loved one.

Sometimes change happens without our will or involvement, and sometimes we act to bring this change in our lives. One thing is sure, change happens inevitably.

So, how do we cope with all this change? Do we hold still and let it “go through” or do we decline it, resist it and consciously fight it?

The first might seem easy, but it’s not. It does make us feel uncomfortable, uneasy, overexposed or perhaps helpless. The second requires constant effort and fight, with the fear of being hurt, exhausted and without gaining much. So, is there a middle ground?

The middle ground is to be alert to distinguish when to resist and when to go with change. To realise that, in certain circumstances, working with change -not fighting it- brings emotional and spiritual development and not pain and exhaustion. It is not easy, but personal development never is. After all, if we trust our lives to God, and decide to let Him be our guide on distinguishing change, everything will be for the salvation of our souls.

So, how about we start learning to understand change, to see it, to listen for it, to comprehend it and eventually work with it, according to the circumstances, and use it as a springboard to develop ourselves further.

The stiff rock that sits by the sea would never have “thought” of becoming a refined pebble. In fact, every battering from the sea would be considered annoying. But the sea inevitably does change the rock and transforms it to a rounded pebble, as change inevitably touches and transforms our lives. Perhaps, we should see change in our life as an opportunity for development and as the help we need to smooth out our edges; as the stiff seaside rock eventually accepts the sea as a transforming blessing.

But be vigilant, be alert. Change becomes a blessing only with acceptance,

wise discernment and fruitful involvement. It is only this way that it becomes God’s blessing in our lives.

*Panagiotis Georgopoulos
Zurich*

The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time; Enjoying one moment at a time; Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace; Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His Will; That I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him Forever in the next. Amen.

---Reinhold Niebuhr



MEETING POINT

It couldn’t escape my attention: whenever there is any kind of public or official occasion, the person in charge will first introduce ‘building safety’ regulations. They will direct the audience to the nearest emergency exits, and then usually

proceed by directing the crowds to the so called “meeting point”.

Meeting point itself, signifies the place that is sufficiently remote from the building in order to be safe, but at the same time close enough to it and easy to find – a place where the confused and (most probably) panicky escapees could be gathered and accounted for.

It occurred to me that for the Orthodox, this ‘meeting point’ from the countless safety drills, could serve as a metaphor for the Holy Cross of Our Saviour. All of our differences start to fade to grey: liberal or conservative, ecumenical or exclusivist, Julian or Gregorian calendarist; you can all find us at our eternal meeting point – the foot of the Cross. Here, the lost find their security, despondent – their lost hope. Right here, at the place of Our Lord’s suffering and death – we are all ‘sufficiently remote’ from the building of this passing world, but close enough to be numbered and called by our true names; the names that are written on a sacred white stone by the One who loves us, and who will judge us – by His Love.

At that moment we will shamefully acknowledge the shallow artificialities of our divisions and fleshly concerns, and pour out the tears of the repentance, and then embrace the Wood that was a shining beacon for the lost sheep we all are.

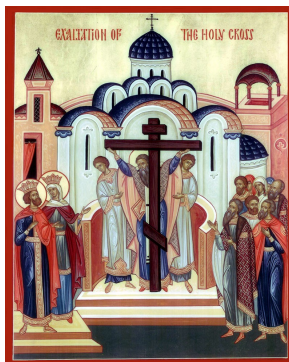
In this holy and mysterious meeting place, we will then see each other - for the very first time.

*Alexandar Miljkovic
London*



PARISH NEWS

We congratulate Vera Nina and Konstantinos Arfanis on the birth of their baby-son, born on 30th August! We welcome Paul into our community who was made a Catechumen on 31st August. May God grant them all many years!



OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

We thank Panagiotis Georgopoulos for the icon, incense and holy oil from the tomb of St Spyridon in Corfu, Greece. May our Lord Jesus Christ give the reward!

We also thank with our whole heart the persons who have donated £200 to our Community and who wish to remain anonymous. Matthew 6:1; “Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that

your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1st Sept: The Ecclesiastical New Year
8th Sept: The Nativity of our Most-Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary
14th Sept: The Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross

16th Sept: The Great Martyr Euphemia the All-praised

17th Sept: Martyr Sophia and her three daughters, Faith (Pistis, Vera), Hope (Elpis, Nadezhda) and Love (Agape, Lyubov)

23rd Sept: The Conception of the Holy, Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John

25th Sept: St. Sergius, Abbot and Wonderworker of Radonezh

28th Sept: St. Lioba of Wimborne, Abbess of Bischofsheim

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

Services during September*

Sat. 6 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 13 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sun. 21 st	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in Q.R. followed by Parish lunch
Sat. 27 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.

*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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