



**The Orthodox Parish
of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,
Lancaster, U.K.**

The Stavronian

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*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)***

NATIVITY HYMN

Based on the Nativity sermon of St. John Chrysostom, which can be found following the link [here](#).

Look a new and wondrous mystery
Christ is born in Bethlehem,
Angels singing blend their voices
With the hosts of Cherubim.

Join in praise then all you living
Here on earth with those above,
He "Who is" comes down from heaven
Manifests the Father's love.

Sun of Justice far outshining
Stars that led the kingly wise,
Today is born for our salvation
Him Unseen before our eyes.

Infants run then to adore Him
Shepherds come to be His sheep,
Priests to labour in His Vineyard
Wine and Bread His presence keep.

Fishers catch the world before Him
Sinful, lost and maimed repent,
That they may embrace together
This Child whom the Father sent.

Therefore let us sing together
Sharing in this choral dance,
"Christ is born!" the incarnation
So we may to heaven advance.

This our song our hope our story
This our life, so glory be
To the Father, Son and Spirit
Undivided Trinity.

*To the Glory of God
Fr Jonathan*



THE DISPOSITION OF THE HEART

Elder Porphyrios writes the following in his beautiful and spiritual health giving book "Wounded by Love": "*Man has such powers that he can transmit good or evil to his environment. These matters are very delicate. Great care is needed. We need to see everything in a positive frame of mind. We mustn't think anything evil about others. Even a simple glance or a sigh influences those around us. And even the slightest anger or indignation does harm. We need to have goodness and love in our soul and to transmit these things.*" p. 212

When we speak or think evil against others, it is transmitted as sound waves to a radio. The receiver picks it up, hears it and feels it. Those who curse or who are resentful and jealous, often do not realise the harm they do to others as well as to themselves. Wisdom 4:12; "*For the bewitching eye of wickedness obscures what is good.*"

Thought can so easily turn into action. When we think evil then it manifests itself in reality and we give voice to and become the vehicle of that power. Our disposition to do good or evil is both a **choice** and an **invitation**. We may invite the grace of God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the assistance of the saints or through our bitterness and envy we may invite evil and demons. When someone prays for his enemies, for those who have wronged him there is a peace which echoes in the soul. When someone prays for their family and friends, their loved ones and neighbours a goodness proceeds from them with healing and strength. This goodness is visited equally upon the bestower as much as upon those bestowed as it were by reflection. This light becomes a glorious shield from attack.

The choice is ours within the will – it

is the transformation of the mind which is *metanoia* and when warmed and directed correctly by the heart becomes the transfiguring of the soul. It is ours to choose. When we choose God to come and abide in our lives anger, resentment, depression, ingratitude, jealousy, judgement no longer have any place only love, joy, and peace.

O Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things, the Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come, and abide in us, and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O Good One.

Fr Jonathan

MISSING ON INCARNATION

It is so easy, for us humans, to be in awe of the Christ resurrected – the fulfilment of our deepest desires, or of Christ crucified – atoning for our darkest sins. Awe for Christ the healer – raising the dead or the miracle-worker who defies the expected and the ordinary, doesn't fall very far behind.

Still, when we need to recognise the Christ as one of us, as another human being - this is where the difficulty starts. In the Gospels, we find very dramatic and persistent refusals to acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as the living God incarnate as a human being. This lack of recognition is not only coming from the usual direction of: Pharisees, lawyers, Romans and others of the sceptical disposition; this is something that was acted out by those who were closest to Him. The Apostle Peter after witnessing the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor later on denied Christ, and Thomas had grave doubts following the Crucifixion concerning the Resurrection. Judas's betrayal is an obvious

example – but we often forget that Judas Iscariot was one of the twelve that Christ chose to witness His ministry, very likely without missing the manifold miraculous aspects of it.

So, why was it so hard to accept the heavenly authority that Jesus of Nazareth carried in Him and presented them all with? I guess we are aware of the tragic deprivations that ancestral sin imposes on all of our individual faculties and impairs our recognition of the glory of God, but did we learn anything from those events that took place during Jesus' ministry? The humble way in which He asserted His divine vocation was probably simply too 'low-key' to be seen for what it was; God was seemingly absent from 1st century Palestine. It was an environment self-referential to the point of denial of God's presence, even when He is right there present calling on everyone to affirm Him in the most direct and immediate manner. If the stubborn and persistent rejection of the divine Other in the New Testament reminds us of our contemporary predicament – perhaps we should not be very surprised. The same set of difficulties that the Apostles were grappling with is still facing all of us to this very day. Violent and cynical society where money rules the day, with all the hypocrisy of quasi-sanctified status quo, is just a moral and spiritual wasteland where God is least expected to appear.

Having that in mind, we should however find the hope and wisdom in those instances when the God-man Jesus was recognised, like in St. Luke's famous account of the disciples' walk to the village called Emmaus. The moment of the recognition took place when the Resurrected Lord (who was walking with them along most of the way) broke the bread at the dinner table and said the blessing. This event leaves us hopeful of our own modest abilities as well as of God's generous mercies.

The epiphany that took place in Emmaus is a joyful reminder that God still wants to be recognised, even after enduring our blindness for Him. This is an early example of divine-human synergy in which God takes the initiative and we follow by opening our minds and hearts to Him. When moments like that occur all our needs for different abstract thought systems and power based ideologies, simply cease to exist: we soon become full of awe and wonder as we enter the realm of the pure encounter, for this is a place where we shall meet our God.

*Alexandar Miljkovic
London*

O HOLY BRIGID

How deep is the darkness of a pagan soul!
How hollow and empty is a heart without God.
Saint Patrick's spiritual child you were
bringing the light of the Gospel to your beloved land.

You lit the fire at Kildare's monastery;
The druids and pagans from their spiritual prison you set free.
A cross from grass you wove to drive the demons away,
A pillar of light you became showing us the right way.

Your charity was popular throughout the land
You did not care about the beauty of the body
and proved it by removing your eye.
To spite your natural beauty.

You left everything behind to lead a life of prayer
From an oak tree you attracted faithful nuns to follow your rule.
Miracles you still show to those who come to you with faith
To your Lord Jesus Christ for our unworthy souls you pray.

Now the fire at Kildare no more exists
but the fire you lit inside us still burns strong,
a light that shines for ages long
destroying the dark world of the enemy.

*Christos Vasilopoulos
Kozani, Greece*

PARISH NEWS

We are so grateful to an anonymous donor who wishes to donate £80 per month to our Parish! We are humbled by

such generosity of spirit and ask God's blessing and reward for their kindness.

We also want to wholeheartedly thank Oleg Lychkovskiy, Konstantinos Kalemis and Antonios Papakonstantinou for providing the Parish with a new solid base for our *iconostasion*! May our Lord Jesus Christ give the reward!



Oleg Lychkovskiy and the Parish after the liturgy on Nov. 15. The next day he went for a short visit to Leiden, Holland before moving permanently to Moscow, Russia. We will certainly miss him!



The Parish celebrates the birthday of our beloved Barnabas after the liturgy on Oct. 18 at the lounge of the Chaplaincy Centre.

OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

Andrey, Alla and Masha Ganshin from Ithaca, NY, USA, send their greetings along with two beautiful photos of the Niagara falls, on the border between USA and Canada, and from a small yet beautiful local waterfall at Ithaca.



Niagara falls



Taughannock Park, Ithaca, NY, USA



Ithaca, NY, USA



Fr Jonathan and Fr Samir at the Antiochian Cathedral in London along with Old Stavronians and Parishioners.



MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

4th Dec: Great Martyr Barbara

6th Dec: St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia

9th Dec: The conception of the Most-Holy Theotokos by the Righteous Anna

11th Dec: Hieromartyr Metropolitan Seraphim (Chichagov)

12th Dec: St. Spyridon the Wonderworker, Bishop of Tremithus

13th Dec: St. Herman of Alaska,
Wonderworker of All America

20th Dec: The repose of St. John of
Kronstadt

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

27th Dec: Protomartyr and Archdeacon
Stephen

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

Services during December*

Sat. 6 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 13 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 20 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Wed. 24 th	6:30 pm	Holy Liturgy of St Basil in R.C. followed by Parish meal on the Eve of the Nativity according to the Flesh of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ
Sun. 28 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 -



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

www.orthodox-lancaster.org.uk

www.antiochian-orthodox.co.uk

