



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, 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)*

ACTIVE STILLNESS

I find myself yet again travelling on the train from Lancaster to London and back; twice in the space of four days at the response of invitations. However, the daily commute for many to the City is a matter of necessity in order to work and earn their living. Often crowded like “sardines in a tin” the train journey becomes a matter of accepting the dual burden of loss of time and lack of comfort. Some use their time profitably to “prep” their work on the lap top, balance cups of coffee and peruse the newspapers. For those who travel off-peak and avoid the “rush hour,” such journeys can be more leisurely, affording opportunities to catch up on sleep, to read or to meet people who join the train on the way.

So I am moving on this train at a speed of 150+ kph and yet I am sitting perfectly still viewing the passing countryside. This passive movement is both a paradox and a metaphor. True I had to make the effort of acquiring the ticket, getting to the station at the right time and finding the correct platform and train but then I am moved inexorably to my place of destination. In a similar way the Holy Liturgy and indeed our Christian life is a journey in which, at the invitation of our heavenly Father we join Christ and through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit are moved ever nearer to the Kingdom of Heaven. *John 14:6; Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

We need to respond with commitment to this invitation and when do we find that the synergy of our will in response to God’s grace is a beautiful movement. Faith like our salvation is not static, it has a dynamic which moves us at certain times with great speed of direction and at others gradually and with

such subtlety as not to be perceived by ourselves. Such active stillness is the opposite of anxious business which seeks for distractions, like the man who runs from the last carriage of the train to the first in the vain belief that he will be at his destination the sooner. There may be interruptions and delays to our progress but this is where we grow in patience. Even the anonymous strange and strained silence of the metro commute can be transformed into an opportunity for prayer and an adventure of new encounters with fellow travellers.

Fr Jonathan

Prayer of the Optina Fathers

O Lord, grant that I may greet the coming day in peace. Help me to rely upon your holy will at every moment. In every hour of the day, reveal your will to me. Bless my association with all who surround me. Teach me to treat whatever may happen with peace of soul and with firm conviction that your will governs all. In all my deeds and words, guide my thoughts and feelings. In unforeseen events, let me not forget that all are sent by You. Teach me to act firmly and wisely without embittering and embarrassing others. Give me strength to bear the fatigue of the coming day with all that it shall bring. Direct my will. Teach me to pray. Pray Yourself in me. Amen.



Meteora Monasteries, Greece

TALES FROM GREECE 2014

Meteora: I was walking from Varlaam Monastery to Roussanou early one morning. I had dashed out to catch the only bus of the day to the mountain monasteries. As I was walking along, about halfway to Roussanou, there by the roadside was a loaf of bread. I had not eaten breakfast and so I was hungry enough to stop and examine it. Was this some dry, rejected prosphora left out for the birds? No! There in my hands was a perfectly baked fresh loaf of bread. I broke it, pulled out some big handfuls of pure white crumbs and ate them until only the crust remained.

I know of no-one who would stop to leave a freshly baked loaf halfway up a mountain, only that it must have been left there that very morning and was not more than a few hours old at the most! I went on my way to Roussanou praising and thanking God that He has provided precisely what I needed exactly where and when I needed it!

post script

As I was sitting in the morning sunshine eating my bread, I meditated upon the life of St. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne (whose icon we venerate at Holy Cross). One day he was walking in a remote place. "Where shall we find food" asked his student. "Trust in the Lord" was Cuthbert's answer to the young monk. Just then an eagle circling overhead dropped a salmon at the holy bishop's feet. The young monk eagerly wanted to keep and eat all this fish, but St. Cuthbert insisted they give half back to the noble fisherman who caught it. I remembered these things and also how close the saint was to my patron Saint Aidan; and scattered the crusts of my new found loaf to the little birds in the hollyoaks.

cf: Matthew 6: 19-34

Bibliography: Adam, D (1993) *Fire of the North, the illustrated life of St Cuthbert*

Aidan Wearing
Lancaster

THE DIVINE ODYSSEY

Some of the faithful were reflecting after a Holy Liturgy on holy places that we have visited. We thought how good it would be if we could go, as a Parish, to Cephalonia and Ithaca, Greece, this summer. We have connections there - not only Old Stavronians who could offer us accommodation but Pater Theodosios Dendrinou on Ithaca who has invited us to go back and who years ago entrusted us with the divine commission to translate the book about St Joachim of Vatopaedi and Ithaca through another providential connection with an Old Stavronian in Cyprus.

It was some years between our synodia undertaking this holy task in translating the book on Saint Joachim in 2007 and my visit in 2014. I came across some lines by the Greek poet C. P. Cavafy entitled *Ithake* (Ithaca). They have a certain resonance to my own journey there. The purpose of our odyssey as Christians is not to accumulate earthly wealth, experiences and treasures but heavenly ones in our pilgrimage of faith.

One way we do this is by visiting the places where the saints have trod, have lived, have written, have proclaimed the truth of the Gospel, have prayed, have been martyred for their faith in Christ and by venerating their Holy Spirit filled relics. We should also visit the monasteries which are power houses of prayer and light houses for those sailing through stormy waters. This of course should start

at home by recovering and uncovering our own saints and visiting those places of our own British Orthodox: *"When the Church in the British Isles begins to venerate her own Saints then the Church will grow."*---St Arsenios of Paros (†1877) but it should not end there because, as we proclaim on the Sunday of Orthodoxy: *This is the Faith of the Apostles, this is the Faith of the Fathers, this is the Faith of the Orthodox, this is the Faith which has established the Universe.*

It should be our joy to make it our life task to visit the places throughout the world associated with the Saints of God. I remember many years ago at an early meeting of our clergy the advice of Archimandrite Athanasios Ledwich (now of blessed memory) to soak yourselves in the spirit of Orthodoxy. This is no less than a movement to Paradise -it is no museum crawl or historical visit- it is a Life-enhancing walk with Christ who is the Way with his chosen containers of salvation connecting the Church on earth with the Church in Heaven.

*Keep Ithaca always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you are destined for.
But do not hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you are old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you have gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaca to make you rich.*

*Ithaca gave you the marvellous journey.
Without her you would not have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now...*

Well perhaps she has!

Fr. Jonathan



NAMES OF DEPARTED LOVED ONES TO BE REMEMBERED THIS MONTH

Feb. 21: Pisistratos

Please send us the names of your departed loved ones and date of their departure in order for them to be remembered.



PARISH NEWS

We wish to wholeheartedly thank the anonymous donor who has given £200 to the Parish; may God grant His blessing in return for this generous gift! We also thank Aidan Wearing for cleaning and restoring our candle stand for the Holy Table! :)

OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

We extend our thanks to Maria Verra from Athens, Greece, who sent us incense and floating wicks. Eftychia Schini from Cyprus, sends her greetings to the Community along with Christos Vasilopoulos from Kozani, Greece, who also sends his greetings.

Konstantinos Voutzoulides from Patmos, Greece, has been to the Holy Mountain and along with his greetings he sends a few photos of his pilgrimage; his letter is included below:

Dear Father,

*How are you these days? How's the Parish?
We're still enjoying the winter here. I just*

came back from my yearly pilgrimage to Mt Athos where I stayed for 7 days. I'm sending you some pictures from there.

I initially visited the Holy Mountain for the Feast of St Simon, the founder of Simonos Petra Monastery. I then visited the Monastery of Agios Pavlos and Koutloumoussi, where I had the Blessing to visit St Paisios' Hut just a day before his Sainthood was officially declared! Megisti Lavra followed, where we stayed for 2 days and Agia Anna's Skete, where we had the chance to walk to the Katounakia area and visit several Huts such as the Thomades, Danielei, the Cave of Sts Dionysios and Mitrophanes and others. Lastly I visited the Dionysiou Monastery.

Thank you very much again for your time and prayers for us! Kissing your right hand and asking for your Blessing,

Konstantinos



MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1st Feb: Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee: Triodion Begins Today; St Bridget of Kildare (†525)

2nd Feb: The Meeting of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Temple

3rd Feb: St Nicholas, Archbishop & Enlightener of Japan

10th Feb: Hieromartyr Charalampus

18th Feb: St Colman (†675)

22nd Feb: Forgiveness Sunday

23rd Feb: Clean Monday; St Polycarp the Holy Martyr & Bishop of Smyrna

24th Feb: First & Second Finding of the Venerable Head of John the Baptist

26th Feb: St Photine, the Samaritan woman

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



Services during February*

Sat. 14th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 21st	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Fri. 27th	6:30 pm	Akathist to the Theotokos in R.C.
Sat. 28th	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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