



**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)*

RESSURECTION OF THE BODY

I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come

The Nicene Creed or Symbol of faith begins with the words... "I believe **in**". Believing in something or someone has a qualitative difference from believing an academic theory, a philosophical principle or a political ideology. Believing **in**... is a matter of a trusting relationship. If I believe in you, this possesses a stronger and deeper commitment than saying simply, I believe you. Belief in the age to come for Christians is therefore dependant upon a relationship with and in Him who is the Resurrection and the Life: John 11:24-25; Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "**I am** the resurrection and the life. He who **believes in Me**, though he may die, he shall live; εἶπεν αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς; **ἐγὼ εἰμι** ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή.

Note that Our Lord corrects Martha's understanding by moving her emphasis from a future end time event to the present and Himself. In order to emphasise this he uses **ἐγὼ εἰμι** literally "**I, I am** the resurrection!" Thus belief in the age to come is not just a future expectation, it is life in the Person of Christ and a realised eschatology (end time). Luke 17:20-21 ; *Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there! For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."* Thus the study of the last things - the consummation of the Kingdom is tied to our relationship with Christ.

Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life, the Alpha and the Omega and every

kairos moment in between. Life in its fullness depends upon us coming to terms with our own mortality in the Light of God's Immortality.

If the Kingdom of God is within us, then we access it in our heartfelt acceptance through faith and through prayer. Nourishment for the soul is to be found in **silence, stillness and tears**.

Silence is a way of being awake to the Kingdom of God and a way of watching what is going on in our heart. In silence we meet the mystery of the future life.

St Isaac the Syrian wrote : "*From stillness a person can gain possession of the three causes of tears: love of God, awe-struck wonder at his mysteries, and humility of heart.*"

Tears are that manifestation of the heart, a refining process whereby we wash away our accretions and impurities in a little baptism. St. Isaac continues "*one should pray with deep affection and tears. The sense of the heart's affliction should become an integral part of prayer.*"

Silence, stillness and tears in prayer together become a holy trigonometry that enables us establish our relationship within the Holy Trinity, faith is the magnetic compass pointing us to Christ. Such indicators also reveal healing and self knowledge; they flow outward in empathy towards others and to their particular situations and predicaments. One identifies oneself with each and every person, which is the true meaning of mercy. Bearing one another's burdens becomes the fruit of this ascetic exercise and this spiritual formation.

Today's society champions the individual and values independence. The Christian triumphs through interdependence within the Communion of Saints. We should "*Remember the little things*" as St David of Wales said. We should pay attention to our words, our thoughts, our

actions, our food, our priorities - what we buy and why? Such awareness renders us fully engaged for the spiritual life of the Resurrection.

We do well to be in the world of prayer, so that we can be of use to the world without prayer, troubled as it is by consumerism, materialism, hedonism and all the other fascinating distractions which attempt to fill the void - the emptiness and meaninglessness of life without God. Conversely, prayer in "the desert", without anything, prepares us for heaven and frees us for the service of others; for surely possessions have no place in the Life of the age to come. The life of the soul is the authentic life. The Divine Love is boundless; Christ will meet us in our brokenness for He comes to us in His own brokenness in the Divine Liturgy: "***Divided and distributed is the Lamb of God, who is divided, yet not disunited, who is ever eaten, yet never consumed, but sanctifies those who partake thereof.***"

Our Lord said that those who ate of His flesh and drank of His blood already have eternal life (John 6:54).

St Ignatios of Antioch called the Holy Mystery of the Lord's Supper the medicine of immortality and remedy against our having to die.

This making holy is from everlasting to everlasting, that which was prophesied and fulfilled, the promise and hope of things to come, the seen and the unseen; here and now the Kingdom of God breaks into our lives, for past, present and the future are met in Him and of those who partake of Him at the Eucharist, today, at this moment...

Eternal life does not begin when we die it has begun already and continues throughout eternity for those who live in Christ Jesus. As Christians, it is not enough that the soul lives on after death - we believe in the resurrection of the body. St Paul in his letter to the Christi-

ans at Corinth needed to address this matter in some detail, for the Greeks had no problem with the immortality of the soul but they needed to be put right about its relationship with the body (1 Corinthians 15). St John of Damascus another of the saints of Antioch believed that: "... *If it were the soul alone that revels in pleasure, it would be the soul alone that would be justly punished. But since the soul does not pursue either virtue or vice separate from the body, both together will obtain that which is their just due.*"

So the body too will be resurrected to appear before the Creator on the last day in accordance with the vision of the Prophet Ezekiel 37(1-10) receiving a spiritual and glorious body. Orthodox Christians believe in the salvation of the whole person, body and soul. This is why Orthodox Christians do not cremate the body at death, we treat it with dignity and honour, since the whole person is made in the image of God. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 ; *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*

In death as in life that which God has made is holy and that is why also the saints pour forth the sweet fragrance of myrrh from their very bones. Whether we live or die we are the Lord's!

John 5:25; *Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.* This affirmation of the future gives power to the present. C.S. Lewis wrote: *If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely*

ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.

It is then with confidence in Christ the Risen Lord that we confess our faith in the Creed: “I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come.”

Fr. Jonathan



MORAL GYROSCOPE*

When I was a boy, long before the age of computers and the internet, I had two possessions which I loved. One was a globe of the world. I would sit looking at all the different countries of the world imagining what it was like to live in these strange named countries. There was one country which only had letters USSR! Many of these names and boundaries have changed since I was young, some for better some for the worse yet the world keeps spinning! Every 24 hours, the earth spins around once on its axis—an axis that is tilted 23 degrees with respect to earth's orbit which gives us the seasons of

the year. The fact that the earth makes an elliptical orbit around the Sun was another amazing fact for my young mind to grasp. A complete orbit occurs every 365.256 days, during which time Earth travels 940 million kilometers. The Earth's speed on its own axis is 1,670 kilometers per hour. Wow! And I didn't think we were moving at all, or if we were, very slowly!!

My other “related” favourite possession was a gyroscope. Again, I was (and still am) amazed at how this spinning object would defy gravity. After winding it up with string, it would balance at the most amazing angles. Now of course physics has an explanation for the world orbiting around the Sun and why the Gyroscope maintains angular momentum. However, if we add a moral dimension to the world and the gyroscope what keeps it going? Suppose a malign force was acting upon us, so as to change our orbit around God; then how would we solve this problem?

Prayer keeps the world alive and when prayer fails, the world will perish... “Nowadays,” perhaps you will say, “there are no more monks like that to pray for the whole world.” But I tell you that when there are no more men of prayer on earth, the world will come to an end and great disasters will befall (Archimandrite Sophrony of Essex, ‘St. Silouan the Athonite’, p. 223).

Fr Jonathan

* This article is also available in Greek [here](#), translated by Christos Vasilopoulos.



Q&A SESSION

Q: If the body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, why divide the saints into fragments and send them to the four corners of the globe? Surely a temple is better left whole than picked apart?

A: One must understand that the bones of the martyrs are holy, sanctified, grace filled and a reminder of that to which we are called “to die and rise with Christ.” Indeed, the earliest Christians celebrated the Holy Eucharist in the Catacombs on the very bones of the martyrs - as we still do today. Every [antimension](#), the cloth upon which the Holy Communion is celebrated, **must** contain the bones of the Martyrs.

Our own contains the bones of the Martyrs of St Sabbas Monastery in the Holy Land. The sharing and dispersal of these bones is therefore a blessing and physical reminder; for Orthodox all matter is to be sanctified - we don't do cerebral philosophy! Every sense is to be sanctified –taste, smell, touch, hearing, sight– all are infused with the Holy Spirit - that is why our Liturgies are so rich in all these! Matter for us is Holy not seen as corrupt! Why? Because God became flesh!!

Of course in an instant on the last day all these fragments can be brought together if God so wishes and transfigured but it is a reminder to the faithful that we are not in splendid isolation (left whole) - but for those attaining glorification even in death to be seen, scented, touched, kissed, honoured, venerated as a true blessing and testimony of faith for others (even to the four corners of the world!)

Fr Jonathan

For further information about Holy Relics and their place in the Orthodox Church, please click [here](#).

PARISH NEWS

[Julian Parkinson](#), who was made a Catechumen at Holy Cross, Lancaster, was chrismated at the 5th century [church of Acheiropoietos](#) in Thessalonica, Greece, in early May. We wish him every blessing in his spiritual journey in the Orthodox faith! His godfather is our Stavronian [Antonis Papakonstantinou](#). A photo of Julian's chrismation follows.



Julian and Antonis at the church of Acheiropoietos in Thessalonica, Greece.

[Christos Vasilopoulos](#) from Kozani, Greece, has translated in Greek last month's Stavronian article by Fr Jonathan, “The wild goose of the Holy Spirit”; you may read it [here](#).

OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

We extend our congratulations and love in Christ to [Parintele Ionut](#) and [Presbytera Maria](#) on Ionut being raised to the Priesthood on Palm Sunday and ask that

God will grant them many years in His service. We also thank them for the Icon cards which we will use, God willing, next Pascha!

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1st June: Monday of the Holy Spirit

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

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

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

Services during June*

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.
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 -



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