

**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'*



*Ὁρθόδοξος 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)*

## NEW BISHOP

Archimandrite Silouan Oner has been designated as our new Bishop of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland. Axios! For his health and good guidance, let us pray to the Lord! His CV is included below.



Born: 21.08.1970, Latakia, Syria

### Studies:

- 1989-1994: Mechanical Engineering  
Degree: Tishreen University, Latakia , Syria
- 1995-2000: Degree in Theology, St. John of Damascus Institute, Balamand, Lebanon
- 2000-2005: Master's Degree in Theology, St. John of Damascus Institute, the University of Balamand, Lebanon
- 2005-2010: Doctorate in theology, ethics and homiletics, the University of Thessaloniki, Greece

### Church Work:

- Since 2000: Archimandrite, priest, pastor and preacher in the parish of Latakia
- 2001-2003: Work in the Orthodox youth movement since a young man and was appointed President of the Latakia Centre for the Orthodox Youth Movement
- Since 2006: Owner and developer of the website “Orthodox Lighthouse”, [www.almanarah.net/wp](http://www.almanarah.net/wp)
- 2010-2015: Chaplain to Metropolitan John Mansour
- Appointed by His Beatitude Patriarch John X of Antioch and All the East abbot of the [Patriarchal Monastery of St. George Humaira](#), Syria

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING IN A PLACE

In an early comedy sketch show on the radio, much loved by Metropolitan Kallistos, one of the characters Seagoon finding another character Eccles in a coal cellar asks: “*What are you doing here?*” . Eccles replies “*Everybody's gotta be somewhere!*”

Eccles portrayed as a rather silly youth, has a special talent for taking things he hears literally, but in so doing often shows a profound insight.

From a slightly later vintage, some may remember Robin's song from the T.V. Muppet Show. In innocent reflection he sings:

*Halfway down the stairs is a stair where I sit.  
There isn't any other stair quite like it.  
I'm not at the bottom, I'm not at the top.  
So this is the stair where I always stop.*

The original version of “King Lear” (1605), William Shakespeare contains the line: “*Jesters do oft prove prophets*”; from where we gain the expression “*many a true word is spoken in jest.*”

The fool, whilst seen to be a jester, has his place in the plot, pointing to a truth which the “wise in their own eyes” fail to see (Isaiah 5:21).

A hermit was once asked by a visitor “*What do you do?*”. The hermit answered “*I live here!*”. The old English words “*dwel*” and “*abide*” for “*live*” conveys the sense of remaining fully in a state of stability.

An embryo dwells in the mother’s womb, growing and being nourished in the darkness until the time of birth.

On meeting someone for the first time we often ask “*What do you do?*” as if someone is defined by their job or status! Our Lord did not judge people by what they did but he had empathy with who they were and had insight into the potential of what they could become. We are not “*Human doings*” we are “*Human Beings.*” In order to “*be,*” to be fully in the present moment, to be fully alive, fully aware, we need to have stability of place. Constant movement is not good for the spirit. With too much movement we become like children who spin round and round and when they stop they are dizzy and fall over. Much could be said about the work/life balance in today’s society but sufficient to say that we need to be aware of the limits and integrity of our mind, body, spirit and the heart.

Place is the dimension of revelation. God appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai, Christ revealed His Divinity on Mount Tabor, St John received the Revelation of the Apocalypse in the Cave on Patmos. From the beginning God has given us a place to be: Genesis 2:15; “*Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it*”.

The place where we live is both the place of our daily routine and our spiritual life. Our daily duties are not separate from our spiritual life. Prayer is not separate from work. Our Icon Corner is the Church in the home and becomes the centre of our being in that place. The saints were made holy in their cells, in caves, on islands, in trees, on platforms in the sky, in their places where God broke into their lives. One senses the holiness of places that are infused with prayer and built by asceticism. Go to the cave of St John in Prislop Monastery in Romania, visit the underground cell of St Gerasimos on Cephalonia, row across Derwentwater to St Herbert’s Island- you will find the grace of God. Even when their bodies are separated from the souls, the grace remains in both. Their soul is apprehended invisibly. St John of Damascus says that “*the holy relics of the saints, their icons, their graves, are full of grace which their souls and bodies had whilst on earth.*” Since men and women are composed of soul and body, both need theosis, both need a place to be. Even when their bones have disappeared the place where they lived has become holy -sanctified- a place of refreshment for our spirit.

Like Eccles we have to be somewhere - **but not** anywhere! If we are in the wrong place then we will have no peace until we find the right place. God has given each of us a place to be.

Fr. Jonathan

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



## MARTHA AND MARY

One of the perpetual questions of Christian life is the matter of finding and developing our vocation. In a very basic sense, the story of Martha and Mary from the gospel (Luke 10:38-42) offers two different, but very unique approaches to this dilemma: *Now as they went on their way, he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."*

It is often speculated, in some theological circles, that the Orthodox Church follows more closely Mary's contemplative stance, while western Christian's sensibility is closer to Martha's active service. This is very crude simplification, but it can serve as a suitable starting point for a reflection.

Common sense tells us that there shouldn't be any real obstacle in balancing and embracing both of these ways in our spiritual journey, but things are (as usual) not as simple as they look. Very often Christians are antagonised between each other for having 'natural leanings' to one or the other side, and that can in itself create a certain amount of unnecessary guilt and confusion. Followers of one path could be seen as self-obsessed mystics, detached and indifferent to the suffering of the world, while disciples of Martha's path can be perceived as narcissistic busybodies, always scoring points on their self-serving piety tables. This

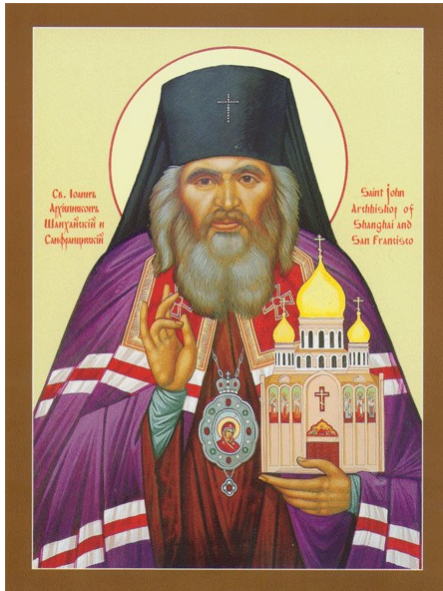
bleak picture of the contemporary Christian believer is almost perfect fodder for the secularist's envious and revengeful discourse about futility of faith in the 21st century. In this article, I am trying to suggest that both paths are complementary and perfectly valid- we do not have to feel bad if we are more prone to locate our personal vocation in either of them. As a matter of fact, Christ Himself never made any distinctions or divisions in that sense. In a quote above He is not being scornful towards Martha, but compassionate to Mary. Christ's actions as much as His fasts and prayers are always part of the larger Whole, something that we understand only partially.

Whether we decide to engage through direct action or through deep contemplation, we must always bring forward the attitude of Love, Hope and Faith; according to Saint Paul in Corinthians, three of the most Christ-like modes of being. Loving intention should be the starting point of any Christian endeavour, regardless of the type or the circumstance. Persistent and stubborn Hope is that solidifying feature, which turns every Christian effort into sound investment for the future.

However, it is the undying and creative Faith of the Christian pilgrim that makes all the difference. It is through Faith that our vocations transcend this world and connect to Eternity. Through Faith we realise that whatever we decide to do (or not do) in Love and with Hope, is so much more than the 'sum of its parts'. Our very Way of Being is constantly affecting the Creation, whether we want it or not. We are (after Christ) in the 'business' of Transfiguration, observing and seeing only smaller effects and the consequences of what we are actually achieving in the Universe. This is why every charitable act is a mystical prayer, and even the most secret fast is a fully efficient and loud proclamation of the

life-giving Word, modestly following our Master's pattern.

*Aleksandar Miljkovic  
London*



## NAMES OF DEPARTED LOVED ONES TO BE REMEMBERED THIS MONTH

July 9: Metropolitan Methodios Fougias

**MEMORY ETERNAL!**

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



## PARISH NEWS

The publisher of religious books [Ev Plo](#) (En plo), based in Thessaloniki, Greece, has shown interest in publishing Fr Jonathan's book "Fountains in the Desert" after being translated in Greek by our Stavronian Kleio Kechagia. Glory be to God for all things!

## MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1<sup>st</sup> July: Cosmas and Damian the Holy Unmercenaries

2<sup>nd</sup> July: St. John Maximovitch, Bishop of Shanghai & Archbishop of San Francisco (†1966); St. Juvenal, Protomartyr of America and Alaska (†1796)

3<sup>rd</sup> July: St Germanus Bishop of the Isle of Man (†474)

4<sup>th</sup> July: St. Andrew of Crete, author of the Great Canon

7<sup>th</sup> July: Great-martyr Kyriake

11<sup>th</sup> July: Great Martyr Euphemia the All-praised; St. Olga, equal to the Apostles, Princess of Kiev

13<sup>th</sup> July: Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel

15<sup>th</sup> July: Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Great Prince Vladimir, in Baptism Basil, Enlightener of the Russian Land

17<sup>th</sup> July: Great-Martyr Marina of Antioch and Child-Martyr Prince Kenelm

20<sup>th</sup> July: Holy Glorious Prophet Elijah

25<sup>th</sup> July: Dormition of righteous Anna, mother of the Most Holy Theotokos

26<sup>th</sup> July: Holy Martyr Paraskeue

27<sup>th</sup> July: Great Martyr and Healer Panteleimon

31<sup>st</sup> July: St Joseph of Arimathea

For the lives of Saints please visit the Calendar of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America: [www.calendar.goarch.org](http://www.calendar.goarch.org)



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### Services during July\*

Sat. 4 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	No liturgy this week
Sun. 12 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in Q.R.
Sat. 18 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sun. 26 <sup>th</sup>	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.

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



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