

**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'*



*Ἰσθρονος Χριστός, Ζωοδότης.  
(Φ. Κόντογλου, 1962).*

*The Parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,  
belongs to the Antiochian Orthodox Christian 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)*

## THE MODEL OF PRAYER

### Chapter 4; *Thy Kingdom Come Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*

The Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven is that rule in peoples' hearts over the other kingdoms that superimpose themselves as nations and empires. Remember how our Lord was tempted at the beginning of His ministry in Luke Chapter 4: *Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."* And Jesus answered and said to him, *"Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"*

In the Old Testament, the prophet Samuel upbraids the people of Israel for preferring a king like other nations rather than the sovereign Lord of the Universe (1 Samuel 8:6-7). Later, the prophet Daniel foretells of a succession of kingdoms that would be destroyed before the rule of the Son of Man who would usher in the Kingdom of God. This kingdom would last forever. We see throughout the history of Israel a succession of Kingdoms trying to subjugate the people of God in the Old Testament; the Egyptians, the Philistines, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians and at the time of Our Lord's own ministry on earth, the Romans.

The problem is that man has a propensity for making pale shadows and distortions of the heavenly Kingdom. Totalitarian regimes and political ideologies always cloak themselves with a religious veneer to give the illusion of the utopian idyll, when in reality such systems are

often built on lies and deception, reinforced by violence and intimidation, fear and suspicion. Many writers and philosophers have tried to construct their idea of utopia - the ideal state and they disagree with one another. They disagree because they all start from the wrong perspective. They start with the proposition of the "perfect" state without taking into account the imperfect people who inhabit this Utopia. Our Lord understood that it was necessary to change the person to fit the Kingdom of God. This is the revelation that Christ came to bring. It is not mystery but secrecy that veils the truth. Mystery reveals the Truth, secrecy always hides it. Obedience has a destructive character of slave mentality if it proffers allegiance to man-made dogmas; it has a creative, freeing quality if obedience is to the will of God.

In the Old Testament, God "tabernacled" or tented with his people. Indeed, St John in the opening Prologue of his Gospel uses this same word translated into Greek when he says: John 1:14; *The Word became flesh and **made his dwelling** among us.* Before the building of the Temple in Jerusalem by King Solomon, the Ark of the Covenant was the symbol of the presence of the Lord moving amongst His people. The Ark was kept in a Tent and the Hebrew people as a nomadic people also lived in tents. As a family grew larger the tent increased in size, but the larger the tent the greater was the risk of the wind blowing the tent away, since the wind had a larger surface area to act upon. This meant that the tent required even more secure anchorage to the ground. The prophet Isaiah wrote: Isaiah 54:2; *"Enlarge the limits of your home, spread wide the curtains of your tent, let out the ropes to the full and drive the pegs home."* The prophet Isaiah uses this principle of "driving the pegs home" to illustrate the importance of securing and deepening our spiritual resources as

we grow in faith. Faith may be the passport by which we enter into the Kingdom of God but we are called to employ all our spiritual resources to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

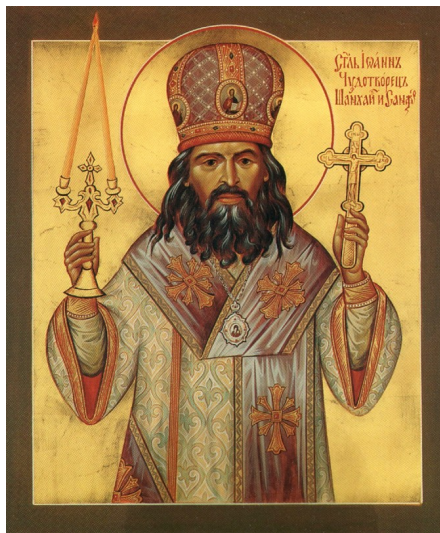
The mysteries of the Kingdom are set out in a series of parables in St Matthew's Gospel in Chapter 13. Our Lord presents the Kingdom in terms of metaphors: *"The Kingdom of God is like..."*. This is not in order to confuse or to pose intellectual riddles; quite the reverse! Christ paints simple pictures in words from everyday life. Parables are then for the simple hearted and innocent who are open to receive the mystery of the Kingdom of God with faith through such images which are invested with truth. The Kingdom is a gift; for the proud and those who will not receive this gift, parables remain riddles.

When religion assumes the garment of worldly power, when it espouses secular authority, when it embraces "relevance" and relativism, it ceases to be a prophetic and authentic voice. Holiness, particularly in the west is often viewed as archaic and embarrassing. Indeed, piety has a negative connotation and so new ways which borrow from and which appeal to the secular model are found to dilute to popular taste - returning the wine which Christ had changed from water at the wedding of Cana in Galilee back into its original state. False Kingdoms are built on false teaching. Force and violence lead to a death; mercy and love lead to Life. John 16:2; ... *yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.*

Our Lord Jesus began His ministry by declaring himself to be the Son of Man and that the Kingdom of God was at hand. The consummation of that Kingdom will be at the end of time at the second coming or *parousia* of our Lord; but our confession of this hope is not based on an eschatological perspective

but a present reality, because the kingdom has already begun on earth - its inauguration came with the Incarnation of the Messiah Christ who is the *Way the Truth and the Life*.

We are free to choose and to accept citizenship of the Kingdom of God. Archimandrite Vasileios in his book "The Christian in a changing world", p. 51, illustrates this choice that God gives us: *And someone used to say that in paradise, God will say to everyone "Come into Paradise." What happens there?" they will ask. "There is praise of God, there is a climate of love, of interpenetration." So this person says, "No way, that's hell - I'm going." And that is the way that one goes to hell, which is the lack of love."*



**Not my will** - this is the axial phrase upon which the Lord's Prayer balances. It is at this point that we are set free. It is at this moment that the prayer as it were takes off as an aeroplane takes off on the runway. When an aeroplane takes off and lands the little wheels take all the weight. The thrust of the engines, the law of aerodynamics will complete the lift and

when in flight-mode the wheels are not required. It strikes me that we too are small, but are robust enough to take the weight of God's will - to bear the load. If our prayer is to take off, we will need to absorb the Will of God - when we are in prayer then we will be in flight with the angels, yet like an aircraft in flight our movement will be imperceptible. Prayer is both movement and stillness or rather being carried by the Holy Spirit who directs us as on "eagles' wings". Isaiah 40:31; *but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.*" St Porphyrios writes: *"The soul of the Christian needs to be refined and sensitive, to have sensibility and wings, to be constantly in flight and to live in dreams, to fly through infinity, among the stars, amidst the greatness of God, amid silence."* ---St Porphyrios, "Wounded by Love".

Waiting upon God in prayer is the very oxygen of life like breathing in and out; taking in the grace of God exhaling our sins. Prayer should become as natural as breathing; for surely without it we die inwardly.

We wish to live out our earthly lives according to his model (since we are made in His image), according to His will, which is always good, and for us to strive for perfection (Romans 12:2). Obedience is beautiful and true freedom. By obeying the will of God, we establish the Kingdom of God on earth and imperceptibly we change within ourselves.

Ecclesiastes 3:11; *He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.* Christ's Light shines in our hearts, we may not see it in ourselves, we see ourselves as the worst of sinners; but others will see the Light of Christ in

us because Light does not bring attention to itself but disperses itself so that by it we may see everything else. A small candle in a dark room will reveal all the obstacles before us. We see an expression of this understanding within the Holy Liturgy itself and within the Church: St. Germanos of Constantinople said *"The Church is the Earthly Heaven, in which the Heavenly God dwells and moves."*

For our individual needs, the weight of God's will may be difficult to comprehend fully - we would rather have our "freedom"; we would rather have **our** will done by God. Sometimes we try to make a deal with God - *I will do that for you, if You will do this for me.* God does not do deals, He reveals - likewise we are called to inspire rather than conspire with others.



Christ is the Way the Truth and the Life, the Alpha and the Omega and every *kairos* moment in between. We have to realise the Kingdom of Heaven and to understand that everything we do is for

that goal. Towards the end of the Holy Liturgy in the Ektenia before the Lord's Prayer we make this petition:

**PRIEST:** *Asking for the unity of the Faith, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, let us commend ourselves and each other, **and all our life unto Christ our God.***

**CHOIR:** To thee, O Lord.

God does not want us to be lukewarm, half hearted, fair weather followers in name only. Revelation 3:16-18; *So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.* If we try to follow the world's agenda or try to be "relevant" which is the new shibboleth of political correctness, to what or to whom are we meant to be relevant? It is a form of idolatry. Popular relativism may appeal to the urban jungle, but we will find ourselves in a spiritual desert. The hallmark of a secular understanding of the world is that it trivialises magnitudes and magnifies trivialities. "*Aim at Heaven and you will get Earth 'thrown in': aim at Earth and you will get neither.*" --- C.S. Lewis, "The Joyful Christian".

God invites us to respond to His initiative in *synergia* whereby we work out and work at the details of His will before us in that larger frame of grace.

In my childhood jig saw puzzles were popular. I was taught by my parents to look for the straight edges first -to acquire the outline- the frame and then look at the model, copy the prototype in order to make a facsimile. As Christians we are called to imitate Christ: Ephesians 5:1; *Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.* It is not always easy to find where a piece fits but with help and encouragement we will complete the image. Sometimes a spiritual father may offer help with an observation: "Oh look

that piece of the jigsaw-puzzle fits there!"

God does not do deals - why would He do deals when He offers the Kingdom for free anyway? Like Adam we want things our way, we want to be like God knowing everything. When we say Thy Will be done then God's Will may come as a shock to our expectations and to our comfort zone. It will shake us out of complacency and self satisfaction and create in us a new heart and move us in a direction which is needful for our salvation. We strive then to attain the Kingdom and to actualise it in ourselves. 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."*

An old English nursery rhyme dating back to an actual event in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1553-1603) goes like this:

*Pussy cat, pussy cat, where have you been?  
I've been to London to see the fair Queen.  
Pussy cat, pussy cat, what did you there?  
I frightened a little mouse, under her chair.  
The last line sometimes sung as:  
I chased a little mouse right under the chair*

The story goes that a lady-in-waiting, a courtier at the court of Queen Elizabeth I of England had a pet cat which she took into the Royal Palace. The cat, following instinct spotted a mouse and leaping from the woman's arms, chased the mouse under the Royal throne upon which the Queen was seated. The cat was not interested in the Queen, only chasing the mouse! Likewise those who chase money and wealth, power and status, will not pay attention to the presence of the



King or His Kingdom they are only interested in building their own little empires. *Luke 16:13; "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."*

If we are to make the Kingdom come on earth, then we have to seize it by force (Matthew 11:12) we are to be earnest in our endeavours, single minded, zealous, exerting all our effort, brave and courageous in spirit and totally committed. When we pray "Thy will be done" and mean it, then God reduces our options until there is only one way forward - His way!

... To be continued  
*Fr Jonathan*

## REMEMBER THE SIGNS

"But, first, remember, remember, remember the signs. Say them to yourself when you wake in the morning and when you lie down at night, and when you wake in the middle of the night. And whatever strange things may happen to you, let nothing turn your mind from following the signs. And secondly, I give you a warning. Here on the mountain I have spoken to you clearly: I will not often do so down in Narnia. Here on the mountain, the air is clear and your mind is clear; as you drop down into Narnia, the air will thicken. Take great care that it does not confuse your mind. And the signs which you have learned here will not look at all as you expect them to look, when you meet them there. That is why it is so important to know them by heart and pay no attention to appearances. Remember the signs and believe the signs. Nothing else matters."

--- C.S. Lewis, *The Chronicles of Narnia*

*Again and again we have found that C.S. Lewis articulates a vision of Christian truth which a member of the Orthodox Church can whole heartedly endorse. His starting-point may be that of a Western Christian, but repeatedly his conclusions are Ortho-dox, with a large as well as a small 'o'.*

--- Metropolitan Kallistos Ware



## ELDER STAVRONIAN

*"I was seeking for the Truth for 70 years and finally I have found it!"*

--- Barnabas Dickinson

On Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup> of June (by the new Calendar) the Orthodox Church celebrated the memory of Holy Apostle Barnabas of the Seventy, the stalwart companion of Apostle Paul in his missions around the world. At this day the eldest member of our Parish, Barnabas (Stanley) Dickinson, celebrates his Name day. The small delegation headed by Fr Jonathan, consisted also from Kleio, my husband Dmitry and me, went to congratulate him on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> of June.

Barnabas lives in a small town south from Lancaster called Chorley. Actually, the only time in his almost century life (he is now 93) when he for a long time was out from Chorley was during the

Second World War. Barnabas is one of the few still living participants of the operation in Normandy in 1944. He explored the presents of the Orthodox Church at the same time when Fr Jonathan did so and joined him on the Pilgrimage to Orthodoxy. He literally stands at the cradle of our Holy Cross Parish and remember those times as the happiest part of his long life.

The Holy Communion for Barnabas was of course the central part of our visit. While he was receiving the Holy Communion we were surrounded by the variety of beautiful Orthodox Icons on the walls of his living room and of historic books about the Second World War lying everywhere. For me this background presented the key points of Barnabas' life very clearly and precisely. Later he confirmed my feeling by saying that of course the War was a turning point in his life, however the main and most important one happened nearly 30 year ago, when he was chrismated into Orthodoxy.

After the Holy Communion we had a little festal meal. We brought with us some cakes and Barnabas made a very tasty mint tea. It should be mentioned separately that in his 93 Barnabas lives a full life watching over his house, cooking for himself and working with many documents. Our meal was accompanied by Barnabas' and Fr Jonathan's memories of their first steps in Orthodoxy, and I think all of us mentioned how Barnabas' eyes were shining bright every time he spoke about Orthodoxy and the Orthodox Faith.

From the pages of this Stavronian we want one more time to wish our dear Barnabas "Many years" and invite you to accede to these wishes!

*Ekaterina Shushkina*



*Fr Jonathan and Barnabas at his house in Chorley*

## THE PRESCIENT PRIEST

He was a 'convert' too. His eyes were by far the most playful I had ever encountered! 'Clean' and fresh like an ocean breeze, magical, charming, fairylike, sprightly, with elfin grace, conjuring deep, green forests and starry nights! Who said that holiness is forbidding and austere? This priest is the most humble and welcoming I have ever received a blessing. You feel like an innocent small child in his presence. Still, he is so otherworldly, light and free! Literally floating!



At a break between talks, I whisper to a friend of mine: 'Let us go and get his blessing! He is such a holy man, so special and close to God!' She readily agrees. Before however a move is made or a look is exchanged, something most unexpected happens. He could not have listened! He is far away, across the hall! And yet, the moment my words are uttered, he suddenly fixes his eyes meaning-fully on me, smiles mischievously with elfin delight, apparently most 'proud' at his practical joke, and starts to make a funny pantomime, as if he is 'escaping' from us!



Wait a minute! This cannot be happening! I run to his side and ask him: 'How on earth, pappouli, did you hear? Or know what we were planning to do? You can't have possibly heard us at such a distance!' 'Of course, I can', he answers smiling even more elfishly. 'I am so proud and conceited that I am always eaves-dropping, eager to listen to other people's praises!'

He is not telling the truth, of course. And his blessing is a small miracle that seals my participation at this conference. Ever since, I feel his prayers, and bless the Lord for allowing me to "see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face", for catching a glimpse of Orthodoxy in Great Britain through the eyes of the prescient priest."

*Kleio Kechagia*

For more vignettes from the Antiochian Conference, go to "*The Pending, the Proselyte and the Prescient*" at the Orthodox city hermit blog [here](#).

## 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

By God's grace and will, we are blessed to receive more relics of Saints to our Parish. Elder Symeon from the Monastery of Agios Georgios of Mavrovouni, Larnaka, Cyprus, sent us with Ramy Al-Haddad three relics of the following Saints:

- \* St. Habakkuk of Kalamithasi (Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>)
- \* St Arsenius of Cappadocia (Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>)
- \* St Georgios the new martyr of Ephesus (Apr. 5<sup>th</sup>)

You may read the letter of elder Symeon sent to Fr Jonathan [here](#). For more information about the Monastery itself, please click [here](#) (in Greek).





*The icon of St George from the Monastery of Agios Georgios of Mavrovouni, Larnaka, Cyprus*

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

## STAVRONIAN CORNER

We are so very grateful to those who remember us in their prayers and show their love as generous benefactors of our Parish. We would like to thank Ioana Plater and her family for cleaning the priestly vestments and for making cloths for the Cross and Holy Icons. Thank you also to a beloved Cypriot family who wishes to remain anonymous for a generous donation to our Community.

## MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

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

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)





### Services at St Martin's in July\*

Sat. 2 <sup>nd</sup>	13:00	Confessions, Synaxarion and Great Vespers
Sun. 3 <sup>rd</sup>	10:00	Hours and Holy Liturgy
Sat. 9 <sup>th</sup>	13:00	Confessions, Synaxarion and Great Vespers
Sun. 10 <sup>th</sup>	10:00	Hours and Holy Liturgy
Sat. 16 <sup>th</sup>	13:00	Confessions, Synaxarion and Great Vespers
Sun. 17 <sup>th</sup>	10:00	Hours and Holy Liturgy
Sat. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	13:00	Confessions, Synaxarion and Great Vespers
Sun. 24 <sup>th</sup>	10:00	Hours and Holy Liturgy
Sat. 30 <sup>th</sup>	13:00	Confessions, Synaxarion and Great Vespers
Sun. 31 <sup>st</sup>	10:00	Hours and Holy Liturgy

\*Help setting up the church is greatly appreciated and starts from 9.30 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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The following blogs of Old Stavronians are available in Romanian, [Constiinta Ortodoxa](#), in English, [Orthodox city hermit](#), and in Greek, [Orthodoxy rainbow](#).

