



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

The Stavronian

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*Ἦθρονος 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 5; Give us this day our daily bread

Taste and see that the Lord is good

Sufficient unto the day are the evils thereof and sufficient unto the day are the blessings. Our Lord wants us to live sufficient to our needs in the present moment which is the only moment that we can fully be alive. We should not live in the past with its regrets or in the future with its dreams. Now, today is the intersection of time and eternity.

In the Exodus we see what happened to the people of Israel in the desert when they gathered too much manna for the next day - it went rotten and became mouldy (Exodus 16). The ideal is to live a faith sustained by God as the lilies of the field and the birds of the air.

We should ask, indeed demand like children who say "give us", the verb in Hebrew *ten lanu* is an imperative. Our Lord teaches that we should ask for those things that are needful not simply what we want or what we would like. The Hebrew *lechem chucheinu* reflects the request found in the wisdom book of [Proverbs 30:8](#); "*Give me neither poverty nor riches, but provide me with my daily bread.*" God has engraved into our very nature and being a need for food and water and a need for Him - here in this simple request we address the creator of our souls and the sustainer of our bodies. [Psalm 145:15-16](#); The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing.

An old Rabbi, when asked what the meaning was in the Creation story of the serpent's curse to eat earth answered: "*Humans are condemned to eat bread by the sweat of their brow, so that if they*

wear of their labours they will cry out to God. Especially in their distress they remain linked to God. But God has given the serpent everything it needs, so that it will never turn to Him again."

We turn to God in conversation, in guilt to answer Him, in anger to question Him, in wonder to glorify Him. The King and Prophet David expresses the whole gamut of human emotions but in a tender moment of exaltation he expresses the offering of his heart: [Psalm 19:14](#); "*Let the words of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.*"

In Hebrew the word for meditation is *הגה* (hagah) in Greek *μελετώ*. The Hebrew has the connotation to spell out like a child learning a new word who speaks it out loud, letter by letter. As we speak the word we also ingest and digest the sweet delight of the food from heaven - we savour the word of God. The Greek indicates to care for something, to devise a plan with practice and to exercise oneself in study. Meditation is not simply a mental exercise, it has an emotional and spiritual content; the fathers teach us that it has the effect of stamping an indelible seal in our conscience and that it why we should limit meditation to the word of God. In Platonic thought the idea must have a word (logos) and a word must have a concept but the Psalms go further to reflect human needs in respect to the nature and purposes of God: [Psalm 119:105](#); "*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*"

The more we ponder on the word the clearer our path becomes. Metropolitan Anthony of Sourzozh recounting his own conversion to Christ sat down to read the Gospel of St. Mark. He read it more as a challenge to discard what he believed at the time its false claims but by the end of the first chapter he found himself in tears. He became aware with total certainty of the presence of Christ

standing on the other side of the desk to where he was reading. He saw nothing, heard nothing but Christ's presence was real; real and certain enough to change the direction of Metropolitan Anthony's life forever.

In 1984 an English actor Alec McCowen received worldwide acclaim for his one man performance of the recitation of the whole of St Mark's Gospel. Years later he found himself reciting it when going for walks and was called upon to "perform" it again such was the stunning effect it had on the audiences.

Another Mark, St Mark the Ascetic who was born in Athens in the fifth century and lived in the Egyptian desert as a monk to a very old age could recite by heart all four Gospels as well as many other books from the Old and New Testament!

Memory and meditation therefore are related, they stand as servants to receive Christ. Through reading the scriptures we come to know them and as we come to know them they become our daily bread. It is no wonder that before his ministry when Our Lord was tempted he answered and said: Matthew 4:4; "*It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'*"

It is no coincidence either that when describing the Kingdom of Heaven, Our Lord compares it to a Wedding Banquet to which we are all invited (Matthew 22:2-14) .

Bread is the most basic substance for sustaining our body and it is also the substance which becomes the body of Christ. The Greek text in fact has this in mind when it uses the word *epiousios* literally "above the essence" or *super-substantial* the bread is not only the bread for today but for eternal life. Our daily bread is invested by the Holy Spirit. At the Holy Liturgy, the priest asks that the Holy Spirit may come upon us and upon

these gifts here spread forth. Such bread is provides sustenance for eternal life. It is living bread. It is not simply the bread which keeps our mortal body alive and provides for our physical health, it is the bread of immortality for the eternal day of the Kingdom of God. Does not Our Lord say of himself "*I am the bread of Life.*" (John 6:27)... and "*the bread which I give for the life of the world is My flesh*" (John 6:48,51)?

John Keble an Anglican priest and poet, one of the leaders of the Oxford Movement of the 19th c. once wrote this about the Eucharist:

What is this silent might, making our darkness light,
New wine our waters, heavenly blood our wine?
Christ, and his Mother dear, and all his saints, are here;
And where they are is heaven, and what they touch, divine.



We are asking for spiritual food, as well as that which is necessary for our physical well being. In the original Hebrew Aramaic the words indicate a wish for *Our bread which is from the Earth* which forms a parallel in classic psalmic poetic meter to *Our Father who is*

in Heaven. God's concern is for the whole person: mind, body, heart and soul.

At the Divine Liturgy, Christ comes to us under the forms of Bread and Wine. This is the Bread of Life and the Divine Blood Transfusion to transform and transfigure us into His likeness. Our own theosis is a process rather like the baking of bread. Evangelia Stergiou in her beautiful article on Bread draws strongly from this passage in the Didache of the Twelve Apostles:

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“Ὡσπερ ἦν τούτο το κλάσμα δισκορπιζόμενον ἐπάνω των ορέων και συναχθέν ἐν, οὕτω συναχθήτω Σου η Εκκλησία ἀπό των περάτων της γης εις την Βασιλείαν σου. Ἦταν σιτάρι, σπαρμένο σε βουνό και σε φαράγγια. Θερίστηκε, αλέστηκε, ζυμώθηκε, ἐγινε ψωμί. Το ευλογήσαμε και αγιάσθηκε και ἐγινε σῶμα Χριστοῦ. Και εμεῖς Κύριε, σκορπισμένοι εἴμαστε· σε «βουνά» και σε «φαράγγια»! Μάζεψέ μας κοντά Σου, Κύριε. Ἄλεσέ μας. Κάνε μας Ψωμί. Κάνε μας ὅλους μας ἓνα μέσα στην Εκκλησία σου και αγιάσέ μας. Πάρε μας στη Βασιλεία Σου! (Διδαχή των Δώδεκα Αποστόλων, 9, 4. Από την www.pigizois.gr).

It was wheat, sown on mountains and ravines. It was harvested, milled, kneaded, turned into bread. We blessed it and it was sanctified and became the body of Christ. We, too, are scattered, Lord. On “mountains” and “ravines”. Gather us round you, Lord. Pound us. Turn us into bread. Make us all one in Your Church and sanctify us. Take us to Your Kingdom! (Didache of the 12 Apostles, 9,4; from www.pigizois.gr).

Change

I love bread. Bread is rarely the protagonist of a meal. It will be there, next to your plate, as a nourishing accompaniment, as a

tool to help you eat your food with. Bread is humble, yet essential, at the heart of the Holy Communion, the essential moment of “changing... by Thy Holy Spirit”.

We don't always welcome change in our life, we often resent it or resist it, even though it is unavoidable. I read somewhere that sin is surprisingly conservative; it means refusing to grow; to change.

Bread possesses a changing nature: from seed to plant, from wheat to flour, from flour to dough, from dough to bread, from bread to nourishment, from nourishment to life, from every day common commodity to prosforo, from prosforo to the Body of Christ. Humble bread turns to Holy Bread; it turns into a bridge between heaven and earth. Christ offers us His Holy Body. Man takes a part of creation and changes it, through his labour, then offers it back to the Creator, “Thy own of Thine own we offer Thee”.

I also read recently (The Apples of the Cook, p. 18), that in the old times people called the prosforo “Panagia”, Mother of God, humanity's “offer” to God, which, among other things, made me think that the word prosforo comes from the word προσφέρω, prosfero = to offer).

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We are encumbered by so many possessions, weighed down by so many cares. This simple request asks only for that which is essential. The line between what we want and what we need is clear.

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well. Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day (Matthew 6:33-34).

... To be continued
Fr Jonathan

SAYINGS OF THE FATHERS

“A man who is wrathful with us is a sick man; we must apply a plaster to his heart - love; we must treat him kindly, speak to him gently, lovingly. And if there is not deeply-rooted malice against us within him, but only a temporary fit of anger, you will see how his heart, or his malice, will melt away through your kindness and love - how good will conquer evil. A Christian must always be kind, gracious, and wise in order to conquer evil by good.”

— St. John of Kronstadt, “My Life in Christ”

“You believe that God is one. You do well. The demons also believe, and they tremble.” (James 2:19).

They alone know how to believe in God who love God, who are Christians not only in name but also in action and [way of] life, because without love faith is empty. With love, it is the faith of a Christian - without love, the faith of a demon.

—The Venerable Bede, "Commentary on James"

TOWER OF BABEL

Genesis 11:4; *And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”*

The phrase “Tower of Babel” does not appear in the Bible; it is always “the city and its tower” (אֶת-הָעִיר וְאֶת-הַמִּגְדָּל) or just “the city” (הָעִיר).

Some people think in terms of short term investments. Others think in terms of long term gains, Christians must think in terms of eternity.

Matthew 19:23-24; *Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you that*

it is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

Fr Jonathan



A FEW PALS

The hoped for fruit of youthful vigour never grew,
Green shoots were scythed down in booming sound,
When the sap of sweet blood of life gushed out
Upon the ground

Their prayers and ears attentive to the great command
For those in deep trenches preparing for the foe,
a lacuna of the second hand on pocket watch,
Time to go!

Emptied sand of time from the smashed hour glass
Dropped by propaganda in synonyms for “kill,”
Broken glass of bodies lies strewn upon the mud
Splintered, ... still!

A million grieving mothers send up their pain to heaven.

Their hymns are set to minor keys of shriek and moan
Whilst builders plan for monuments a million names
In Portland stone.

The blossom of mans ignorance; a bitter flower.
Dark narcissus and foxglove grow with loss of truth,
Wisdom sacrificed on altar of power and boast,
As well as youth.

Fr Jonathan



IOCS CONFERENCE

Dear Friends,

We have the pleasure to remind you of our forthcoming Conference on 'Contemporary Fathers and Mothers of the Church: Guides for Today's World', which will take place between **29-31 August 2016** at Sidney Sussex College in Cambridge. You can find details about our Conference on our website [here](#).

Our annual conference will offer - as always - a stimulating theological forum of lectures and discussions, a friendly relaxed atmosphere and a great opportunity to spend a creative and inspirational summer break in Cambridge. You can enrol or make initial payment online [here](#) - or simply send us an email, or call us on 01223 741 037. We would be happy to assist with any questions you may have, so please do not hesitate to contact us.

With our warmest wishes, as ever,
In Christ,

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SUMMER CELTIC PILGRIMAGES

Every year, the Monastery of All Celtic Saints in Mull, organises several Summer Pilgrimages to the Celtic Isles of Scotland. We visit some of the most remote and authentic places connected with early Celtic Christianity. Some of these places have been uninhabited for centuries! The pilgrimages organised by the Monastery are the only way one can visit some of these isles and are organised to support the Monastery in order to bring us one step closer to having it built by the end of

2018. The next Pilgrimage is going to be held in August 13-20. Please write to ierom.serafim@yahoo.co.uk if you are interested to join. For further information, please click [here](#).

NAMES OF DEPARTED LOVED ONES TO BE REMEMBERED THIS MONTH

Aug. 29: *Angelos*

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

We would like to thank Ioana and Aurica for cleaning and repairing the Church Vestments; their help is always much appreciated. May our Lord and Saviour give the reward!



Photo of Parish members taken on Sunday the 24th of July after the Holy Liturgy.

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

6th Aug: The Holy Transfiguration of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

13th Aug: St. Tikhon, Bishop of Voronezh, Wonderworker of Zadonsk and All Russia

15th Aug: The Dormition of our Most-Holy Theotokos

16th Aug: St. Gerasimus, Wonderworker of Cephalonia

20th Aug: St. Oswin, King and Martyr (†651)

24th Aug: St. Cosmas of Aetolia, equal-to-the-Apostles

31st Aug: St. Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne (†651).

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

Services at St Martin's in August*

Sat. 6 th	10:00	Hours and Holy Liturgy celebrating the Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord and Great Vespers at 2 pm.
Sun. 7 th	10:00	Hours and Holy Liturgy
Sat. 13 th	13:00	Confessions, Synaxarion and Great Vespers
Sun. 14 th	10:00	Hours and Holy Liturgy celebrating the Dormition of our Most Holy Theotokos
Mon. 15 th	-	No liturgy today!
Sat. 20 th	13:00	Confessions, Synaxarion and Great Vespers
Sun. 21 st	10:00	Hours and Holy Liturgy
Sat. 27 th	13:00	Confessions, Synaxarion and Great Vespers
Sun. 28 th	10:00	Hours and Holy Liturgy followed by Parish lunch

*Help setting up the church is greatly appreciated and starts from 9.30 a.m.

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



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