



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

The Stavronian

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*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 7; And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.

God does not lead us into temptation: we let ourselves be led by Satan, but the word for temptation in Hebrew is *Masah*. It comes from a root that means to melt, dissolve or consume as if by fire that tests the quality of something. It is for this reason that some versions of the Lord's Prayer translate the petition as "deliver us from a time of testing or trial." *Masah* was the place in the desert where the children of Israel tested God, Ex. 17:7; *So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"*

We are essentially asking not to fall into despair, to be consumed by difficult times and testing moments when our faith in God is questioned. Let us not fall into the hands of Massah where we yield to that psychological and spiritual sterility and paralysis-that atrophy which deadens our spirit and makes us unable to do anything.

St Silouan the Athonite's saying: *Keep your mind in hell and do not despair*, given to him through a revelation from above illustrates the human condition we often find ourselves in. The Psalmist however knows the power of God to refresh the soul: God does not lead us into temptation but as a Good Shepherd into green pastures and by still waters, Psalm 23:2-3;

He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.
He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake

Thus our mind should be filled with quiet confidence and free from any imagining; putting all our trust in God will certainly keep us from despair.

Such despair is a form of idolatry because we replace Almighty God's promise of forgiveness and mercy, his boundless clarity of love with the fog of our selfish lack of faith, our own blinkered and immediate circumstances. Such meanness of spirit and self absorption will make us vulnerable to the evil ones tricks. At such times we put ourselves at the centre of the Universe rather than God and so we must let go of ourselves and fall into the hands of Almighty God, Romans 8:37-39; *Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

The origin of despair is what the Jewish tradition calls *yetzer hara* which is the impulse towards idolatry and selfish gratification; *yetzer* is the imagination or thoughts of the heart what the New Testament calls the natural man or carnal mind. That which is in the mind will lead us to rebel and shape our actions and character. Our appeal to God is again our hope and our release from such evil imagination. The evil one wants to separate us from God - he has done this from the beginning of time by making things that are less than God seem attractive-this of course is idolatry. But as St Augustine says: *"our souls are restless until they find their rest in God."*

Nothing less than God can really satisfy our souls and until we come to our right minds and realise this we are lost in our sins and the idolatry of money,

status, celebrity and all the other charms the evil one has at his disposal to enthrall and consume us.

In Matthew's Gospel the Greek word πονηρός (poneros) is translated as *the evil one* not simply evil. The Aramaic indicates an adversary- the one who contends against us in a court of law. We may say that just as goodness proceeds from God who is all good; so evil proceeds from Satan (the evil one) who is the adversary against us and as a fallen angel against God.

God is a fire that warms and kindles the heart and inward parts. Hence, if we feel in our hearts the cold which comes from the devil -for the devil is cold- let us call on the Lord. He will come to warm our hearts with perfect love, not only for Him but also for our neighbour, and the cold of him who hates the good will flee before the heat of His countenance. ---St. Seraphim of Sarov.

The evil one will bombard us with gifts; poisons and harmful substances concealed in delightful, beguiling wrapping paper -so attractive-so enticing-appealing to our sense of independence and curiosity. Go on try it! The temptation is familiar to the sons and daughters of Adam but still we fall for it. But we must strive for discernment, that is why the Church Fathers encourage us to put our whole effort into being able to distinguish between spirits: We must be able to grow spiritually and be mature enough to be able to say "This is from the devil and I will reject it. This is from God and I will accept it." God's Holy Spirit will equip a person to determine the source of a spiritual manifestation, whether it emanates from God, the Devil, the world, or man.

St John of Damascus in the *Philokalia*, Vol.2, on the Virtues and the Vices writes that the virtue of discernment (discrimination) "*is greater*

than any other virtue; and is the queen and crown of all the virtues".

We ask God our Father to protect us from all that confuses our spirit and from temptations that are beyond our strength to reject. In this petition, we ask God the Father to assist us - to prevent us (literally go before us). We need the Holiness of God and His Strength. The closer we are to God the greater the strength we draw from Him like a matchstick against a nail that cannot be broken. We will experience trials for our purification but we invite God to send us assistance from above. Like the Righteous Job God may allow Satan his freedom (yes God's free will is bestowed to all His creatures) but He will not allow us to be tempted beyond our endurance (1 Corinthians 10:13). Christ has suffered in the flesh so he knows about human suffering (Heb. 2:18).

The evil one seeks our destruction As St. Peter says, *the Devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour* (1 Peter 5:8). So we need to be vigilant and courageous against the enemy of our salvation. We strive for the state of watchfulness and sobriety.

When we are pressed by passions, trials and temptations on every side there are only two ways to go; down or up - choose up, choose Christ, choose the Kingdom of Heaven.

May we be delivered today from such deception and realise our service in Christ and our honoured status as children of God our heavenly Father.

... To be continued
Fr Jonathan



NOTHING ACTUALLY IS FOR EVER!

Ecclesiastes 3:14-15; *I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever. **Nothing** can be added to it, and **nothing** taken from it. God does it, that men should fear before Him. That which is has already been, and what is to be has already been; and God requires an account of what is past.*

Someone commented about the Orthodox Liturgy” It is so old fashioned; it (the Church) belongs of the past.” To which an Orthodox priest replied “We don’t do fashion! The Church belongs to Christ who is the Alpha and the Omega and so belongs to the past, the present and the future.”

Every thing is as God made it - the Church is the work of His hands; the Church is the gift of God to the world - the Church is not made by the world, neither should she (the Bride of Christ, Ephesians 5:22-33) be conformed to the image of the world. We have the world so much in our hearts today that it has taken up residence there. We are so taken up with thoughts and cares of worldly things that we do not have the inclination, the time or the spiritual sight, to see God's Work. The world has not only gained possession of the heart, but has formed thoughts against the beauty of God's Work. We are mistaken if we think the Church should be made to fit the world's shifting values, to be “relevant” and relative”; no, in our short time on this earth, the Church redeems time and the world through the Holy Liturgy. Divine action sanctifies the world, as it has been, is, and will be; hence the proclamation of the deacon or priest at the beginning of the Holy Liturgy, “It is time for the Lord to act.”

Blessed Seraphim Rose wrote: “a transplantation from the soil of worldliness

to the soil of Christianity and a Church orientated life... it is the Life of repentance and grace in the Church attested by miracles... that softens and converts the heart of man.”

In our Orthodox Christian faith we will find nothing reformed, nothing novel, nothing recent, nothing temporal, nothing alternative, nothing extra, nothing removed, nothing adapted, nothing fashionable; just authentic Apostolic faith, teaching and tradition going right back to Christ.

Fr Jonathan

THOUGHTS FROM THE CELTIC FATHERS

From the life of Saint Winifred of Wales: Once when Saint Winifred was giving alms to the poor, the people told to her that if she continued to give alms in that way she would end up a poor woman. Saint Winifred replied to them saying that God never abandons a man who gives alms with his heart.

*Christos Vasilopoulos
Kozani, Greece*



NAMES OF DEPARTED LOVED ONES TO BE REMEMBERED THIS MONTH

Oct. 17: *Garyfalos*

Oct. 20: *Fr Stephen Hatherly*

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

On 21st October at 7 pm at St Martin's church, the Parish will welcome Readers and other members of the Anglican Parish of the Ascension Torrisholme for Hours, a talk on "What is Orthodox Christianity?" by Fr Jonathan, and refreshments. Please come along to support this event of our Parish!

On Oct. 8th, Fr Jonathan is presenting his [book](#) "Fountains in the desert" in Athens, Greece. It is translated in Greek by Kleio Kechagia and published by Ev πλω.

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 [Anastasios Apostolidis](#) for providing us with charcoal for the censor, [Patricia Chiracu's mother and father](#) for the wine and [Eleni Fitsiou](#) for the candles she brought to be used in the church.



Fr Jonathan and Aidan visited Barnabas at his house in Chorley, where he received Holy Communion. Aidan on this photo holding Barnabas' Legion of Honour, [Chevalier medal](#)!

STAVRONIAN CORNER

[Iryna Minakova and family](#) spent part of their August holidays in Belgium. They visited the [Monastery of St John Maximovich](#), Archbishop of Shanghai and San Francisco, which is affiliated to the Patriarchate of Moscow. The Liturgy is celebrated in Dutch and French! Iryna sent us a few photos along with greetings to the Parish.





The [catacombs](#) in Milos, Greece.

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

6th Oct: Holy Apostle Thomas

7th Oct: Sts Sergius & Bacchus the Great Martyrs of Syria

10th Oct: The 14 Holy Elders of Optina Monastery in Russia

12th Oct: St. Wilfrid, Bishop of York (+709)

18th Oct: Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke

19th Oct: St. John of Kronstadt

26th Oct: The Glorious Great Martyr Demetrius of Thessalonica

28th Oct: The Holy Protection of the Theotokos



Last August, [Theodoros and Theophania Papadopoulos](#) visited the [catacombs](#) in the island of Milos, Greece, which are considered to be among the oldest in the Christian world. They sent the following photo of one of the catacomb passages.

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 during October*

Sat. 1st	13:00	Confessions and Synaxarion
	14:00	Great Vespers
Sun. 2nd	10:00	Hours
	10:30	Holy Liturgy
Sun. 9th	10:00	Hours
	10:30	Holy Liturgy followed by Parish lunch
Sat. 15th	13:00	Confessions and Synaxarion
	14:00	Great Vespers
Sun. 16th	10:00	Hours
	10:30	Holy Liturgy
Sat. 22nd	13:00	Confessions and Synaxarion
	14:00	Great Vespers
Sun. 23rd	10:00	Hours
	10:30	Holy Liturgy
Sat. 29th	13:00	Confessions and Synaxarion
	14:00	Great Vespers
Sun. 30th	10:00	Hours
	10:30	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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The following blogs of Old Stavronians are available in Romanian, [Constiinta Ortodoxa](#), in English, [Orthodox city hermit](#), and in Greek, [Orthodoxy rainbow](#).

