

**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, 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)***

VISIT OF OUR METROPOLITAN

His Eminence Metropolitan Silouan is, God willing, going to visit the Parish of Holy Cross on the **26th February**. He will serve the Hierarchical Liturgy at 11 a.m. and meet the faithful after the Holy Liturgy. If time permits, he may visit the Chapel of St Patrick - all welcome! This will be the first time for an Episcopal visit from our own Patriarchate of Antioch and we very much look forward to welcoming our Spiritual Father in Christ!

I AM A CHRISTIAN AND I GO TO CHURCH ON SUNDAYS

As Christians we should have no embarrassment about proclaiming this *kairos* time dedicated for the worship of our Creator and Redeemer. Others should know us by our works and our commitments - the Liturgy is the work of the people! The word holiness in Hebrew means to be "set apart"; we "set apart" the Lord's day of Resurrection in the week for Him who is our Life. Sunday mornings are 'set apart' from our everyday routine to accept the invitation of the All Holy Trinity.

Of course there may be valid reasons why we cannot attend Church because of work or illness, but we must beware of the slippery slope! It is so easy to be diverted from the saving beauty of the Liturgy and the Gift of Life which Christ brings by the blandishments of society's norms, hobbies, leisure activities, expectations and diversions. Wherever we find ourselves, we should seek out the nearest Orthodox Christian Church and run to it for our salvation: *If we make every effort to avoid death of the body, still more*

should it be our endeavor to avoid death of the soul. There is no obstacle for a man who wants to be saved other than negligence and laziness of soul. - St Antony the Great

Once we start staying away from Church, it becomes very easy to miss it again and again, until we begin to treat God rather like an elderly aunt who lives a great distance from us and whom we visit on odd occasions of birthdays and anniversaries to pay our respects; Actually elderly aunts should be treated with more respect than this!

In this deeply secular world in which we live, we need to make every effort to resist the easy comforts and distractions from the goal of life which is union with God.

"**I go to Church on Sunday!**" is a bold statement which says to others Whose we are and Whom we serve! We go to Church, because the Church is composed of its members and we are the members of Christ's Body.

In the **parable of the Great Supper**, in [Luke 14:15-24](#) we see how easy it is to make excuses: *Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out*

quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.

"Stand upright, let us attend" is the command we hear in the Liturgy. Standing up for Jesus, both in the literal sense at the Liturgy and in our Christian apologetics may start with fellowship and worship but it goes beyond the Sundays: it should be woven into the very fabric of our every day life as Christians. Making time for God everyday in this modern age is essential if we are to grow in holiness. Duty is the handmaid of joy, love is both the gift and the fruit of the Holy Spirit, thanksgiving is the prism of faith. When we own this truth, then we own the right to say **"I am a Christian"**.

St Kosmas Aitolos wrote: *"It is our duty to love God because he has given us such a large earth here to live temporarily; so many thousand of plants, springs, rivers, seas, air, day, night, sky, sun. For whom did He create all of these if not for us? What did He owe us? Nothing. They are all gifts... He made us in His own image although we sin thousands of times an hour he has compassion for us like a father... A man invites you to his home and wants to treat you to a glass of wine. For the rest of your life you will respect him and honour him. Shouldn't you honour and respect God, who gave you so many good things and who was crucified for your love? ...Shouldn't we too love our Jesus and thank Him?"*

Fr Jonathan



JOURNEY TO ORTHODOXY: Interview with Fr Michael Plekou about Elisabeth Behr Siegel

1. *First of all I would appreciate a lot if you could talk a little bit about the personality of Elisabeth Behr Siegel so that our readers have the opportunity to understand her in a spiritual way.*

I had the privilege of knowing EBS. Though elderly when I met her, she was like a burning bush, full of life and enthusiasm, and great humor. When my wife and I said we could not find the street sign for her flat, she said no one here needs them--they know where everything is! She asked if she could smoke and offered them, Galouises and also offered us some excellent liqueur. She was full of life. I think Olga Lossky's fine biography captures EBS very well.

2. *Her life has certainly been defined by her conversion from Protestantism to Orthodoxy. What really meant her protestant origins and heritage for*

Elisabeth Behr Siegel as a future orthodox theologian?

EBS told me she was encouraged by Fr Lev Gillet to always honor and hold on to her Lutheran roots. It was through the Lutheran church, baptism, catechetical instruction, communion, later theological work, work with the Christian Students Movement and her work as a lay pastor that she lived in Christ. This was never taken away by her entrance into the Orthodox Church. I too came into the Orthodox Church from the Lutheran, so there was a special bond between EBS and myself as there also was between her and Sarah Hinlicky Wilson, herself a Lutheran pastor and theologian. All this said, I would not characterize EBS's theological and church work as anything but that of a western Orthodox Christian, one who had lived and had roots in both the churches of the west and of the east. I knew no more catholic and orthodox a theologian than EBS.

3. Elisabeth Behr Siegel was friends with one of the most well-known orthodox theologians, Vladimir Lossky. How did actually influence his thinking the Behr Siegel's theological approaches?

EBS was friends with numerous Orthodox theologians between the wars. Of all of them I believe Fr Sergius Bulgakov, also her spiritual father for a time, Fr Lev Gillet, her close friend and spiritual father, and Professor George Fedotov were the greatest influences, along with Paul Evdokimov, the theologian, also a close friend. EBS's ecumenical dedication and her commitment to the "living tradition" of the church place her in the "Paris school" of which, of course, Bulgakov, Gillet, Evdokimov and Fedotov were important voices. EBS also knew another bright light of that "school" now a saint, Mother Maria Skobtsova, and

helped her ministry of service to the poor and those hunted by the Nazis. EBS helped those destined for extermination by the Gestapo get out of Paris and into the country and hiding.

4. Do you think that we can talk about a some kind of theology of hope in the Elisabeth Behr Siegel's thinking?

EBS probably was the inheritor of George Fedotov's new hagiography, the use of historical method in the study of the lives and teachings of the saints and more broadly of the church. EBS first published on the saints of Russia, but then came to write about the spiritual life in everyday life for people of the 20th century. She also came to write a great deal about the place and role of women in the church and championed a restoration of the female diaconate. Her essays on women and ordination are classic and among the most important theological examinations of why ordination is not absolutely or inevitably excluded for women. In this she was supported by among others, Metropolitans Anthony Bloom and Gerroes Khodr and Kallistos Ware.

5. Which is the main reason why the approaches of Elisabeth Behr Siegel could be considered something original in the orthodox theology?

EBS was indeed an "original" in contemporary Orthodox theology. She was dedicated to the restoration of unity in the divided churches of east and west. She along with others in the "Paris school," celebrated tradition as alive and constantly in need of reinterpretation and application to new circumstances. She saw the church as vibrant, the "continual Pentecost" her teacher Fr Bulgakov spoke of. Hence, her pioneering work on holiness/sanctity in everyday, something I too have pursued. (See the link below

my signature to my page at my school for further links to my trilogy of books on holiness and persons of faith in our time: Living Icons, Hidden Holiness, Saints as they really are, University of Notre Dame Press, 2002, 2009, 2012 and my forthcoming Uncommon Prayer.

6. Given the entire theological system of Elisabeth Behr Siegel, would it be correct to discuss any orthodox feminism, if I can call it like that?

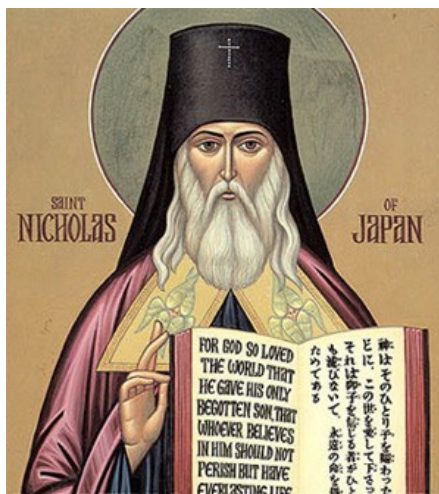
I think it would be accurate to say that EBS knew and understood the feminist movement of the 1960s, 70s, 80s, 90 and into the 21st century. She died in 2005. She sympathized with many feminist critiques of culture and society. However, I think she felt that studying and criticizing the ways women were treated in the church transcended feminism as ordinarily understood, this because in Christ there is no Greek, Jew, master, slave, male or female. She did not share her friend Paul Evdokimov's efforts to sketch out the distinct charisms of woman. Rather she argued that the gospels, the rest of the New testament, the liturgical tradition, especially baptism, all offered an equal place to women. But over history, the patriarchal character of the church from its transformed and transcendent vision of gender. Thus, EBS's many essays on women in the gospels, on the Mother of God, on women saints in the history of the church and on the theological issues of ordination and women.

7. How can we find a strong and real influence of Elisabeth Behr Siegel's thinking in the contemporary orthodoxy? And when I am saying "contemporary orthodoxy" I especially make reference to the western orthodoxy.

Given the more recent neotraditionalism and shift of Orthodox thinking, not just in theology but also in politics, culture, social thought to the right, EBS now stands out as a prophetic figure and voice. Here and there I know of many women theologians, like Teva Regule, Kyriaki Fitzgerald, Valerie Karras, Susan Ashbrook Harvey, Carrie Frederick Frost, Sarah Hinlicky Wilson, among others, and I would say, even without direct connections, they carry on EBS' work and vision. The one exception is Sarah Hinlicky Wilson, who as a Lutheran pastor and theologian at the Ecumenical Institute in Strasbourg, knew EBS, did the first dissertation on her and her work and carries on her legacy in many ways.

Tudor Petcu, Romania

Tudor Petcu is a writer and a graduate of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Bucharest, Romania. Part of his work focuses on the evolution of Orthodox spirituality in Western societies. This article is part of his new book of interviews with Orthodox converts in the West, to be published in the near future.



THOUGHTS FROM THE CELTIC FATHERS

From the life of St Ciaran of Saighir, Ireland: Saint Ciaran had many cows and sheep in his monastery. But he never tasted something from the products which his animals were producing. He was giving everything that the animals produced to the poor people. He had fifty horses to plough the earth. But he never tasted something from what his earth was producing. He was giving everything to the poor. That was his food every night: one small piece of bread, some water and some roots.

*Christos Vasilopoulos
Kozani, Greece*

NAMES OF DEPARTED LOVED ONES TO BE REMEMBERED THIS MONTH

Feb. 2: *Dimitri*

Feb. 21: *Pisistratos*

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 express our thanks for Tony Plater's work in the Temple particularly making our sand tray "mobile". Our thanks also to

Nikos Georgopoulos for his kind donation and gift of candles, Katya Tisdall for the gift of icons, Anastasios Apostolidis for the candles and charcoal, as well as Kleio and Apostolos Kechagias for the gift of books. May they all receive God's blessing as a reward for their thoughtfulness.

OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

Proto-Stavronians Ignatius and Ioanna Bacon from Scotland, are sending their greetings and love to the Parish. They used to attend the Holy Liturgy in Lancaster when the Parish services were held at the Lancaster Royal Grammar School.



Ignatius and Ioanna Bacon in July 2016 at the conference organised by the Orthodox Fellowship of St John the Baptist.



MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1st Feb: St Bridget of Kildare (†525)

2nd Feb: The Meeting of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Temple

3rd Feb: St Nicholas, Archbishop & Enlightener of Japan

5th Feb: **Triodion** begins today

10th Feb: Hieromartyr Charalampus

18th Feb: St Colman (†675)

23rd Feb: St Polycarp the Holy Martyr & Bishop of Smyrna

24th Feb: First & Second Finding of the Venerable Head of John the Baptist

26th Feb: Forgiveness Sunday and St Photine, the Samaritan woman

27th Feb: **Lent** starts today

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 February*

Sat. 4 th	13:00	Memorial, Confessions, Synaxarion and Great Vespers
Sun. 5 th	10:00	Hours and Holy Liturgy
Sat. 11 th	13:00	Memorial, Confessions, Synaxarion and Great Vespers
Sun. 12 th	10:00	Hours and Holy Liturgy
Sat. 18 th	13:00	Memorial, Confessions, Synaxarion and Great Vespers
Sun. 19 th	10:00	Hours and Holy Liturgy
Sat. 25 th	13:00	Memorial, Confessions, Synaxarion and Great Vespers
Sun. 26 th	11:00	Hierarchical 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 -



For further information please contact:

Father Jonathan Hemmings
67 Sibsey Str., Fairfield, Lancaster, LA1 5DQ
Tel: +44 1524 840759, +44 1524 580600

Email: frjah@yahoo.co.uk

www.orthodox-lancaster.org.uk

www.antiochian-orthodox.co.uk

The following blogs of Old Stavronians are available in Romanian, [Constiinta Ortodoxa](#), in English, [Orthodox city hermit](#), and in Greek, [Orthodoxy rainbow](#).

