

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

The Stavronian

a monthly magazine & newsletter publicised 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)***

THE OLD AND THE YOUNG; FOREVER NEW IN CHRIST

Psalm 71: “Do not cast me away in time of old age...”

We are indeed blessed in having in our holy community at Holy Cross young families with children. What a blessing it is for those who are parents to pass on their Orthodox faith, teaching and practice to their children and to bring them to Church. What a joy it is to see each week the young children rush to receive their Holy Communion when the priest says: “With fear of God and faith and love draw near.”

Oh what faith! Would that we all had such enthusiasm to partake of the Holy Mysteries of God! It is to this purity of faith that Our Lord points to children and says: Matthew 19:14; “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

Drawing near to God we draw on His strength, His love, His peace and His light and we become strengthened in our life as we take, eat and receive the Holy Gifts.

When two priests serve the Holy Liturgy they exchange a holy kiss with the words: “Christ is in our midst” to which the other replies “He is and ever shall be!” Indeed, Christ is in our midst. One of the symbols of this is beautifully realised on the discos itself, where the Lamb is at the centre, the Mother of God and the orders of Saints are there, our Bishop, the living and departed are all presented from the Prosthoro. Here then is a beautiful icon of the Church, those living, the sick, the elderly, the young, the housebound, the healthy and those reposed, our forefathers and foremothers. Each is represented in particles of bread and at the centre is Christ Himself.

I remember my spiritual father Archpriest Michael Harper saying that when

he carried the Holy Discos at the Great Entrance, by the time he reached the Holy Table the bread particles of the living and the departed had moved and became mixed together. What a wonderful image that is of our Life in Christ who is the Resurrection and the Life; for in Him there is only Life.

Yet the Liturgy after the Liturgy is to visit the elderly, the lonely, the oppressed, the housebound, those in hospital, the ones who for good reason are unable to attend Church, since they are a part of our family. James 1:27; *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

Ministry is never one way. We can learn so much about wisdom and patience from the elderly. We must see through the eyes of the “nous” not just at the physical, but beyond to the soul of the person, both made fully in the image of God.

It is an irony in these days when social media makes everyone so instantly “available” that there is more loneliness, less community spirit and greater fractures in our society; especially affected are the elderly who often do not have access to the internet. Face to face, person to person, is infinitely more important and essential than Facebook, since our faith itself is about relationship with Christ whom one day we will meet face to face.

How lovely it is when old and young are together, respected and nurtured in mutual care. In a recent programme on T.V. entitled “Old peoples home for 4 year olds” pre-schoolers shared their classroom with pensioners for six weeks. The impact that this intergenerational experiment had on the health and happiness of the older group was remarkable, reenergising, life enhancing?

So here is the blueprint for the Church laid out on the Holy Discos at each and every Liturgy. As sons and daughters of Christ, whether old or young, we move together through this life, loving one another, helping one another staying close to the Lamb of God: Acts 17:28; *for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'*

It is only when every stage of human life is woven into the very fabric of our holy Christian communities that we begin to comprehend the unity and fullness of the Church and experience love.

The Holy Apostle John the Theologian says that the commandments of God are not difficult, but easy (I John, 5:3). But they are only easy because of love, while they are all difficult if there is no love. --- St. Silouan the Athonite, Writings, XVI.10

Fr Jonathan

INTERVIEW WITH FATHER NECTARIE PETRE, ABBOT OF CRASNA MONASTERY OF PRAHOVA, ROMANIA

The dialogue, the conversation with God has to be as intimate and sincere as possible

Fr Nectarie Petre is a young monk who can reach out to the troubled youths of our days. Our conversation, direct and very alive can be an invitation in this direction (or so we trust). He began the dialogue starting with the issue of young people who desire to enter the monastery, but mistrust their own heart, tormented by indecision and incapable of major decisions.

Every age has its challenges, but this particular time of life, between 25 and 30 ought to be the age of settling down already, but it is equally a time of searching and interior restlessness. We too often fear the answers we might give ourselves. But if we embark upon this search relying on our own strength and self confidence, we cannot face up to this calling. This is when we have to put our trust in God and intensify our prayer. "Lord, may your will be done unto me!" At this time, man needs such a deep intimacy with God, that his prayer has to go beyond akatists and prayer books, but he has to place his entire self in God's hands. The dialogue, the conversation with God has to become as intimate and sincere as possible and the surrender has to be complete: "Lord if I was made for this following, strengthen me to follow it until my last breath." And then the Lord will strengthen this soul. At this point the young person meets the impossibility of answering himself "Yes, I shall go." And the self doubt, the fear that he might not fulfil his promise to the end, ceases.

What then?

This is when the surrender into God's hands, the self denial and complete trust in God must intervene. I remember meeting a young man in Paris, who believed it was easy to enter a monastery. And as I mentioned earlier, I told him not to forget that everybody will oppose his decision. His reaction was: "Really, Father? I can't believe that." It was not easy and we experienced the difficulty together, but God prevailed and he is now a monk and we were thinking together how all the temptations come to assail those who want to enter a monastery. At this moment we have to be entirely devoted to the vocation we want to follow in our life and to believe truly that Christ is the one who strengthens us to make this decision.

Anyway, sometimes the people close to the young man discerning his vocation, behave in the most impossible ways because monasticism is often misunderstood. Often a young man entering a monastery is seen as a traitor, an egotist or simply disillusioned. I will tell you without doubt that he who goes to the monastery out of disillusionment and without vocation, will not be able to see it through. I appreciated those who remained in the monastery for a while and, deciding that this following is not for them, did not make their vows, but thanked God for the experience they had lived there. I was glad to see this dignity and through the experience in the monastery they may fulfil God's work in the world, by living a truly Christian family life, thus witnessing to Christ.

"The entering of a novice into a monastery is a mystery lived by himself, but also by the abbot and the whole of the monastic community"

If you were entering the monastery now, what would you look for in a monastery?

I would first of all look to find a family there.; it is very important to feel that this community can become your family and this family can accept you and gradually you can identify with its members. This is why all the other things you are looking for and the answers you are searching for will surely follow. It is very important to identify with the place, to know that it is not just a place of retreat. From the moment you have entered the monastery it becomes your home, the monastic community are your brothers and sisters and the entire monastic daily schedule is your own daily ministry. Every second you must remember that being there means you are not ministering to people, but given entirely to God, through and along-

side the abbot and brothers you are labouring with. There are many monasteries with young abbots and people sometimes think they are not as spiritually advanced, but for different reasons, God works through their youth and even maybe through their ignorance. Through their lack of charismatic experience, God works the mystery of this vocation. This is why the entering of a novice into a monastery is a mystery lived by himself, but also by the abbot and the whole of the monastic community. It is very important that the young man is well received. I remember a story once recounted to me by a father. There was a renowned monastery and an elder of the monastery was trying to give guidance to a young novice who wanted to remain there :” Young man, monastic life is hard, the services are long, monasticism is not easy at all. You must be fully aware why you are taking this step.” And the young man became increasingly sad and convinced he should not remain. And at some point, another father nearby said: ”Father, the Devil is telling him the same things. Tell him of the joys that can be found in the monastery, of the fulfilment, the satisfactions, reveal to him the state of grace that your holiness has experienced and afterwards tell him of the trials of monastic life.”

"If monasticism cultivates sadness and not joy it cannot constitute a form of witness for the contemporary world."

This is a situation often met. When you ask about monastic life, many times the answer is the same “Monasticism is not as it once was”.

God knows! Maybe those people do not talk through the joy they experienced in the monastery. For me this is a source of pain. People have often said that our monastery is welcoming, although I do

not know if this defines us. But we have tried, the brothers and I to make sure that every day, after the services until the evening at 7, all pilgrims are welcomed at the gate by a brother and showed around the monastery and taken to the refectory. People have asked “Why is it different here than other monasteries? Does this not compromise monastic life?” We do not know if it is different. This is how we were taught. My true intimacy with Christ, through monastic living takes place in my cell, which is the mystery of this vocation. All day long, as I meet people I still talk of monasticism, of God and of the joys of the monastery. It is very important to share joy, but naturally and not forced. I was much strengthened by the words of Saint Evagrius Ponticus who said the following about monks: “A sad monk is a failed monk.” Therefore if monasticism cultivates sadness and not joy, it cannot constitute a form of witness for the contemporary world. Many Christians take the road towards monasteries nowadays. People compare and pay attention to details and need to be received with warmth and joy and this is the “joined work” of the monk’s vocation. There is a need to return to a certain state of spontaneity? and sincerity. This saves monasticism: sincerity and openness.

“Monasticism and marriage, the two slopes of Tabor. One and the other have the same end: holiness”

Monasticism or marriage?

In this day and age, marriage is harder than monasticism. One is not superior to the other. The French theologian Olivier Clément says beautifully “Monasticism and marriage, the two slopes of Tabor. One and the other have the same end: holiness.” It is hard. Many ask :how can I become holy in the world? But why think you can only become holy in the monas-

tery? God works also for those in the world. It is true that monks have a lot of time at their disposal :time for private reflection, time for prayer, you are aware that those living in the world do not have as much time. But maybe God will judge monastics in accordance with the very time they had at their disposal and did not use well, but a monk’s chief act of mercy and supreme duty is to pray for the world. He withdraws to atone for the world. This is why the faithful come to the monasteries with their prayers and requests...It is a certainty that the monastic prays for people. Although he left behind home, parents, brothers, sisters, friends he came to the monastery, so all people have become his mother, father, brother, sister...This the potential of monastic life! You enter into the intimacy of dwelling with Christ, but you must be fully aware of it and it shall bring along a certainty. This is why monasticism in itself remains a mystery.

In our daily life, how must we behave to one another to experience Christ?

“Love one another as I have loved you” and “Do not judge” says our Saviour. You see, we wish everybody else to be like us and often this “acrvia” (rigorism) does not yield the best results. This is why I consider it essential that every man be accepted as they are. Every person goes through difficulties and temptations which can become real interior wars so their faith is tried. It is important to see that even in temptations people try to meet Christ, but on their own spiritual level at that given time and not on a forced, hypothetical level to which they ought to ascend. This is why us monks cannot and do not have the right to blame the world. We have to blame ourselves because since we no longer live beautifully, the world does not live beautifully either. We have to be alive with

Christ and speak to the world about the joy of encountering Christ!

Interview by Valentina Ciucă

The interview was first published in 2015. Translation from Romanian by Andreea Zoitanu and Alexandra Petrescu.

NAMES OF DEPARTED LOVED ONES TO BE REMEMBERED THIS MONTH

Mar. 4: *Nikolaos*

Mar. 12: *Georgianna*

Mar. 18: *Fr Thomas Hopko*

Mar. 19: *Metropolitan Philip of North America and Fr Georgios Myrou*

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 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 for making the purple curtains on the Iconostasis for Great Lent. Thanks also to Apostolos Iakovidis for the

candles. May our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ give the reward!

This Great Lent our Parish will once again raise money for the Hospice in Nicosia, Cyprus. Please hand your donations to our Treasurer Alexandra.

OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

We are delighted that our Old Stavronians Fr Ionut Uliniuc and Presbyteria Maria Anastasiou from Nicosia, Cyprus, are visiting Lancaster and Morecambe in Bright Week. With the blessing of our Metropolitan Silouan, Fr Ionut will serve the Holy Liturgy with Fr Jonathan on Bright Sunday. Glory to God!

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1st Mar: St. David of Wales (†589)

2nd Mar: Our Holy fathers St Nicholas Planas & St Joachim of Ithaca and Vatopaedi

12th Mar: Symeon the new Theologian

17th Mar: St Patrick, the Enlightener of Ireland (†492)

20th Mar: St Cuthbert the Wonderworker, Bishop of Lindisfarne (†687)

25th Mar: The Annunciation of our Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary










30th Mar: St John Climacus the righteous, author of the Divine Ladder of Ascent

31st Mar: St. Innocent, Enlightener of Siberia & Alaska

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

OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2018

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week JANUARY 28th	 Publican and the Pharisee Reading: 2 Timothy 3: 10-15 Gospel: Luke 18: 10-14	Trust in God, not yourself Ask for His help before every task this week!
Normal Fast Week FEBRUARY 4th	 The Prodigal Son Returns! Reading: 1 Corinthians 6: 12-20 Gospel: Luke 15: 11-32	Schedule a Confession. Use up/freeze meats this week.
Meatfare FEBRUARY 11th FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY	 The Last Judgment Reading: 1 Corinthians 8: 8-9; 2 Gospel: Matthew 25: 31-46	Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare FEBRUARY 18th FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	 Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise! FORGIVENESS SUNDAY Reading: Romans 13: 11-14; 4 Gospel: Matthew 6: 14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1st Sunday of Lent FEBRUARY 25th	 SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY Reading: Hebrews 11: 24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1: 43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent MARCH 4th	 ST GREGORY PALAMAS Reading: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2: 1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent MARCH 11th	 VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS HALF WAY TO PASCHA! Reading: Hebrews 4: 14-5: 6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9: 1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bowl!
4th Sunday of Lent MARCH 18th	 ST JOHN of the LADDER Reading: Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9: 17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent MARCH 25th	 ST MARY of EGYPT Reading: Hebrews 9: 11-14 & Heb 2:11-18 Gospel: Mark 10: 32-45 & LK 1:24-38	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! April 1st GREAT WEEK BEGINS	 ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM Reading: Philippians 4: 4-9 Gospel: John 12: 1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY APRIL 6th	 GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet, & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! APRIL 8th NO FASTING!	 HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!) Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1: 1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!

For the times of the Holy Services and Akathists during our Journey to Pascha, please refer to the following list

1. Pre-Lent "Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee" Theme: *Metanoia*, i.e. Repentance, 28th Jan
2. "Sunday of the Prodigal Son" Theme: Returning to God 4th Feb.
3. "Sunday of the Last Judgement" Theme: Judgement. Meatfare Sunday 11th Feb.

4. Forgiveness Sunday Theme: Being forgiven and forgiving one another. Cheesefare Sunday Expulsion of Adam from Paradise First Week of Great Lent: Liturgy followed by Vespers of Forgiveness 18th Feb.
5. 1st Salutation to the Theotokos - 1st Akathist, 23rd February, at 6.30 p.m.
6. **First Sunday of Great Lent.** Theme: Sunday of Orthodoxy Liturgy of St Basil. Procession of Icons "*This is our Orthodox faith*" 25th Feb.
7. 2nd Salutation to the Theotokos - 2nd Akathist, 2nd March, at 6.30 p.m.
8. Saturday of Souls 3rd March
9. **Second Sunday of Great Lent.** Theme: St Gregory Palamas 4th March
10. 3rd Salutation to the Theotokos - 3rd Akathist, 9th March, at 6.30 p.m.
11. Saturday of Souls 10th March
12. **Third Sunday of Great Lent.** Theme: "*Veneration of the Cross*" Lent mid-point- 11th March
13. 4th Salutation - 4th Akathist, 16th March, at 6.30 p.m.
14. Saturday of Souls 17th March
15. **Fourth Sunday of Great Lent.** Theme: St John Climacus - The Ladder of Divine Ascent 18th March
16. The Akathist Hymn in Full 23rd March, at 6.30 p.m.
17. **Fifth Sunday of Great Lent.** Liturgy of St John Chrysostom. Theme: "*The Annunciation to the Theotokos*" 25th March
18. Lazarus Saturday Theme: A foretaste of the Resurrection 31st March
19. **Holy Week:** Entry of Our Lord into Jerusalem; Palm Sunday 1st April
20. Great and Holy Monday; Commemoration of the Unfruitful Fig Tree. Matins 6.00 p.m. 2nd April
21. Great and Holy Tuesday; Commemoration of the Parable of the Ten Virgins Matins 6.00 p.m. 3rd April
22. Great and Holy Wednesday; Commemoration of the Sinful woman who anointed the Lord with myrrh. *Euchelaion* 6.00 p.m. 4th April
23. Great and Holy Thursday; Commemoration of the Washing of the Feet, the Mystical Supper, the Prayer in Gethsemane and Betrayal; 10.00 a.m. Holy Liturgy; 6.00 p.m. The Twelve Gospels 5th April
24. **Great and Holy Friday:** The Holy and Redeeming Passion of Our Lord; 9.00 a.m. The Royal Hours 6th April
25. **Great and Holy Friday;** Preparation of the Epitaphion 10.00 a.m.
26. **Great and Holy Friday;** Prayers before the Cross and Confessions 11.00 a.m.
27. **Great and Holy Friday;** Great Vespers 1.00 p.m.
28. **Great and Holy Friday;** Matins Lamentations and Epitaphios 6.30 p.m.
29. **Great and Holy Saturday;** The Burial of our Lord and His Descent into Hell. Vespers Liturgy of St Basil 10.00a.m. 7th April
30. **Great and Holy Saturday:** 9.00 p.m. Reading of the Acts of the Apostles
31. **Holy Pascha:** The Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Receiving of the Light 10.00 p.m.
32. **Holy Pascha;** Liturgy of the Resurrection 10.30 p.m.
33. **Sunday of the Resurrection;** Vespers of Love 3.00 p.m. 8th April

Services at St Martin's in March*

Fri. 2 nd	18:30	2 nd Akathist to the Theotokos
Sat. 3 rd	15:00	Memorial, Confessions, Synaxarion and Great Vespers
Sun. 4 th	10:00	Hours and Holy Liturgy
Fri. 9 th	18:30	3 rd Akathist to the Theotokos
Sat. 10 th	15:00	Memorial, Confessions, Synaxarion and Great Vespers
Sun. 11 th	10:00	Hours and Holy Liturgy
Fri. 16 th	18:30	4 th Akathist to the Theotokos
Sat. 17 th	15:00	Memorial, Confessions, Synaxarion and Great Vespers
Sun. 18 th	10:00	Hours and Holy Liturgy
Fri. 23 rd	18:30	The Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos in Full
Sat. 24 th	15:00	Memorial, Confessions, Synaxarion and Great Vespers
Sun. 25 th	10:00	Hours and Holy Liturgy followed by Parish lunch
Sat. 31 st	15:00	Lazarus Saturday - Memorial, Confessions, Synaxarion and Great Vespers

*Help setting up the church is greatly appreciated and starts half an hour before the service.

“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](#).

