

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

## ***The Stavronian***

*Monthly magazine & newsletter publicised by the Holy Cross Synodia*



*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)*

## TEACHING CHILDREN AND LEARNING FROM CHILDREN

Three of the Gospels, Mark 10:13-16, Luke 18:15-17, and Matthew 19:13-15, reveal to us as Christian adults firstly that our duty is to bring children to Christ to be touched and blessed by Him, but also that the Lord wills us to learn from them. *“Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.”*

What then, must we, as Christian adults and specifically parents, learn from our children in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven? One of the things which has often struck me as a parent and carer is the openness and purity of heart of children. Children’s love is unconditional and uncomplicated. They only ask to be allowed to love us and to be loved back. They have no ulterior motives, love suffices.

Secondly, little children are entirely dependent on their parents: they put their whole trust in us and allow themselves to be in our hands, as we ought to put our trust entirely and unquestioningly in the hands of Our Father in the Heavens.

Another fascinating observation about young children is that they never hold grudges. Any argument or offence is almost instantly forgiven and never remembered the next day. How wonderful this stage of life is, which allows love to overcome and wipe out any brokenness in the relationship of mutual love and how hard it becomes to do so as we advance in years!

If as parents we could only acquire these three childhood gifts, how much closer we would find ourselves to Christ and to our neighbours and how much nearer to the kingdom of God!

On the other hand, as seen in St. Mark’s Gospel, our first duty as parents is to bring children to Christ, to Church. For little children, Church is Heaven on Earth. Children are not only alive with a sense of mystery and wonder which is sometimes lost later on in life, but also curious and hungry for new experiences. If their intellect is not yet fully developed to understand the majesty of God, their senses are fully alert to holiness. As St John of Kronstadt says *“The Church through the temple and Divine service acts upon the entire man, educates him wholly; acts upon his sight, hearing, smelling, feeling, taste, imagination, mind and will, by the splendour of the icons and of the holy temple, by the ringing of bells, by the singing of the choir, by the fragrance of incense, the kissing of the Gospel, of the cross and the holy icons, by the prosphoras, the singing and sweet sound of the reading of the Scriptures.”* How much more sensitive children are to this holy and pleasing assault on the senses, since the senses are the way in which a child first experiences the world around, the first pedagogical tool! Having a simple and open heart, they are also finely attuned to the sense of God’s love which they reciprocate simply and wonderfully in their desire to kiss the icons and the Cross and their eagerness to partake of the Divine Gifts and be one with Christ.

Sometimes parents are displeased when their young child, under the age of three cannot sit still during the Holy Liturgy and try by threat of consequences or bribery to coerce them to be still or sometimes cease coming to Church altogether. Young children are doers and not listeners and exploring is the way in which they learn. Furthermore, children live in the moment. Unlike their parents, they have no regrets about the past and no worries about the future. They are fully present in the moment, joyfully liv-

ing in their own way the Liturgy. It is therefore a parent's duty to try and understand the limitations of the age and to endeavour to occupy the child with suitable, quiet activities which allow the rest of the congregation to also fully participate in the Divine Liturgy. It is a difficult task and true labour of love.

What then, as parents and instructors, do we have to teach our children to bring them closer to Christ as they begin their Christian Orthodox journey? St John Chrysostom says *"Let everything take second place to our care of our children, our bringing them up to the discipline and instruction of the Lord."* If our first duty is to allow children to come to the Lord as they are, with their wonderful gifts and to experience Him simply and directly through their senses and their hearts, we do have two further duties as they grow in understanding and maturity. Firstly, we must instruct them in the faith. Elder Paisios says *"When your children are still small, you have to help them understand what is good. That is the deepest meaning of life"*. Helping them to acquire wisdom and discernment in the Lord is done through introducing them to the Holy Scriptures and the lives of the Saints, through prayer and most of all, through example. Children are far more likely to copy their parents than to follow their instructions. St Porphyrios says *"What saves and makes for good children is the life of the parents in the home. The parents need to devote themselves to the love of God. They need to become Saints in their relations to their children through their mildness, patience and love."* Equally love and harmony between parents is the most wonderful gift these can bequeath their child *"Love, harmony and understanding between parents are what is required for the children. This provides a great sense of security and certainty."* —St Porphyrios

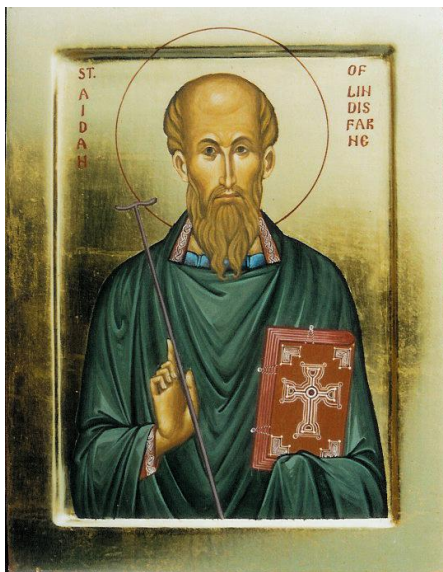
Everyday offers ample opportunities for parents to help children to distinguish what is right, good, beautiful and therefore pleasing to the Lord: *"When we teach children to be good, to be gentle, to be forgiving (all these are attributes of God), to be generous, to love their fellow man, to regard this present age as nothing, we instil virtue in their souls and reveal the image of God within them."* —St John Chrysostom.

The second element of our teaching has to involve discipline. *"Where there is no discipline, there is no constancy."* —St Sebastian Dabovich. As children become more mature and in accordance with their understanding, we need to help them to accept parental authority and treat their elders with respect. *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right"*. Children have a strong inborn sense of fairness, hence the admonition to parents *"And you, fathers do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord"* —Ephesians 6. Obeying your parents, trusting them to be right even when your wishes are contrary to theirs is the first step towards entrusting one's whole self to God and placing our will in His hands. Through a relationship of love and respect with our parents we are "in training" for the ultimate filial obedience to God. It is therefore our duty as parents to help children develop a discipline of obedience and also a discipline of prayer and study, which leads to constancy in their relationship with God. Discipline, if too harsh can nonetheless have adverse effects. Discipline has to be accompanied at all times by love and instruction. When a child becomes old enough to participate intellectually more fully in the Divine services, we need to explain for instance the reasons why they are expected to be still and quiet. We need to help them develop

a sense of understanding and meaning of their actions.

How beautiful is then this exchange of love and gifts between parents and children, where parents instruct their children in discernment, virtues and discipline and children show their elders how to love with and open heart, to forgive and forget and to live in the present in the Presence of the Lord.

*Alexandra McCafferty*



*St Aidan of Lindisfarne*

## PREPARING FOR A WEDDING

When then you make a marriage, go not round from house to house borrowing mirrors and dresses; for the matter is not one of display, nor do you lead your daughter to a pageant; but decking out your house with what is in it, invite your neighbours, and friends, and kindred. As many as you know to be of a good character, those invite, and bid them be content

with what there is. Let no one from the orchestra be present, for such expense is superfluous, and unbecoming. Before all the rest, invite Christ. Do you know whereby you will invite Him? Whosoever, says He, *“has done it to one of these least, has done it to Me.”*, Matthew 25:40, And think it not an annoying thing to invite the poor for Christ's sake; to invite harlots is an annoyance. For to invite the poor is a means of wealth, the other of ruin. Adorn the bride not with these ornaments that are made of gold, but with gentleness and modesty, and the customary robes; in place of all golden ornament and braiding, arraying her in blushes, and shamefacedness, and the not desiring such things. Let there be no uproar, no confusion; let the bridegroom be called, let him receive the virgin. The dinners and suppers, let them not be full of drunkenness, but of abundance and pleasure. See how many good things will result, whenever we see such marriages as those; but from the marriages that are now celebrated, (if at least one ought to call them marriages and not pageants,) how many are the evils! The banquet hall is no sooner broken up, than straightway comes care and fear, lest anything that is borrowed should have been lost, and there succeeds to the pleasure melancholy intolerable. But this distress belongs to the mother-in-law — nay, rather not even is the bride herself free; all that follows at least belongs to the bride herself. For to see all broken up, is a ground for sadness, to see the house desolate.

There is Christ, here is Satan; there is cheerfulness, here anxious care; there pleasure, here pain; there expense, here nothing of the kind; there indecency, here modesty; there envy, here no envy; there drunkenness, here soberness, here health, here temperance. Bearing in mind all these things, let us stay the evil at this point, that we may please God, and be counted worthy to obtain the good things

promised to them that love Him, through the grace and love toward man of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom, to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, power, honour, now and for ever, and world without end. Amen.

*St John Chrysostom*  
c. 349 - 14 Sept. 407  
Homily 12 on Colossians

## SMARTPHONES

I was marking my students' homework one night after dinner. My husband was sitting nearby, playing "Candy Crush Saga" on his phone. Suddenly, tears welled up in my eyes.

"Why are you crying my dear?" my husband asked. "Yesterday I gave my class a writing assignment called, 'My Wish'" I told him. "Ok, and what's making you cry?" he asked again, keeping one eye on his game. "The last paper moved me so much, it made me cry". "What about it made you cry?"

Listen, I'll read it to you, I replied wiping my eyes: "My parents love their smart-phones very much. They care about their smart-phones so much, that sometimes they forget to care about me. When my father comes home from work tired, he has time for his smart-phone but not for me. When my parents are doing some important work and their phones ring, they will answer it right away, but they will not answer me... even when I'm crying. They play games on their phones but not with me. When they are talking to someone on their phones, they never listen to me, even if I'm telling them something important. So, my wish is to become a smart-phone".

Now it was my husband who wiped his eyes. "Who wrote this?" he asked

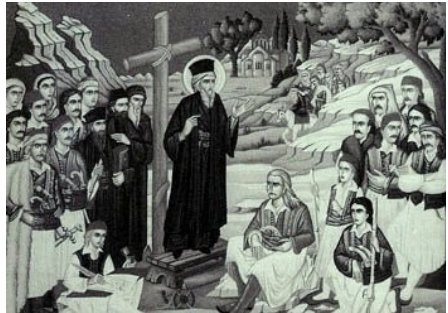
quietly. I looked up at him and said... "Our son".

Let us not sacrifice our family and relationships over the pursuit of material things. Smart-phones are here to make our lives easier, but not to control us, make us addicted and unsociable.

It's not too late to return to a real family life, back to the old days when we didn't have the Internet and computer games. **Put down that phone for a while. Talk to your children, your spouse or your friends.** Set a good example for your children. Whatever you do, they will also do. Talk to the people you love and make sure they will feel loved. And you can receive love from them too.

**Can your phone give you love?**

Taken from the Newsletter of St George's Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral, London, [Issue 12/18](#).



*St Cosmas of Aetolia, equal-to-the-Apostles*

## 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 Dmitry Ismagilov and his family for providing the church with candles and candlesticks (see



following photo) for our servers to hold during the processions in the Holy Liturgy! May our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ give the reward!

May God give the blessing to all benefactors of His Holy Church in this part of His Vineyard.



## NAMES OF DEPARTED LOVED ONES TO BE REMEMBERED THIS MONTH

Aug. 14: *Paulina*

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.



## MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

6<sup>th</sup> Aug: The Holy Transfiguration of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

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

15<sup>th</sup> Aug: The Dormition of our Most-Holy Theotokos

16<sup>th</sup> Aug: St. Gerasimus, Wonderworker of Cephalonia

20<sup>th</sup> Aug: St. Oswin, King and Martyr (†651)

22<sup>nd</sup> Aug: St. Sigfrid, Abbot of Wearmouth (†688)

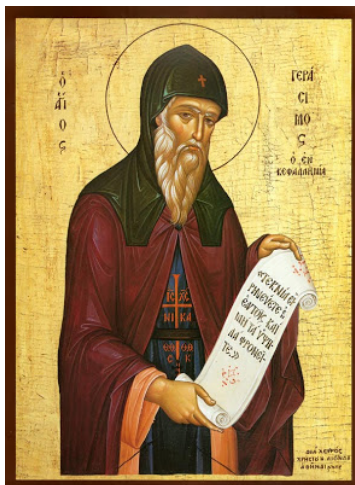
24<sup>th</sup> Aug: St. Cosmas of Aetolia, equal-to-the-Apostles

27<sup>th</sup> Aug: Martyr Phanourius

29<sup>th</sup> Aug: Beheading of the Holy, Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John

31<sup>st</sup> Aug: The Placing of the Cincture of the Most Holy Theotokos in the Church of Chalkoprateia / 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](http://www.calendar.goarch.org)



*St Gerasimos, Wonderworker of Cephalonia*



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

Sat. 4 <sup>th</sup>	10:00	Holy Liturgy followed by Memorial, Confessions & Catechism
Sun. 5 <sup>th</sup>	09:30	Matins (Orthros) and Holy Liturgy followed by Parish lunch
	14:00	Great Vespers for the Transfiguration of Christ
Sat. 11 <sup>th</sup>	10:00	Holy Liturgy followed by Memorial, Confessions & Catechism
Sun. 12 <sup>th</sup>	09:30	Matins (Orthros) and Holy Liturgy followed by Parish lunch
Wed. 15 <sup>th</sup>	10:00	Holy Liturgy for the <b>Dormition of the Theotokos</b>
Sat. 18 <sup>th</sup>	10:00	Holy Liturgy followed by Memorial, Confessions & Catechism
Sun. 19 <sup>th</sup>	09:30	Matins (Orthros) and Holy Liturgy followed by Parish lunch
Sat. 25 <sup>th</sup>	10:00	Holy Liturgy followed by Memorial, Confessions & Catechism
Sun. 26 <sup>th</sup>	09:30	Matins (Orthros) and Holy Liturgy followed by Parish lunch

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

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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](#).



Top and bottom sketches are created at the Holy Monastery of "The Annunciation of the Theotokos" Chios, Greece, courtesy of Fr Theodosios Dendrinos, Ithaca, Greece.  
The sketch of Christ by Photis Kontoglou was scanned from the Orthodox calendar of the Apostoliki Diakonia of the Church of Greece.