



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

## ***The Stavronian***

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



*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)*

## ECCLESIASTICAL NEW YEAR, SEPTEMBER 1<sup>st</sup>

O Word of the Father from before the ages, Who, being in the form of God, broughtest creation into being out of nothing; Thou Who hast put the times and seasons in Thine own power: Bless the crown of the year with Thy goodness; give peace unto Thy churches, victory unto Thy faithful hierarchs, fruitfulness unto the earth, and Great Mercy unto us.



*Slavonic fresco depicting Christ blessing the Creation*

## A SCENE AT A BIRTH

*The family were looking at the newly born baby as I entered the room. The mother was lying on the bed smiling- looking tired but serenely happy. One of the persons present cools the baby with a fan. A mid-wife washing her hands is present coming in to have a look at the mother and at the baby who is wrapped tightly in the cot next*

*to the mother's bed. A nurse enters to bring a drink for the mother to refresh her. Meanwhile the proud father is looking on, completely lost in thanksgiving, joy and amazement.*

I could be talking about the birth of Ioann to Dmitry and Katerina and I could be describing the Icon of the Nativity of the Theotokos to Joachim and Anna!

It is indeed fitting that the Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos (Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>) stands at the beginning of the New Ecclesiastical Year (Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>). The Dormition marks the last of the Great Feasts at the end of the Ecclesiastical Year (Aug. 15<sup>th</sup>). Like living “book ends” the Feasts of the Holy Theotokos contain, bear, hold and offer within them the volumes of our salvation in Our Lord and Saviour and God Jesus Christ.

The once barren Anna gives birth to the Mother of God: “*She is born and the world is renewed*”. The account of the birth of the Theotokos is found in the Protoevangelium of James from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century according to which Joachim her father was of the royal line of David of Judah and her mother Anna of the priestly tribe of Levi. Pregnancy is a time of waiting and in the fullness time there is the joy of childbirth. Likewise the world had been pregnant with expectation for the long awaited Messiah. Here then in the birth of Christ's holy Mother is the beginning of that prophetic fulfilment culminating in the Incarnation when the Panagia herself of her own free will, purity of heart and co-operation with God, gives birth to Our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Today the Virgin Theotokos Mary, the bridal chamber of the Heavenly Bridegroom, by the will of God is born of a barren woman, being prepared as the chariot of God the Word. She was fore-ordained for this, since she is the divine gate and the true Mother of Life.*

When I serve Matins and come to the censuring of the Church at: *“The Theotokos and Mother of Light let us honour and magnify in song”* ... I find myself inexorably drawn into the mystery of the Icon of the Theotokos. We then, in our time and place, are called to co-operate with God in that synergy of grace and work where we also are invited to enter into the Icons of our Holy Faith and by that same participation become visible and tangible representations of grace for others.

*“When you look upon the icon of the Mother of God with Her Eternal Infant marvel how most truly the Godhead was united with human nature, glorify the goodness and omnipotence of God, and, recognizing your own dignity, as man, live worthily of the high calling to which you are called in Christ—that is, the calling of a child of God and an heir to the eternal Kingdom.”* --- St John of Kronstadt

Many years in Christ to  
the newly born Ioann!

Πάτερ Ιωνάθαν

## ON ST. PAUL’S FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS 16:13-24

*Brethren, be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love. Now, brethren, you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; I urge you to be subject to such men and to every fellow worker and labourer. I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicos, because they have made up for your absence; for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours.*

*Give recognition to such men. The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. All the brethren send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. If any one has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

### **To the Church of the Holy and Life Giving Cross, Morecambe**

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; One God. Amen

Dear Friends in Christ,

Forgive my enforced absence due to “shingles”, but there is something very Apostolic about sending a letter to the ones you know and love in Christ. In the extract of today’s epistle (letter) of St Paul to the Corinthians; the Apostle Paul speaks both to the Community in Corinth and commends certain individuals by name, Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicos. He also mentions Aquila and Prisca who send their greetings to the Church at Corinth; as Dmitry and Katerina and Eleni Fitsiou also send their greetings to you, the Church in Morecambe.

The Apostle Paul starts with some words of exhortation and encouragement, be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong! He then instructs them that all is to be done in love. Without love, watchfulness can be just observation, without love, faith can become mere obligation, without love, courage can become impetuosity, without love, strength can become brute force.

St Paul urges us to devote ourselves like the household of Stephanas to the

“service of the saints” that is to one another who are called to be saints.

He rejoices at the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicos to him because they have “*refreshed my spirit.*” These were the carriers of Paul’s letters, giving themselves tirelessly for mission to spread the message of the Kingdom of God. I thank Pericles for carrying this little letter to you all. How important it is to refresh one another with joyful encouragement. We are there for one another in times of joy and sadness. The Churches of Asia send their greetings - we see here how in Christ we are one - the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church are together joined by the indwelling guidance and comfort of the Holy Spirit. St Paul saw the need to extend the greetings of the Churches in Asia minor to the Church in Corinth.

Aquila and Prisca who had converted from Judaism to Christianity, who had fled from Rome and who had lived briefly in Corinth were now residing with Paul in Ephesus sent their greetings, all the brethren sent their greetings. Our Stavro-nian brothers send their greetings from Greece, Romania and Cyprus. St Paul sends his greetings. Our Sayedna sends you greetings!! Because we are the Body of Christ we care for one another and it does not matter how far apart in miles we are, we are together in the Holy Spirit and in prayers.

*“Greet one another with a holy kiss”* - we still do this in our Holy Orthodox Church - some twice, some (in the Slavonic tradition) three times!!! Paul writes the letter in his own hand - one can imagine that having to obtain papyrus or velum was an expensive business but Paul keeps in contact with all the Churches that he had established in Christ. His tireless vision and practical communication kept the Church in contact - long before the age of the internet! We must have love for our Lord, those that do not love

the Lord are anathema. We must have love for one another. Finally, St Paul ends his letter with the prayer for Christ to return using the Aramaic *Maranatha*.

I end my little epistle sending my greetings and love to you all with the words of St Paul himself: *The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

*Fr Jonathan*

## **THE FIVE HOLY MARTYRS: EUSTRATIOS, AUXENTIOS, MARDARIOS, EUGENIOS AND ORESTIS**

We have been privileged and honoured to receive recently at Holy Cross the relics of St Panteleimon along with three other martyrs Auxentios, Eustratios and Eugenios, who were martyred under Diocletian c. 296. You may find an account of the lives of the Five Martyrs from the website of the Monastery of [Pantokrat-  
oros](#), Thessaloniki, Greece, but below is an article from Apostolos and Pericles who brought the holy relics from Greece.

### **Apolytikion**

Wise Eustratios, divine Auxentios,  
Eugenios, Mardarios and Orestes  
five members of the choir of Martyrs  
enlightened the whole world  
with the torch of their contests.  
O faithful, in praising them let us cry out  
Rejoice you five holy Martyrs of Christ.

### **A brief account of the lives of the Five Martyrs**

Relics of all the five martyrs, even Orestis who was burnt by fire, can be found in many places. The five martyrs were espe-

cially revered in most coastal regions that face the Aegean Sea in Asia Minor. It is known that in quite a few villages, when an important decision was sought, they would leave an icon of the saints on a table overnight; if the icon was facing downwards in the morning, it meant the Saints' answer was negative, whereas if the icon was facing up, the Saints' answer was positive.



*Fresco of the five holy martyrs*

Also, they are considered *ktetores*, i.e. founders, of the Skete of St Anna, which is the largest Skete of Mt Athos, because of the following event. When the monks decided to paint the *Kyriakon*, i.e. the main church where monks and pilgrims celebrate the Divine Liturgy on Sundays, the painters were asking for a fee that the fathers and monks could not afford. Unable to reach an agreement, the painters left, but on their way back they met five men who offered them a bag of gold coins to go back and take the job they had just refused. Upon their return to the Skete, from their descriptions of the five men's clothing, it became apparent to the fathers that those people were in fact the five martyrs.

Another miraculous incident occurred in Chios island, Greece, in the 1950s. In a *Metochi*, i.e. dependent monastery, of the five holy martyrs that belonged to Nea Moni, the priest had no deacon, servers,

or chanters to perform the Divine Liturgy due to a severe snow storm that prevented people from attending, but then suddenly five strangers in unfamiliar clothing appeared and offered to chant for the Liturgy. When it was time for the Synaxarion of the five martyrs to be read, the youngest, who looked like Orestis that was martyred in a red-hot iron-bed, read "emeidiasen (smiled softly) before his martyrdom". At that point, the eldest Eugenios asked him to read it correctly as it happened, and so Orestis corrected "emidisen (shied away) before his martyrdom". Once the Divine Liturgy finished, the priest looked for the five strangers, but they were nowhere to be found, in which point he realised in awe just who his mysterious guests and chanters were. Their feast day is December the 13<sup>th</sup>.

*Apostolos and Pericles Iakovides  
Thessaloniki, Greece*



*The relics of St Panteleimon, and martyrs Auxentios, Eustratios and Eugenios, that were brought from Greece by Apostolos.*



## PILGRIMAGE TO THE SHRINE OF ST WINIFRED

The Parish of Saint Barbara at Chester, organises an annual pilgrimage to the Shrine of St Winifred on Oct. 6<sup>th</sup> in the Medieval Chapel by the Saint's Well. It is located at Holywell, Flintshire, North Wales, CH8 7LS.

The Hours and Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 10:30 am. Then we will have picnic lunch (please bring own food) and do a procession to the Well with the Relic of St Winifred for the blessing of the waters. The day will conclude with Great Vespers at 3 pm.

Holywell has easy access by car from all parts of the country via M56 and A55, or by bus/coach via Chester, or train (nearest station Flint with bus to Holywell).

St Winifride was a nun in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, famed for her sanctity of life. The Holy Well near which she lived has been a place of pilgrimage ever since and the scene of many miracles of healing. Holywell is also the only place of Pilgrimage in Britain where Christian pilgrimage has continued uninterrupted for nearly 1400 years.



Icon of Saint Winifred

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

Sept. 1: *Pericles*

Sept. 29: *Georgios*

### 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

1<sup>st</sup> Sept: The Ecclesiastical New Year

8<sup>th</sup> Sept: The Nativity of our Most-Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary

9<sup>th</sup> Sept: The Holy & Righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna

14<sup>th</sup> Sept: The Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross

17<sup>th</sup> Sept: Martyr Sophia and her three daughters, Faith (Pistis, Vera), Hope (Elpis, Nadezhda) and Love (Agape, Lyubov)

19<sup>th</sup> Sept: St. Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury

24<sup>th</sup> Sept: St. Silouan the Athonite

25<sup>th</sup> Sept: St. Sergius, Abbot and Wonderworker of Radonezh

26<sup>th</sup> Sept: The Falling Asleep of St. John the Evangelist and Theologian

28<sup>th</sup> Sept: St. Lioba of Wimborne, Abbess of Bischofsheim (†782)

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)



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

Sat. 1 <sup>st</sup>	10:00	Holy Liturgy followed by Memorial, Confessions & Catechism
Sun. 2 <sup>nd</sup>	09:30	Matins and Holy Liturgy followed by Parish Lunch
Sat. 8 <sup>th</sup>	10:00	Holy Liturgy followed by Memorial, Confessions & Catechism
Sun. 9 <sup>th</sup>	09:30	Matins and Holy Liturgy followed by Parish Lunch
Thu. 13 <sup>th</sup>	18:30	Divine Liturgy on the <u>Feast of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross</u>
Sat. 15 <sup>th</sup>	10:00	Holy Liturgy followed by Memorial, Confessions & Catechism
Sun. 16 <sup>th</sup>	09:30	Matins and Holy Liturgy followed by Parish Lunch
Sat. 22 <sup>nd</sup>	10:00	Holy Liturgy followed by Memorial, Confessions & Catechism
Sun. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	09:30	Matins 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 -



*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](mailto:frjah@yahoo.co.uk)  
[www.orthodox-lancaster.org.uk](http://www.orthodox-lancaster.org.uk)  
[www.antiochian-orthodox.co.uk](http://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](#).



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