



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

The Stavronian

Monthly magazine and newsletter publicised by the Holy Cross Synodia



*Ἐθρονος 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)***

HOLDING SALVATION

In the Icon of the Feast of the Meeting on February 2nd we see the righteous Simeon receiving the Lord Jesus Christ into his arms. Receiving the Light of the World is an awesome gift and the old priest Simeon had waited his whole life to see and hold the Incarnate Light. Simeon and Anna's whole spiritual inclination was of "patient watchfulness", i.e. *Nepsis*.

When we Christians receive the Light of Christ at Baptism and each Sunday we should hold on to it. So often, despite having received the Incarnate Lord into our lives, we repeatedly fall into that temptation of receiving the world's blandishments, converting them into gods. Such seeking of immediate pleasure excludes God and proves to be unrewarding and futile – yet we are slow to learn this lesson. It is as if we have never been participants in the Heavenly Kingdom. So we find ourselves vacillating between salvation which bring us moments of real joy and peace and moments of indulgence which bring false aspirations and dissatisfaction. Why can we not give ourselves entirely over to Christ? Because we want to hold on to our ideas, our opinions our will! We justify our lack of constancy by listing our other "commitments" and so we become lukewarm – and we know what Christ has to say about this state: Revelation 3:15-17; "*I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' —and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—*"

Moreover, it is evidently clear that apostasy has replaced spiritual and mindful appreciation of the mystical union with God for a rational concern for the

world's interest in a purely political agenda.

We have forgotten the need for *nepsis*, of being awake to the movement of the Holy Spirit, of opening our heart to that vital connection with Christ that can only come through the conscious experience of communion with Him. We must again teach all who wish to learn, the art of recognising, receiving and keeping salvation.

Near the end of the Holy Liturgy, after the faithful have received the Holy Communion, the celebrant blesses them with the words: "*O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.*" The people sing in response: "***We have seen the True Light! We have received the Heavenly Spirit! We have found the True Faith! Worshiping the Undivided Trinity, Who has saved us***".

The celebrant then blesses the faithful with the Eucharistic chalice in which the Divine gifts are still present. During the removal of the consecrated gifts to the Prothesis table the people sing: "*Let our mouths be filled with Thy praise O Lord, that we may sing of Thy glory; for Thou hast made us worthy to partake of Thy Holy, Divine, Immortal and Life-creating Mysteries. Keep us in Thy holiness that all the day we may meditate upon Thy righteousness. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*"

Do we say these words in vain repetition or do we mean them? What is vital for us Christians is that we have really "*seen the True Light, received the Heavenly Spirit, found the true faith*" in the experience of the Kingdom of God at the Holy Liturgy. The question we must ask ourselves is: since we have seen the true Light, since we have received the Heavenly Spirit, since we have found the True Faith; how important is it to hold on to our salvation?

Fr Jonathan



OUR HOLY MOTHER BRIGID OF KILDARE († 524)

Her name is also spelled Brigit or Bridget (Feb. 1st); she is considered, equally with St Patrick (Mar. 17th), patron of Ireland. She was born in Ulster of a noble Irish family which had been converted by St Patrick. She was uncommonly beautiful, and her father planned to marry her to the King of Ulster. But at the age of sixteen she asked her Lord Jesus Christ to make her unattractive, so that no one would marry her and she could devote herself to Him alone. Soon she lost an eye and was allowed to enter a monastery. On the day that she took monastic vows, she was miraculously healed and her original beauty restored.

Near Dublin she built herself a cell under an oak tree, which was called Kill-dara, or Cell of the Oak. Soon seven other young women joined her and established the monastery of Kill-dara, which in time became the cathedral city of Kildare. The monastery grew rapidly and became a

double monastery with both men's and women's settlements, with the Abbess ranking above the Abbot; from it several other monasteries were planted throughout Ireland (combined men's and women's monastic communities are virtually unknown in the east, but were common in the golden age of the Irish Church).

The Saint predicted the day of her death and fell asleep in peace in 524, leaving a monastic Rule to govern all the monasteries under her care. During the Middle Ages her veneration spread throughout Europe.

SAYINGS FROM THE DESERT FATHERS

Abba Ammonas was asked, 'What is the "narrow and hard way?" (Mt. 7.14) He replied, 'The "narrow and hard way" is this, to control your thoughts, and to strip yourself of your own will, for the sake of God. This is also the meaning of the sentence, "Lo, we have left everything and followed you." (Mt. 19.27)

There was in the Cells an old man called Apollo. If someone came to find him about doing a piece of work, he would set out joyfully, saying, 'I am going to work with Christ today, for the salvation of my soul, for that is the reward he gives.'



THE FELLOWSHIP OF SAINT ETHELDREDA

St. Etheldreda fellowship started organically in the summer of 2018 when particular Celtic women Saints decided to make a powerful entrance into the lives of certain Holy-Cross women parishioners. Most notable of those were St Audrey herself, the Holy Virgin St Melangell, Abbess in Wales (†641), the Holy Virgin-Martyr St Winifred of Wales (†650), the Venerable Hilda, Abbess of Whitby (†680), Holy Martyr St Dymphna, Patron Saint of Mental Illness (†650) and Holy Abbess and Wonder-worker St Bridget of Kildare Ireland (†524).

Holy Queen St Etheldreda, Abbess of Ely (†679), revealed herself as our patron Saint. Fr Jonathan became the fellowship's spiritual father and we started our weekly prayer meetings, centering on (alternating Bible readings) the Fathers of the Church and Saints' lives, varying our programme according to the Church season. **We meet flexibly, day and house-wise, although we try to schedule these meetings mid-week**, Wednesdays usually, to support each other spiritually so that we can 'survive' from Sunday to Sunday. We have also built a closed *Whatsapp* group so that those who cannot physically meet, they can still follow us digitally.

The most important thing for our St Etheldreda fellowship is that we try to support each other on a daily basis in our struggles, with prayer requests for ourselves or our families, relatives, questions and answers. We share not only our challenges but our joys too, God's blessings in our lives, miraculous 'interventions' and 'solutions', photographs from pilgrimages, fellowship or family events. We are currently doing a 1-year Bible study plan, the Supplication to the Theotokos and a weekly spiritual 'game'

provided to us by Fr Georgios Kougioumtzoglou.

We feel so blessed and so grateful for such powerful intercessors in our lives and we would like to invite all of you to join us. Please contact Marta, Alexandra, Mirabella, or me for more details. Have a blessed New Year of His Grace.

Kleio Kechagia

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 Fr Bogdan Georgescu for donating a Baptismal Font from his Parish in Blejoi, Romania, in memory of Fr Constantin. We also thank Archimandrite Gavriel Aspropoulos, from Athens, Greece, for the most beautiful and generous gift of a new Holy Chalice. In addition, we thank Bogdan Galilo for the Communion wine brought all the way from Moldova! May our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ give the reward!

NAMES OF DEPARTED LOVED ONES TO BE RE- MEMBERED THIS MONTH

Feb. 2: *Dimitri*

Feb. 2: *Eleni*

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.

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 and Enlightener of Japan

10th Feb: Hieromartyr Charalampos

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: St Photine, the Samaritan woman

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. 2 nd	10:00	Great Vespers, Memorial, Confessions and Catechism
Sun. 3 rd	09:30	Matins and Divine Liturgy
Sat. 9 th	10:00	Great Vespers, Memorial, Confessions and Catechism
Sun. 10 th	09:30	Matins and Divine Liturgy
Sat. 16 th	10:00	Great Vespers, Memorial, Confessions and Catechism
Sun. 17 th	09:30	Matins and Divine Liturgy
Sat. 23 rd	10:00	Great Vespers, Memorial, Confessions and Catechism
Sun. 24 th	09:30	Matins and Divine Liturgy followed by Parish Lunch

*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](#).

