



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

The Stavronian

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*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.
Our Metropolitan is His Eminence Bishop Silouan.
Our Patriarch is His Beatitude John X.*

*The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch
(Acts 11:26)*

Often, goes the Christ in the stranger's guise

ON THE VIRTUE OF PATIENCE

As we continue to remain in lockdown in our homes, which have also become our churches, our offices, our school and areas of recreation, it is easy to feel a little claustrophobic. More and more people are asking “When will schools open again? When can we go to work again? When will people stop getting ill? When will this end? Will it ever end?” Only God holds the answer to these questions and, completely powerless as we are, it is easy to become impatient. We are impatient to see our friends and to return to our churches. And yet, patience is one of the most extolled virtues in the Bible and in the writing of the Holy Fathers. St Porphyrios says “*At your work, whatever it may be, you can become a saint through meekness, patience and love.*”

Patience is so vital to our spiritual growth exactly because it is intrinsically linked to humility, love and faith, the virtues on which a Christian life is built.

As St Paul tells us in Corinthians 13:4, *love suffers long and is kind*. What kind of love do we have for our brothers and sisters, for our family and friends, for those whom we find difficult if we cannot be patient with them, if we do not bear their faults and idiosyncrasies, constantly aware that we have our own worst faults. It is in patience and love that we dare to

hope to make things better and maybe correct some of the shortcomings of those around us. As St John Kronostadt says: “*Evils and faults are corrected by good, by love, kindness, meekness, humility and patience.*” We must never stop hoping that those around us can change, can come to love God more, to abandon sinful ways. What wonderful examples of love and patience and faith we have in the saints! Saint Monica wept for her son Augustine for 17 years, imploring the Lord’s mercy on him until he reformed his way of life and was baptised, becoming himself a saint. Patience is the key to Love and Faith. If we trust the Lord and love our neighbour, we become patient.

There is also the very trying aspect of patience with oneself. It is so difficult to accept our own sinfulness and to see that despite the immeasurable love and grace that God bestows on us, we continue to fall into the same sins, into the same bad habits. Not to become disheartened and impatient of our own weakness and folly is very difficult. St Peter of Damaskos says: “*Patient endurance kills the despair that kills the soul; it teaches the soul to take comfort and not to grow listless in the face of its many battles and afflictions.*” Humility comes to our aid here. Facing our own self in our true state of wretchedness enlightens us to the fact that we

cannot become saints overnight. We need to build slowly and patiently; we shall fall again and again, but in patience and humility, we need to stand up again. Our God and Saviour is infinitely patient with His Creation, with each of us; He reaches out to us again and again, He waits for us to turn to Him and to love Him. If He is endlessly patient with us, we must learn to be a little patient with ourselves.

Finally, there is the patience of bearing one's cross, the quiet endurance and acceptance of what is given to us through God's will. If we accept God's will humbly, we can bear whatever trials come our way better. *"In proportion to your humility you are given patience in your woes."*

St Isaac the Syrian

Further more, as we must believe is the case today, the trials the world is going through can be a path to a reformed way of life and the current state of uncertainty and confinement which is trying our patience can be a spiritually enriching moment if we accept it and allow it to change us.

St Ambrose of Optina says *"A continuously happy life produces extremely unhappy consequences. In nature we see that there are not always pleasant springs and fruitful summers, and sometimes autumn is rainy and winter is cold and snowy, and there is flooding and wind and storms, and moreover the crops fail and there are famine, trouble,*

sickness and many other misfortunes. All of this is beneficial so that man might learn through prudence, patience and humility. For the most part, in times of plenty, he forgets himself, but in times of various sorrows he becomes more attentive to his salvation."

Let us therefore exercise ourselves in patience towards our fellow men, towards ourselves and towards whatever circumstances come our way. In patience and faith, let us pray that the Lord gives us whatever is for our growth and that He gives us the grace to bear all.

Patience is a sweet word. Patience is a sweet breath. Patience is an invincible weapon. Patience is a priceless adornment of man. Patience is a blessing of God.
Spiritual Counsels of St. Raphael

Martha and Mary

A DAY IN LOCKDOWN

-- the diary of a gardening mum --

4.30 am Wake up positive and well rested. Quick prayer

4.45 am Tidy up, get school set up for the day, bake bread with the last packet of flour

5.30 am Coffee. Coffee. Think of many cunning and unlikely ways in which to obtain more flour and yeast

5.40 am Water garden

6.00 am Prayer

6.30 am Pack gardening kit

7.00 am Prayer. Ask St. Hilda for her intercession to be granted strength to do my work ahead

7.15 am Walk energetically and still positive to the allotment. Shout hello to every single stranger I meet on the way and who now feels like a friend

7.30-9.00 am Get impossibly muddy and think up ways in which to stop the bunnies, rats, mice, ants, snails, slugs, caterpillars from eating my crows without becoming or feeling like a mass murderer. It is very hard to share one's crows with uninvited guests. Moral issue still unresolved

9.00 am Run back home always late for the beginning of home schooling day. Supervise whining children and appear knowledgeable on various topics I have never come across.

12.00 Prayer

12.10 pm Prepare lunch very swiftly followed by tidy up lunch

1.30 pm More ancient Greek, Macbeth, coordinates and proportions, spelling, respiratory system, French, Edith Clarke ("Who was she?" "Mum, you don't know? How shocking!")

3.15 pm Big sigh. School is over.

3.20 pm Start making tea

4.00 pm Prayer

4.15 pm Play interminable board game which I never win

5.30 pm Make tea; eat tea; tidy up after tea

7.00 pm onwards: gardening, tidying, laundry, start new projects in the house and garden (since now there is no excuse not to do them since we are at home and do nothing all day – spot of decorating, some in depth cleaning etc)

9.00 pm Collapse in a heap and go to sleep after the briefest prayer time ever

Also achieved: settled more or less successfully 25 disputes involving various combinations of children and husband; replied to what seems like 100 text messages and e-mails

Pages read: 0

Beauty treatments: 0

Movies watched: 0

TV watched: 0 minutes

The other day I was talking to a friend who lives alone in a flat. And as we spoke about our daily lives and routines, I was thinking how lucky this person was to live alone. I was thinking how much time they must have for reading and prayer, for watching documentaries and movies and doing their interesting and intellectual job well. I thought they wouldn't have to justify themselves to their teenage children as to whether a purchase of plant seeds or a jigsaw on line are a justifiable

action or a necessity in lockdown! They wouldn't have to clean, tidy and cook non-stop.

As we spoke, my friend said how lucky I was to have a lot of space in my house and garden and to live with 5 other people for company. This made me think how often we say "If only...", things would be so much better, so much easier, I could achieve so much more.

So I went back to my daily life decided not to wish for anything else other than what I have but be thankful and make the most of what I have... most days. Determined to give thanks to God for the people I have to cook for even when I argue with them and am not as mild and patient as I wish, for the space I enjoy and need to clean and tidy all the time, for the plants and creatures who live in the garden and on the allotment (I might even start sharing with them), for having my children lively and healthy at home all day before they grow up and leave, for learning new things through them every day. And I also have to admit, if I can face the truth, even if I lived alone, I probably would not do that much reading! I wonder if my friend, reading my daily diary will suddenly feel grateful for his circumstances and enjoy and be thankful for the order, peace and quiet in his life?

Let us give thanks to the Lord for everything and for every precious moment in our lives!

PASCHAL GREETINGS

Christ is Risen!

Dear Father Jonathan,

From my family and me as well as our parents you have every good wish! May the Resurrected-from-the-dead Lord provide you everything that's good and valuable both in this life and the Eternal one.

It was a great pleasure and Blessing to see on FB the various Services that you conducted during this time of hardship.

I am sending you [a video](#) on how we Celebrated the moment of Resurrection in our empty Parish, in which, by law only 4 people could be present including the Priest (well we played with our chances there as we were 5 but for the sake of being in the Service we did it!!!).

Kostas Voutzou

NAMES OF DEPARTED LOVED ONES TO BE REMEMBERED THIS MONTH

May 26: *Paraskevi*

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

2nd May: Removal of the Relics of St. Athanasius the Great

3rd May: Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women

8th May: Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian, and St. Arsenius the Great

10th May: Sunday of the Paralytic

11th May: Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Equal-to-the Apostles

13th May: 4th Wednesday after Pascha. Mid-Pentecost

15th May: St. Pachomius the Great Martyr

17th May: Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

21st May: Constantine and Helen, Equal-to-the Apostles

23th May: The retrieval of the relics of St. Joachim of Ithaca

24th May: Sunday of the Blind Man

25th May: Third Finding of the Precious Head of St. John the Baptist

27th May: Apodosis of Pascha

28th May: Holy Ascension

31st May: Fathers of the 1st Council

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 May (online*)

Sat. 2 nd	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 3 rd	09:00	Orthros (Matins). Sunday of the Myrrh Bearing women
Thru. 7 th	18:30	Vespers for St John the Theologian
Sat. 9 th	18:30	Great Vespers. 3 rd Saturday after Pascha
Sun. 10 th	09:00	Orthros. Sunday of the Paralytic
Sat. 16 th	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 17 th	09:00	Orthros. Sunday of the Samaritan
Wed. 20 th	18:30	Vespers for St Constantine and Helen
Sat. 23 rd	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 24 th	09:00	Orthros. Sunday of Blind Man
Thru. 28 th	09:00	Matins for Holy Ascension
Sat. 30 th	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 31 st	09:00	Orthros. Fathers of the 1 st Council

* Please, join a Skype group <https://join.skype.com/KZt20cnwQw5f> to obtain the link to a current service. The live services are also available on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/126074338184/>. All services are subject to change or non-transmission because of internet connection.

“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.

