



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

The Stavronian

Monthly magazine and newsletter published by the Holy Cross Synodia



*Ἐπιθρονος 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

ENCOUNTERS WITH SAINTS

St Hilda of Whitby

A few years back, together with a few spiritual sisters and at the suggestion of our spiritual father, we started a group of prayer. We were looking for a patron saint for our very small sisterhood and our spiritual father encouraged us to put forward two names of saints each. It had to be a woman and a saint of the British Isles. I cannot remember exactly whom I put forward but one of the other sisters said her favourite saint was St. Hilda. I looked her up and felt no connection to St. Hilda of Whitby. Later the same year, I went on holiday to the east coast of Yorkshire and happened to visit Whitby and the ruins of the abbey founded by St. Hilda. It was a very powerful experience and I was awestruck by the strength, kindness and wisdom of the saint. Since then, I have become closer and closer, more and more indebted to this wonderful saint, who embodies for me the beauty of Celtic monasticism.



Whitby Abbey

A few months later, I acquired an allotment which was (and still partly is) more of a wilderness than a garden. Looking for a patron saint who would give me the strength to tame this wilderness, I could think of nobody more suitable than brave St. Hilda. Since then she has been my co-gardener and my shield against discouragement, tiredness and weakness.

St. Hilda became a Christian at the age of 13 at the court of her uncle king Edwin of Northumbria together with his entire court, through the preaching of St. Paulinus of York. At the request of St. Aidan of Lindisfarne, her spiritual father, at the age of 33 she joined a

monastery in Northumbria. She eventually founded a new monastery at Streaneshalch (which became known as Whitby a century or so later). This double monastery, where monks and nuns lives in small huts, and monks and nuns only joined together in church for prayer, became famous for the study of the Holy Scriptures. A strict rule of monastic life and deep spirituality coexisted with flourishing intellectual and artistic endeavours as well as the development of various crafts. Five of the monastics here became bishops. St. Hilda was renowned for her energy, kindness as well as for her wisdom. People far and near came to seek her advice, including monks and kings.

Saint Hilda is also famous for the miracle of turning snakes into stones and her involvement in the Synod of Whitby, which she hosted in 663-664. Under Saint Hilda's patronage, St. Caedmon, who was an illiterate herdsman in Whitby, was tonsured monk and became the author of many beautiful poems on Christian themes.

For the last seven years of her life, she suffered with a terrible fever. Despite this, such was her strength and dedication to the work of the Lord, that she continued to carry out all her duties without fail. She passed to the Lord in the year 680, peacefully after receiving the Holy



St Hilda of Whitby

Mysteries and two miracles happened at her passing away. The monastery bells started tolling in the monastery at Hackness, which was 13 miles away from Whitby and the nun Begu saw in a vision angels bearing the soul of St. Hilda to heaven the night before her passing away. Her feast day is celebrated on the 17th November.

**Apolytikon of Mother Hilda of
Whitby**
(Plagal of the Fourth Tone)

The image of God, was faithfully preserved in you, O Mother. For you took up the Cross and followed Christ. By Your actions you taught us to look beyond the flesh for it passes, rather to be concerned about the soul which is immortal. Wherefore, O Holy Hilda, your soul rejoices with the angels.

Kontakion of Mother Hilda of Whitby
(First Tone)

For three and thirty years in the world, chaste and modest, for three and thirty years as a righteous monastic, thou camest, O Hilda, unto Christ's stature, and perfect man; and on being cleansed through grievous bodily sickness, thou wast taken up in light and glory to Heaven, Where thou dost pray God for us.

SUNDAY SCHOOL PLAN FOR OCTOBER

4th of October

The Lord said, "*As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them*" and "*But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.*" (LUKE 6:31-36)

Today's Sunday School will focus on the reading from the Gospel. If possible, read your child the passage above and help them to

understand it by asking practical questions about it. How do they feel when they share their toys with friends? Is it fun to play together rather than on your own? Is it nice to receive gifts from others? Talk about other behaviours which they find familiar that are small acts of kindness and mercy. In your conversation include the subjects of love, mercy, care, forgiveness and almsgiving and together make a card for an upcoming feast or a name day, to give to a friend or to send it to a family member.

11th of October

The Lord said this parable: "*A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell along the path, and was trodden under foot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew, and yielded a hundredfold.*" (LUKE 8:5-15)

This is a wonderful parable and perhaps one of the favourite ones for the gardeners, big and small! Use this parable to help your child 'grow' spiritually. Relating this Scripture reading to a small-scale gardening craft would be a perfect match. Buy a packet of seeds – flowers, herbs or even vegetable, however watercress might bring the fastest results, and sow the seeds. Perhaps you can sow the seed in different things – eggshells, egg boxes with some stones, in an empty yogurt pot with some soil to see which one grows best? Will they all grow or will some wither like in the parable.

18th of October

Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke

Today is the feast of Saint Luke the Evangelist. We will be focusing on facts and details of his life: How is Saint Luke pictured in the Iconography – he himself has painted the first icon and it was of the Mother of God, what makes him different to other Apostles and Evangelists, what is his symbol, where is his Gospel found in the Bible and much more. We are going to make a card with the details about him, which then can be put in a special place in the house.

25th of October

"Brethren, I would have you know that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's

gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.” (St. Paul’s letter to Galatians 1:11-19)

On this Sunday, we will focus on familiarising our children with the Bible. What is it, what does it look like, why is it so important, how does it divide inside, how it came to be, what events are described inside, why does a Priest read it during every service and Holy Liturgy.

Marta Radford

BEARING FRUIT

For a good tree does not bear bad fruit nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of his heart, his mouth speaks. (Luke 6:43-45)

Men, good or evil, are recognized as such by their actions and words, because these reveal their hearts. The labours of those who work in the vineyard of the Lord, are crowned with fruit, with rewards, while the unfruitful trees are cut down and burnt, just like the fig tree which withers under Jesus’ curse because it was unfruitful. As Christians, we are called to be fruitful: to work and bring forth a rich crop of good deeds and their rewards.

And yet so many good works do not prosper, so many good plans do not come to fruition. So many times, I had a great idea, I invested time and energy in accomplishing it; I put a lot of heart in it too, but it yielded no fruit. And I felt it was such a waste of time and energy. When such things happen, it is easy to become frustrated and I have often asked myself why not every good work produces fruit? The answer, as always with spiritual matters, is complex. Sometimes good works do not prosper immediately because the Lord wants to teach us patience and perseverance. The Lord is testing us. He needs marathon runners, not sprinters. If we have no resilience,

then we need to train. As the parable teaches us, the branches of the vine sometimes need pruning in order to become fruitful.

Secondly, just because something seems good and worthy to us, it doesn’t mean it actually is. We are short sighted and often fail to consider all the implications of our actions and the way in which they affect others. The Lord sees all and knows beyond any doubt what is good for ourselves and for others. He therefore makes trees fruit as needed. After all, as father Rafail Noica says, we are only a tiny branch or leaf in the huge tree of Christianity. Can a tiny leaf know about the well being of the tree? It just has to play its small part and contribute to it.

Finally, efforts not bearing any fruit can be a very simple matter of “Have I asked for a blessing for this?” Asking for God’s blessing for any action is essential for it to prosper. If anything, good as it may be, does not have its roots in Christ, it will not prosper. Without healthy roots, no plant can produce good fruit. And Our Lord teaches us that He is the vine and we are the branches. To bear fruit we must abide in Him.

As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, bears much fruit: for without Me, you can do nothing. (John 15:4)

Furthermore, often there is pride or self will tangled up in our good works. It is this matter of self and will, which often gets in the way of us bearing fruit. Even when we ask for a blessing and try to do good, our action is all to often our own and is rooted in ourself. As we grow spiritually, the Lord is asking us to abandon our plans and actions and take on His plans. It is no longer a question of “Please Lord prosper this idea, this plan I have”, but a complete abandonment of will “What do you wish and need me to do today, Lord?” This change of perspective is very liberating but also very difficult. Even when we understand this is what we must do, we might not feel ready to do it.

I came across this poem which explains beautifully what level of abandonment is required of us. The poet asked the Lord why his works do not prosper, why he feels dejected and low. The answer he receives from the Lord is this:

*Son, I want more for you and for the world.
 Until now you have planned your actions,
 But I have no need for them.
 You have asked for My approval, you have
 asked for My support,
 You have wanted to interest Me in your work.
 But don't you see, son that you were reversing
 the roles?
 I have watched you, I have seen your good
 will,
 And I want more than you now.
 You will no longer do your own work, but the
 will of your Father in Heaven.*

*[...]
 It is I who must do your work.
 It is I who must live in your family.
 It is I who must be in your neighbour and not
 you.
 For it is My look that penetrates, and not
 yours,
 My words that carry weight and not yours,
 My life that transforms, and not yours,
 Give all to Me, abandon all to Me.*

*(From "Help me to say "Yes"" in Prayers of
 Life by Michel Quoist.)*

How much harder when what we are asked to do is completely opposed to our will! It is not often that I can clearly discern the Will of the Lord, but there have been a few occasions when I knew with conviction what I was being asked to do and yet I did not want to do it, usually because it was hard and it sometimes took me out of my comfort zone. I felt like a real battle was taking place inside between the two wills: my will and the Will of the one who willed the whole world into being. I have on occasions dragged myself to the task as you do an unwilling child. But every time I said yes, even reluctantly, after wrestling with myself, the fruit, when it grew, was so sweet and full of grace. Without our yes, the tree will remain barren. It is almost unbearable to think of all the times we say no to the Lord or we even fail to notice He is asking us something. The joyous news is that the Lord is merciful and patient, as the parable of the fig tree teaches us. He keeps pruning, watering and fertilising us with the Holy Spirit so that we may say yes, bear fruit and thus be saved.

*A certain man had a fig tree planted in his
 vineyard and he came seeking fruit on it and*

*found none. Then he said to the keeper of his
 vineyard "Look for three years I have come
 seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none.
 Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?
 But he answered and said to him: Sir, let it
 alone this year also, until I dig around it and
 fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if
 not, after that you can cut it down.
 (Luke 13:6-9)*

Martha and Mary

NAMES OF DEPARTED LOVED ONES TO BE REMEMBERED THIS MONTH

Oct. 10: *Barnabas*
 Oct. 17: *Garyfalos*
 Oct. 20: *Fr. Stephen Hatherly*
 Oct. 23: *Fr. Christopher Neill*

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

6th Oct: Holy Apostle Thomas
*7th Oct: Sts Sergius & Bacchus the Great Mar-
 tyrs of Syria*
*10th Oct: The 14 Holy Elders of Optina Monas-
 tery in Russia*
12th Oct: St. Wilfrid, Bishop of York († 709)
18th Oct: Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke
19th Oct: St. John of Kronstadt
*26th Oct: The Glorious Great Martyr Demetrius
 the Myrrbearer of Thessalonica*
28th Oct: The Holy Protection of the Theotokos
 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 October*

Sat. 3rd	10:00	Memorial
	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 4th	10:00	Hours and Typika**
Mon. 5th	18:30	Great Vespers for the Holy Apostle Thomas
Sat. 10th	10:00	Memorial
	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 11th	10:00	Hours and Typika**
Sat. 17th	10:00	Memorial
	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 18th	10:00	Hours and Typika**
Mon. 19th	18:30	Great Vespers for St John of Kronstadt
Sat. 24th	10:00	Memorial
	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 25th	10:00	Hours and Typika**
Mon. 26th	18:30	Great Vespers for the Glorious Great Martyr Demetrius the Myrrh-bearer of Thessalonica
Tue. 27th	18:30	Great Vespers for the Holy Protection of the Theotokos

* The services are provisional and may be changed at short notice. Services will be in Skype unless otherwise stated. Please, join a Skype group <https://join.skype.com/KZt20cnwQw5f> to join a current service. The live services are also available on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/126074338184/>.

** Services at the St Martin's church. These may change subject to a short email notice.

“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*.

