

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

The Stavronian

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*Έπιθρονος 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

HOLY THEOPHANY

My dear friends in Christ we have come to this holy festival of Our Lord's Baptism. At Theophany we celebrate the revelation of the Three Persons of the Holy and undivided Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For at this feast we see God in His fullness manifest before men and women.

As St. John Chrysostom says in his sermon on the feast, it is necessary to say that there is not one Theophany, but two: the one actual, which already has occurred, and the second in future, which will happen with glory at the end of the world. St. Paul, who in conversing with Titus, speaks thus about the present: "The grace of God hath revealed itself, having saved all mankind, decreeing, that we reject iniquity and worldly desires, and dwell in the present age in prudence and in righteousness and piety" -- and about the future: "awaiting the blessed hope and glorious appearance of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit 2:11-13).

Today, on which Christ was baptized by John even though Our Lord was without sin He sanctified the nature of water. On this day the waters having been infused by the power of the same all Holy Spirit, having obtained the waters we will carry it home and keep it all year, since today the waters are sanctified; and an obvious phenomenon occurs: these waters in their essence do not spoil with the passage of time, but obtained today last for our sanctification, our healing and as a blessing for our homes.

I recall, over 25 years ago, when the first group of converts were being catechized by holy priests from America; some fellow pilgrims to Orthodoxy were seated listening at the feet of Fr. Michael Keiser of blessed memory. He was teaching us about the feasts and came to Theophany. He told the story of one of his parishioners who dutifully came with her empty bottle year by year to receive the Holy Water of Theophany- on going to bless her home the lady beckoned to Father to come and see something. She opened a cupboard under the stairs and there to his amazement was row upon row of bottles dating back fifteen years of Holy Water rather like a rack of fine vintage wines. He mildly upbraided her pointing out that they should be used, for anointing for drinking and for sprinkling of the home and for the making of proshpora.

God in his gracious mercy and love gives us these mysteries for our use. It is a gift which we should receive and enjoy.

In this feast we hear the voice of the Father testifying to the divine nature of Christ:

"You are my beloved Son; in you I am well pleased."

At this feast we have the Son, Who, content for our salvation, sanctifies the waters and indeed all creation, for He is the Word that caused it to come into being, restoring it to its original condition through union with Him.

On this feast we see the Holy Spirit descending in bodily form in the form of a dove upon Christ.

"God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory." St Paul writes in 1 Timothy 3:16



*Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
Image taken from oca.org*

This new birth is connected with purification and illumination. St Gregory the Theologian says, "Where there is purification there is illumination, for without the former the latter is not given."

This important event of the Baptism in the Life of Christ and therefore in the Church is recorded in all four gospels. Here, we see the confession that the Son and Word of God is "one of the Holy Trinity" who became man to save the human race from sin, the devil and death. Christ had no sin but since humans are sinful we confess and are baptised by water and the Spirit.

In the patristic writings the Baptism of Christ is seen in terms of the earlier type connected with the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites. In God's mercy we see salvation in operation in history, firstly in the act of saving His chosen people through His servant Moses and in the fullness of time the divine economy by which the whole of the human race is reshaped in Christ.

St. Nicodemus the Hagiorite says that in order to reshape a vessel a potter needs water for moulding the clay and fire to heat the moulded clay into a vessel. God, the divine potter wants to reshape us into holy vessels. The water is created and blessed; the fire is the uncreated fire of the Holy Spirit. Thus, through Holy Baptism which is the introductory Mystery we are admitted into the Church, just as Christ's saving work began with His Baptism.

Let God reshape us who are created in His image into holy vessels by water and the Holy Spirit.

Christ gave the commandments to His disciples to make disciples of every nation:

"baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Matt. 28:19-20.

We are to live with that divine promise given at our Baptism avoiding the death of sin so that we may inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. However, St Gregory of Nyssa reminds us that when the Grace of Baptism is clouded by sin then the baptism of repentance and tears must follow. *"Even one tear of repentance is equivalent to the water of Baptism, and a painful groan brings back the grace which had departed for a while."*

When we have asked the All Holy Spirit to sanctify the waters today it is for our sanctification and healing. Take it home, place it in your icon corner drink of it often first thing in your morning

prayers, use it for healing for it is of that same Life-giving spring that wells up in you to eternal life as we await the second Theophany -- Christ's coming in glory.

Fr Jonathan

GIFTS

I have a good friend who has the kind of faith to move mountains. She is never troubled by anything because she prays about everything, so much so that she often runs out of time for the daily mundane duties. I tend to be the other way around -- fretting about everything, busy with mundane activities and running out of time for prayer. Recently, this friend and I were having a conversation about illness and friends who were ill. The fearless friend told me of countless situations in her life when the Lord heard her prayer and herself or others were healed.

I pointed out that illness and suffering is allowed by God and we cannot expect him to heal everybody every time we ask. We discussed various saints and their heavy illnesses and terrible sufferings (to support my point) and from there, my friend mentioned how saints had the power of healing but they themselves suffered of the very ailment they could heal in others. This struck me as so beautiful and a great spiritual truth. It reminded me of a story I heard from the Talmud (Jewish texts) where a rabbi who had the power to heal, fell ill and sent for a healer to get him better. He could not heal himself. The Talmud asks why? The answer given is "The prisoner cannot free himself from jail."

One of the most inspiring stories is that of the life of Saint Poemen (Pimen) the Much-Ailing, who suffered from paralysis all his life until three days before he passed to the Lord. He was often treated as a burden by the other monks in the monastery, but he never complained about his trials. He asked of the Lord to allow him to remain in suffering and physical helplessness for his salvation and that of his carers. But he did miraculously heal one of the other monks of paralysis, the very ailment which he suffered from so greatly.

We are made to receive gifts from our heavenly Father, but also to give gifts to our brothers and sisters. We are designed to be each

others' helpers and healers. We receive so many gifts on a daily basis – life itself, joy, love, friendship, grace and a multitude of material gifts too – homes, food, drink, clothes, a whole world of beauty which surrounds us. We are given these to rejoice but mostly to share with others. What good are gifts not shared? What good is a healer who heals nobody else or a prophet who keeps messages to himself?

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bushel. Instead, they set it on a stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven... Matthew 5:14-16

The light of Christ and the good news of the resurrection is to be shared with all the world. Just like in the parable of the talents, the Master will be displeased if, at the last Judgement, we bring the talent He has given us unused, if we kept it buried. We need to unwrap the gift of the Holy Spirit, use it, let it take over and shine through, share our talent, whatever it may be, with our brothers and sisters. What better New Year's resolution than to share and thus multiply the talents given to us at our baptism?

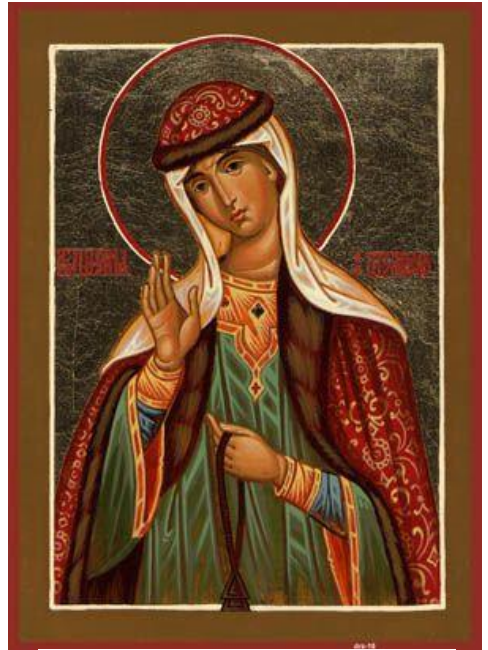
Martha and Mary

ENCOUNTERS WITH SAINTS

St Juliana of Lazarevo

I first read the life of Saint Juliana Lazarevskaia on my wedding anniversary, which I found providential since she is the protectress of married couples and marriage. I found it so beautiful that a young woman who had such a gift for prayer and fasting from an early age and was so suited for monastic life, lived all her life in the world, by God's will, was saved and became a saint in the world.

Saint Juliana's feast day is kept on the 2nd January (new calendar). Saint Juliana (1530-1604) lived during the reign of Ivan the Terrible.



St Juliana of Lazarevo

Image taken from [pinterest.co.uk](https://www.pinterest.co.uk)

She was born to a wealthy noble family of God loving and merciful parents. When Juliana was 6, her mother died and she went to live with her grandmother, who instructed her in the way of the faith. Juliana had a great love of silence and prayer and fasted strictly from a young age. But when Juliana was 12, her grandmother died, and she went to live with an aunt who had a large family and was not very devout. Juliana's cousins mocked her for fasting and her aunt scolded her for ruining her looks. The family rarely went to church, but Juliana kept the precepts which had been taught her at a young age, bore all reproofs meekly and continued to pray and fast. At the age of 16 she married Yurii Osoryin, who was a wealthy man from the village of Lazarevo near Murom and went to live with her parents-in-law. Juliana was so gentle, dutiful, and hardworking, her parents-in-law soon left all the running of the large household to her. From then on, Juliana worked hard all day looking after the good running of the household, always obedient to her husband and parents-in-law. At night, she slept little, praying, making metanias and working hard at sowing garments for the poor. She kept her

night vigils and work for the poor secret from the rest of the household. The saint fasted very strictly eating nothing on Fridays, only dry food on Mondays and Wednesdays and never before noon on the other days. The detailed account of her life was written by her own son Kallistrat Osoryin, who witnessed her secret good works.

Saint Juliana had 13 children. Six of them died in infancy, but according to her son's testimony, she did not grieve much because she accepted that it was God's will and rejoiced not only in the fact that children dying young and pure will be counted with the Saints, but also in the children left to her.

She was sorely tried by the devil first of all in household matters. Servants always argued and fought among themselves and so did her children. She was always gentle and patient in the way she dealt with every person of the household. To her family's exasperation, she was never harsh with any servant even if they were lazy or rude, because she considered God forgave her and was gentle to her, so she ought to forgive others. She brought peace again and again in her household. Her acts of charity were countless. No poor person left her house empty-handed and on Saturdays and Sundays she used to organise feasts for the poor of the area, and all were welcome to her table. During famines she denied herself food to give to the poor and during an epidemic, she washed and nursed the suffering with her own hands, making sure every poor person would have a decent burial and praying for every single soul.

As she spent a long time every night in prayer, the evil one tried to scare her in order to stop her from the path of holiness. She had terrifying visions of devils attacking her and was at first frightened and stopped praying, but then prayed to her beloved Saint Nicholas the wonder worker, who came to her in a vision and dispelled the evil spirits with the Gospel. When Juliana opened her eyes, she saw St Nicholas leave the room, although the door was locked. Later on, as she grew in holiness, she battled physically with the demons and St Nicholas came to her rescue again.

A great trial came when two of her adult sons died suddenly. Saint Juliana was troubled in spirit and wanted to leave the world and enter the monastery. At the entreaties of her husband, she remained next to him, but increased her acts of mercy, her fasts, and vigils. When her husband

was away on the tzar's business, she hardly slept at all, but worked all night at the spindle or sewing to give away to the poor. Despite the many ways in which she mortified her flesh, she was always cheerful and kind to all. She lived the last years of her life as a widow, praying for her husband and continuing to give alms until she herself lived in abject poverty. Even before her death there were reports in the village of the wonderful smell of myrrh which came from the church when she went to pray. At her death, those present saw a golden crown on her head and a halo of white light. In 1614, ten years later, when one of her sons passed away and the family tomb was opened, the coffin or the saint emitted a wonderful fragrance and myrrh started dripping from the incorrupted relics of the saint. Many were healed by the myrrh and even touching the ground under the coffin, healed many.

The life of saint Juliana humbled me and inspired me at the same time. Both my trials and my endeavours in my own household were suddenly dwarfed by the wonderful and humble work of this merciful and cheerful saint, who attained holiness in the midst of a busy household, who bore the passing away of so many dear ones so faithfully and who is such a powerful helper and protector of married people and families.

Let us ask for her intercession to bring peace, love and holiness in our families.

Alexandra McCafferty

Troparion of St. Juliana of Lazarevo

Shining forth with grace divine, even after death thou hast revealed the radiance of thy life; for thou pourest forth fragrant myrrh for healing upon all the sick who approach the shrine of thy relics with faith. O righteous mother Juliana, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved.

Kontakion of St. Juliana of Lazarevo

All of us amid misfortune and pain hymn the holy Juliana as a helper quick to hear; for she lived a God-pleasing life in the world and gave countless alms to the poor. Wherefore, she hath found the grace of miracles at the command of God.

From stjuliana.com

SUNDAY SCHOOL PLAN

3rd of January – Theophany

There are a few beautiful crafts available from the orthodox pebbles for this feast. We aim to only make the smaller children aware and excited about the feast and the craft. You may wish to show them the Icon of Theophany and explain who and why is present. For older children you can retell the story, how people and babies are also baptised to become the members of the Church, it is one of the sacraments, although we don't repeat it like confession or the taking of the Eucharist. After the Church, the priest blesses our homes and gives us the very Holy Water for consumption until the next Theophany!

10th of January -- Gifts and Talents

St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 4:7-13

Brethren grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."... And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Gifts and talents, we all have them! We may not always know what they are, but others will notice them, especially when we used them as the Body of Christ and to the Glory of God. Blessings are added to our blessings, and positivity produces more positivity, similarly gifts and talents are multiplied as we know from a different parable. We will complete activity related to this theme.

17th of January – 10 Lepers and Thanksgiving

Luke 17:12-19

At that time, as Jesus entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus's feet, giving him thanks..."

In the Scripture reading for today, we see how important it is to remember and give thanks to God

for all the blessings and circumstances He puts us in. Ten lepers were healed by our Lord but only one came back to give thanks for healing. Let us be like the one who remembered the blessing bestowed upon him, thanking, and worshipping at the Lord's feet. We will use wooden sticks and pens to create the scene from the Scripture.

24th of January – Xenia of St Petersburg Fool for Christ

There are Saints and Saints! It may seem confusing that there are different types of Saints, but it is important to know and to differentiate the specific categories. And today we will focus on Xenia of St Petersburg and why she is called a Fool for Christ.

31st of January – Zealous like Zacchaios

Luke 19:1-10

At that time, Jesus was passing through Jericho. And there was a man named Zacchaios; he was a chief collector, and rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaios, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully.

Are you ready to make a tree and a man called Zacchaios? He was zealous and determined, full of love and readiness to even just get the glimpse of our Saviour. Being small did not stop Zacchaios from approaching Christ in his own way, he overcame this, by finding another way, even if the intention was just to see Christ, it paid off hundredfold when our Lord approached him.

Marta Radford



NAMES OF DEPARTED LOVED ONES TO BE REMEMBERED THIS MONTH

Jan. 6: *Fr. Michael Harper*
 Jan. 14: *Nina*
 Jan. 16: *Fr. Jacob Myers*
 Jan. 30: *Ioannis*

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 Jan.: St. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia

6th Jan.: The Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

9th Jan.: St. Adrian and St. Brithwald, Archbishops of Canterbury († 710 and † 731 A.D.)

17th Jan.: St. Anthony the Great

18th Jan.: St. Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria

20th Jan.: Righteous Euthymius the Great

24th Jan.: St. Xenia, the Fool-for-Christ of St.

Petersburg († 1803)

25th Jan.: St. Gregory the Theologian

28th Jan.: St. Ephraim the Syrian

30th Jan.: Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom

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 January*

Sat. 2nd	10:00	Memorial
	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 3rd	08:30	Orthros
Tue. 5th	18:30	Great Blessing of Waters
Wed. 6th	19:00	Little Paraklesis to the Mother of God
Sat. 9th	10:00	Memorial
	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 10th	08:30	Orthros
Wed. 13th	19:00	Little Paraklesis to the Mother of God
Sat. 16th	10:00	Memorial
	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 17th	08:30	Orthros
Tue. 19th	18:30	Great Vespers for St Euthymios
Wed. 20th	19:00	Little Paraklesis to the Mother of God
Thru. 21st	18:30	Great Vespers for Apostle Timothy
Sat. 23rd	10:00	Memorial
	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 24th	08:30	Orthros (Matins)
Wed. 27th	18:30	Little Paraklesis to the Mother of God
Sat. 30th	08:30	Orthros for the Synaxis of St Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and St John Chrysostom
	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 31st	08:30	Orthros

* The services are provisional and may be changed at short notice. Services will take place in Skype unless otherwise stated. Please, join a [Skype group](#) to watch or participate in a current service. The live services are also broadcasted simultaneously in the [Facebook group](#) of the Church.

“God cares for everyone. Despair is in effect a lack of faith”
- St. George Karlslides –



For further information please contact:

Father Jonathan Hemmings

67 Sibsey Str., Fairfield, Lancaster, LA1 5DQ

Tel: 07951 722 877

Email: frjah@yahoo.co.uk

www.orthodox-lancaster.org.uk

www.antiochian-orthodox.co.uk

The following blogs of Old Stavronians are available in Romanian, Conștiinta Ortodoxa,
in English, Orthodox city hermit, and in Greek, Orthodoxy rainbow.

