



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

***The Stavronian***

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



*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*

## ON PRIDE

From the beginning of our contributions to the Stavronian, we made a conscious effort to talk and write about virtues rather than dissect sin. It seems so much more inspiring to think of selflessness than to dwell on our selfishness, to inspire people to be self-restrained rather than to berate them about their gluttony, so much more profitable to cultivate humility rather than to keep analysing and fighting pride! But strangely, in our conversations this month, pride kept coming up, and ultimately these articles are about sharing our poor experiences and thoughts. We thought there are a few very interesting aspects of pride, which need to be faced by every person. If not all people have been beset by greed or laziness or covetousness, pride is in fact the sin which we are, most of us troubled by and which sits at the origin of most of our other faults. When I was much younger, in one of my first confessions to my spiritual father, he spoke to me about pride. I was very puzzled because I had mentioned nothing about pride in my confession. But, hours later I began to discern dimly that, of course, he had been right and most of the sins I confessed were rooted in pride.

Pride is of course the first sin which has haunted humanity from the very beginning. The bright angel, Lucifer fell from heaven because he wanted to be the equal of God, and Adam and Eve were tempted by the same desire to disobey and be equal to their Creator.

St Justin Popovic writes: *“The third sin which synthesises all sins is “the pride of life”. That is the first sin in all the world: the sin of Satan. The source of all sins, which always was and will forever stay as such. It can be said: pride is the ultimate sin. Every sin through its life force, comes from it and holds to it: “the pride of life- woven from countless multifarious prides, both great and small, both short-term and long-term. Let us remember the primary things: the pride of glory (scientific, government, in any rank or position in general), pride of beauty, pride of wealth, pride of benevolence, pride of humility (yes! of humility), pride of charity, pride of success...”*

Looking back at my life and all the blots in

the past, the words I wish unsaid and the acts I wish undone, I have become aware that they mostly were born from pride: broken relationships, hurts suffered or inflicted, indifference, cowardice, distorted truths and lies...

The most dangerous and insidious characteristic of pride is that it is a mistress of disguise. As soon as we recognize her in ourselves and point our finger at her, she disappears and takes another form even more subtle than the previous. As St Justin Popovic says, *“There is not a virtue that pride cannot convert into a vice.”* The danger is that pride in its sly disguises sneaks in and enthrones itself at the heart of virtue and slowly corrupts it until it becomes vice. Pride can turn a prayerful person into a Pharisee. As soon as I do a small charitable deed or fast for a day, I think to myself “that was good “and I pat myself on the back. All the good is then lost and converted into sin. At other times, I become plagued by other people’s faults, especially those close to me -- their mistakes or shortcomings become magnified in my eyes and I feel hurt by these – double pride: I want them to be perfect because they are my family and friends and I also think myself in some mysterious way better than them. Also how easily we get hurt by people’s words “They were unkind.” We often say...pride, we cannot bear that someone should hold a mirror to our own face. Finally after all the disguises of pride have been shed, comes the ultimate self-pity (or inverted pride): “I am proud, I sin every minute, I am weak, how can I ever be saved? Poor me!”

The conviction that we are usually if not always right and the instinct to retaliate or contradict, to prove to the other that they are wrong and we are right is a most difficult tendency to quell. Teaching people lessons is such a great temptation! When I have a conversation, especially a disagreement, I imagine pride as an angry dog which keeps barking and pulls at the leash, desperate to attack my interlocutor. I try to control it by pulling sharply at the leash and telling this hound to sit every time it tries to leap. This reminds me of the lovely story of a conversation between an old man and his grandson. The old man said: “Each one of us has two wolves inside them: one is good and one is evil. They are constantly fighting inside us to the death.” The grandson asked: “Which one will

win, granddad?” and the grandfather answered “The one you feed the most”. So feeding pride only makes it swell inside us and take over. Pride also blinds us to our faults, which is very dangerous for our soul. Unless we recognise our sins, our faults, our enemies, we cannot repent and fight them. Until we accept that we are ill and need treatment, we cannot get better.

Pride is also the greatest advocate of sin: it can justify in our own eyes our most unjust and unkind actions, by shifting the blame on the other. It stops us from learning and growing because it closes our heart to other people’s words: to any advice or correction. We think we ultimately know best every time and on every topic. How can we listen to God if we never listen to our fellows?

*“Humility is the medicine for pride and all other sins.”* St Justin Popovic also writes.

There are three main realisations which can annihilate our pride. Firstly, that all we are and all we have is a gift from God. We have not achieved anything by ourselves; therefore, what is there to be proud of or defensive about? As St John Cassian says, *“What right has man to be proud as though he could achieve perfection through his own efforts?”* When we come to see all good things as a gift we shall enjoy them simply and without pride: *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above”* (James 1:17).

Secondly, that we are immensely loved and called to love God and our neighbour, not called to prove ourselves, to please or to teach lessons, but simply called to love and act in accordance to this love.

And finally, that without God we are nothing and can do nothing: *“Without Me you can do nothing”* (John 15:5), but if we fill ourselves with God there will be no room left for self and pride.

*Martha and Mary*

## VIGIL PRAYERS

During the pandemic, we continue the stand-ard prayer practice at home, including the reading of the Lord’s prayer at 12:00 every day. In addition, many parishioners have already signed for

the Vigil Prayer [online](#), so that the non-stopping prayer is maintained by the faithful all over the world continuously for 24 hours, until the pandemic surrenders.

## ATTENDING THE SERVICES AT CHURCH

To attend the in-Church services during September you have to sign up using this [form](#). We want to ensure that as many people as possible can attend at least one service over the weekend. So please rank them based on which of the available dates you prefer more. Allocation of the places depends on the volume of requests, and we cannot guarantee that you will be able to attend all services. The places are allocated on the “first come, first served” basis. At present, a maximum of 30 people including children, servers, chanter, and the COVID officer, are now allowed in Church.

Please note that if you are planning on attending the service as a family, you need to register each family member separately using the form. This is because each person, even from a single family, counts towards the maximum allowed number. You will be notified about attendance in due time, and the full protocols concerning attendance will be issued. Please check your email regularly to get the confirmation emails, as well as to be aware of any changes and updates regarding the online and in-Church services.

## 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 (online\*)

Wed. 1 <sup>st</sup>	08:30	Service of Indiction (Little Supplication) for the First Day of the Liturgical Year (in Liturgikon)
Sat. 4 <sup>th</sup>	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 5 <sup>th</sup>	09:45	Holy Liturgy. Prophet Zechariah and Righteous Elizabeth**
Tue. 7 <sup>th</sup>	18:30	Vespers for the Nativity of our Most Holy Theotokos
Sat. 11 <sup>th</sup>	18:30	Great Vespers: Saturday before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross
Sun. 12 <sup>th</sup>	09:45	Holy Liturgy: Sunday before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross**
Tue. 14 <sup>th</sup>	08:30	Matins. Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross
Sat. 18 <sup>th</sup>	08:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 19 <sup>th</sup>	09:30	Holy Liturgy**
	11:30	Holy Baptism**
Wed. 22 <sup>nd</sup>	18:30	Great Vespers for the Conception of John the Baptist
Sat. 25 <sup>th</sup>	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 26 <sup>th</sup>	09:45	Holy Liturgy: Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian**

\* 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 or availability.

\*\* Services in the Church.

*“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: 07951 722 877

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.

