

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

The Stavronian

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*Έθρονος 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

GOING FISHING

He said to Simon "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. And they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. (Luke 5:4)

This particular miracle recounted by Luke speaks to me so richly because I find it sheds light on complex questions and makes all simple and accessible. It teaches us that without our Lord Jesus, we labour in vain. All night these good fishermen had toiled and had caught nothing. They were good people, they had the skill and yet their reward was inexistent, because they were working by themselves and for themselves. "*Do not think about or do anything without a spiritual purpose, whereby it is done for God. For if you travel without purpose, you shall labour in vain.*" (St Mark the Ascetic.) Psalm 126 tells us about the futility of working without God: "*Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Unless the Lord guard the city, Those who guard it stay awake in vain.*"

But there is also the opposite aspect to consider. The Lord asks Simon not only to trust, but to act. It would have been easy for our Lord to miraculously materialize a mountain of fish on the shore, but He asks for the fishermen's collaboration. Not because God needs our effort, but because this effort is good for us and working together, being together with our Lord is our and God's ultimate goal. Picture the scene again. A whole night the fishermen were toiling in vain. They return to the shore exhausted and disheartened. They are then asked, against reason (fish are caught at night more than in the day) to go out again. And, amazingly, they do! In modern day equivalent, this would be returning home after a very bad night shift where nothing went right only to be told that if you go straight back to work for another shift, things will go better. The lesson for me is that despite tiredness and disappointment, we must obey and go back and start again, trusting the Lord that when He wills it and when He stands

by our side, all will be well. Grace and gifts will abound. Nonetheless, a very wise friend keeps telling me "The Lord gives generously, but doesn't stuff things in your bag". As in the fishing miracle, like the apostles, we have to get back in that boat, row out and cast the nets in order to receive the Lord's gifts.

Therefore, do not go fishing by yourself: your labour will be in vain and the Lord wishes to come with you. But do not stay at home waiting for a big catch of fish to be delivered on your doorstep because it is unlikely to. Our mission is to go fishing but always ask the Lord to come with us.

Martha and Mary

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE BISHOP IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH?

Part I

On the 24th of September our father and bishop Metropolitan Silouan celebrated his name day – the feast day of St. Silouan the Athonite. It is a good occasion to reflect on what the role of the bishop is in the Orthodox Church. I approach this question with the help of the two authoritative sources of the early Church: works of St. Ignatius of Antioch and St. Irenaeus of Lyons. Both bishops themselves, they were among the very first holy fathers who dedicated part of their writings specifically to the topic of bishop's ministry. Throughout the centuries their works were subjected to misrepresentation and falsification that served the purpose of the division within the Church. Yet, an Orthodox interpretation leaves no doubt about the complementarity between the two views.

It is true that the two holy fathers underline distinct aspects of the bishop's ministry due to the peculiarities of the historical moment in which each of them worked. St. Ignatius emphasizes the **Eucharistic** and **Christocentric** character of the bishop's ministry, whereas St. Irenaeus focuses on the **Teaching** one established on the **Apostolic grounds**. But this difference was due to the distinctive historical context in which each of the fathers found themselves. When combined their views provide a holistic interpretation of the role

of the bishop in the Orthodox church which in its essence remains the same until this day.

1. Historical background

This section outlines the historical background in which St. Ignatius and St. Irenaeus have been writing. It will prove to be essential for explaining the differences and drawing connections between their views.

St. Ignatius and St. Irenaeus belong to the pre-Nicene group of theologians, the fathers of the Church who lived and worked in the epoch between the apostolic times and up until the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325). The information about their life is very scarce. Nevertheless, we know that St. Ignatius of Antioch (born c.35 A.D.) was the third bishop of Antioch (modern Antakya, Turkey). He was martyred in Rome around the year 107 A.D. St. Ignatius alongside St. Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, was the disciple of St. Apostle John the Evangelist. The teachings of St. Ignatius' are contained in the series of six letters addressing local churches and in one letter to St. Polycarpⁱ.

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (born c. 130) was the second bishop of Lugdunum in Gaul (modern Lyons, France). Nothing is known for certain about his death, but according to the Orthodox tradition he was martyred around the year 202 A.D. St. Irenaeus proceeded from Smyrna, the hometown of St. Polycarp and was among his disciplesⁱⁱ. Thus, despite living in the different times, St. Ignatius and St. Irenaeus were connected through St. Polycarp. St. Irenaeus wrote several books, the most famous of which is *Against Heresies*ⁱⁱⁱ.

Both fathers lived in the era of constant persecution of Christians throughout the Roman Empire. However, within the early Church, the developments took the different character at

various periods of that era^{iv}. At the times of St. Ignatius either Apostles or their direct disciples oversaw the teaching ministry, and the magnitude of their authority was a sufficient guarantor of the ecclesial unity. Most of the local churches were following the common liturgical practice and were united in the perception of the rule of faith. The emergence of heresies usually did not lead to the creation of the alternative ecclesial structures.

At the times of St. Irenaeus, the problem of heresies stepped to another level. The very title of his major book speaks about its magnitude. This intensification was due to two principal reasons. Firstly, by that time apostles and their disciples died, leaving the faithful without the living memory about Christ as the proof of orthodoxy. Secondly, heresies of that time began to take an ecclesial form. St. Irenaeus' main antagonists – Gnostics^v, were not only turning individual Christians away from the true faith but were also creating alternative ecclesial structures and appointing bishops. This threatened a full-fledged schism and made the theological defense of apostolic faith a prime necessity.

2. Bishop's ministry according to St. Ignatius

This section presents St. Ignatius' views on the bishop's ministry. According to St. Ignatius, it has the **Eucharistic** and **Christocentric** character, and the latter necessarily follows from the former.

2.1. Bishop as the president of the Eucharist

St. Ignatius writes: 'The sole Eucharist you should consider valid is one that is celebrated by the bishop himself, or by some person authorized by him.'^{vi} The bishop's ministry according to St. Ignatius is primarily **Eucharistic** because the bishop should preside at the Eucharist. He insists that administration of the Eucharist lies exclusively with the bishop's office and that

ⁱ in Louth, Andrew, (ed.) *Early Christian Writings: The Apostolic Fathers*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1987).

ⁱⁱ St. Irenaeus' writings provide a clear testimony of his relationship with St. Polycarp. For example, while accusing a Roman presbyter Florinus for falling into the heresy of Valentianism, St. Irenaeus appeals to the authority of their common teacher, St. Polycarp: 'For when I was a boy, I saw thee in lower Asia with Polycarp <...> I am able to describe the very place in which blessed Polycarp sat as he discoursed <...> and the accounts which he gave of his intercourse with John and with the others who had seen the Lord'. *Vid.* Eusebius, *Church History*, V., xx, 5-6. in Schaff, Philip and Wace, Henry (eds.) *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, volume 1: Eusebius: *Church History*, *Life of*

Constantine the Great, and *Oration in Praise of Constantine*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995).

ⁱⁱⁱ in Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James (eds.) *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, volume 1: the Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994).

^{iv} *vid.* Zizioulas, John D. *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*. (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001).

^v Gnosticism – an umbrella term describing a variety of Jewish-Christian heresies in the first and second century A.D.

^{vi} Ign., *To the Smyrnaeans*, 8.

Christ himself established this order after His own will and by His Holy Spirit^{vii}.

The Eucharist is the focal point of St. Ignatius' thoughts. Following the words of our Lord, he stresses that only through the partaking of the Body of Christ people can attain unity with Him and gain Eternal Life. The Church itself is the Body of Christ because historical Christ is the flesh of the Divine Eucharist^{viii}. Through partaking Christ's very flesh, the faithful become members of His Body and thus attain the spiritual and physical unity with one another.

Since the whole Body of Christ is offered at the Eucharist, there should be no more than one consecrated bread and no more than one person administering the Sacrament. Hence, only one bishop should preside at each Eucharist, thereby ministering the unity of his flock with Christ, and one another:

Make certain, therefore, that you all observe one common Eucharist; for there is but one Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and but one cup of union with His Blood, and one single altar of sacrifice – even as also there is but one bishop.^{ix}

2.2. Bishop as the living image of Christ

According to St. Ignatius, the Eucharistic character of the bishop's ministry necessarily makes it also **Christocentric**. He writes: 'Where the bishop is to be seen, there let all his people be, just as wherever Jesus Christ is present, we have the catholic Church.' There exists an inseparable relationship between the local church, the bishop, and the Eucharist. On the one hand, bishop identifies the local church^x, on the other, he and his flock attain the unity with Christ through the Eucharist. Thus, the bishop simultaneously becomes the incarnation of the local church and a living image of Christ^{xi}.

This conclusion leads St. Ignatius to stress the paramount importance of obeying bishop:

Be as submissive to the bishop and to one another as Jesus Christ was to His Father, and as the Apostles were to Christ and the Father; so that there may be complete unity, in the flesh as well as in the spirit.^{xii}

Since the bishop is a living image of Christ, the faithful by obeying the bishop, in fact, obey God Himself. Hence, any activity within the church should be authorized by the bishop because what he approves, is approved by God^{xiii}.

2.3. Boundaries of the bishop's authority

Due to the Eucharistic character of bishop's ministry, his authority is **limited to the local church**. Since the Church is the Body of Christ, only communities which celebrate the Eucharist can be called churches. The Eucharist can be celebrated only locally, and the Church physically incarnates only at the local level^{xiv}. At the same time due to the link between the bishop and the Eucharist, a community 'cannot be called a church,' without the bishop^{xv}. Thus, every local church needs a bishop. Each bishop, in turn, is attached to the community where he presides at the Eucharist and should never interfere in matters beyond the local jurisdiction^{xvi}.

Nowadays the localism of the bishop's authority is preserved in the rule of giving the Antimins to the church, not the priest. Obtaining the Antimins, which is the indication of the bishop's authority over local churches, authorizes celebration of the Liturgy during his absence.

Dmitry Ismagilov

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^{vii} Ign., *To the Philadelphians*, sal.

^{viii} Ign., *To the Smyrnaeans*, 7.

^{ix} Ign., *to the Philadelphians*, 4.

^x Ign., *to the Trallians*, 1.

^{xi} Romanides in that regard writes: 'St. Ignatius offers up the fact that the local [Eucharistic] unity of Christians in Christ ἐπί τοῦ αὐτοῦ [ἐπί τοῦ αὐτοῦ] is clearly and visibly imaged by unity in the person, or office, of the bishop'. *Vid.* Romanides, John S. 'The

Ecclesiology of St. Ignatius of Antioch.' *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 7, no. 1-2 (Sum 1961), p. 67.

^{xii} Ign., *to the Magnesians*, 13.

^{xiii} Ign., *To the Smyrnaeans*, 8.

^{xiv} *Vid.*, Romanides, 'The Ecclesiology of St. Ignatius of Antioch', p. 66.

^{xv} Ign., *to the Trallians*, 3.

^{xvi} *Vid.*, Romanides, 'The Ecclesiology of St. Ignatius of Antioch', p. 71-73.

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To be continued...

ATTENDING THE SERVICES AT CHURCH

To attend the in-Church services during October you have to sign up using this [online 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 allowed in the Church.

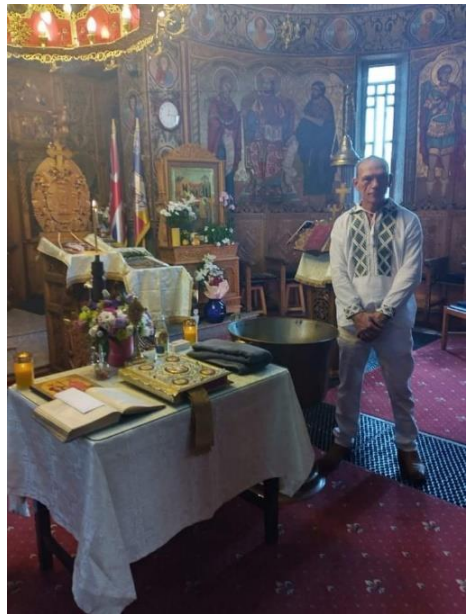
Most importantly, please **Do Not** come to the Church if you experience any of the main COVID symptoms, which are now: **headache, runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, loss of smell and/or taste, fever, and a new, continuous cough**. For the care, consideration and protection of our community, please also take a lateral flow test (LFT) before attending the church. If you test "positive" do not come to the Church and follow the government guidance. Please read [the list of Do's and Don't when in the Church](#) (available in English, Greek and Romanian).

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.

ORTHODOX NEWS FROM ROMANIA

Dear Father,

Sting has a beautiful song: "An Englishman in New York"... We have a joy, more than a simple song: an (Orthodox) Englishman in... Blejoi... Dressed in a very beautiful Romanian traditional folk shirt...



His name is Robert Clive Henry Carter, but he got a new Orthodox name by baptism on Sunday, September 12th: George... As a symbol of protector of England and both the fact that from

now on he is no more Anglican but Orthodox. He is a very good man, he is a poet, but works here as a driver for the moment... I will introduce him to the universe of Romanian language. In the present we speak English and I have to use an Orthodox English prayer book for him.

I miss you... Hope someday we would concelebrate again, here or in my beloved Lancaster... Why not, in the presence of Robert-George's Romanian family...

*Yours in Christ,
Fr Bogdan*

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 Martyrs of Syria

10th Oct: The 14 Holy Elders of Optina Monastery 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 Myrrhbearer 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. 2 nd	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 3 rd	09:45	Holy Liturgy
Tue. 5 th	18:30	Vespers for St Thomas*
Sat. 9 th	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 10 th	09:45	Holy Liturgy
Sat. 16 th	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 17 th	09:45	Holy Liturgy
Mon. 18 th	18:30	Vespers for St John of Kronstadt*
Sat. 23 rd	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 24 th	09:45	Holy Liturgy
Mon. 25 th	18:30	Vespers for St Dimitrios the Myrrh Streamer of Thessaloniki*
Wed. 27 th	18:30	Vespers for the Protection of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos*
Sat. 30 th	18:30	Great Vespers
Sun. 31 st	09:45	Holy Liturgy

* 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.

“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](#).



Top and bottom sketches are created at the Holy Monastery of "The Annunciation of the Theotokos" Chios, Greece, courtesy of Fr Theodosios Dendrinou, Ithaca, Greece.
The sketch of Christ by Photis Koutoglou was scanned from the Orthodox calendar of the *Apostoliki Diakonia* of the Church of Greece.