



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

***The Stavronian***

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*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*

## BRITISH ROOFS

*A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that He had come home. They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and He preached the word to them. Some men came, bringing to Him a paralysed man, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralysed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."*

*Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"*

*Immediately Jesus knew in His spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and He said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to this paralysed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So He said to the man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!" (Mark 2:1-12)*

The passage in the Scriptures about the four friends who brought a paralysed man to Jesus has always awakened mixed emotions in my heart. My British view of the world renders this particular Gospel passage hard to digest. The idea that you would try to bustle into somebody else's house uninvited, and when you fail to squeeze in, you climb on the roof, cut a whole and get in that way is frankly outrageous. Not even considering trespass and damage to property, which in the US would entitle the owner to actually shoot a man and in Britain would be worthy of police investigation, the insistence of these men goes against the most basic politeness rules which teach us to ask for things politely and to accept refusal resignedly and graciously.

I am clearly not of the same cut as the four friends. And how could I be? Having just paid a small fortune to have my roof fixed, I would not

take kindly at all to somebody cutting a whole in the said roof for any reason at all. I certainly wouldn't dream of doing so myself or of gatecrashing a party and I would wait patiently in a queue to see Jesus. If I couldn't get through, I would assume it wasn't meant to be or others needed to see Him more than me. I would say at the most "Excuse me! Do you think there might be room for us to squeeze in?" "No? Thank you. That's OK. We'll try another time".

I belong to a culture where the four friends could not have made it to Jesus. In this world, roofs are high and pointy, weather proof, doors are always locked front and back and houses generally have alarm systems and possibly video surveillance cameras. "An Englishman's home is his castle" is true in more than one way. It is a fortress which cannot be easily entered. No chance of getting in by lifting a tile like the four friends.

I have such difficulty picturing myself in any Gospel scenes, where people crowd around Jesus because pushing in front is so foreign to me. I have often felt very uncomfortable in churches where people rush to communion, just as children do in our church. With enthusiasm and gusto, above all with desire, but in doing so they push past others in their eagerness for God. Or watching scenes from pilgrimages or Paschal services where thousands of people push each other to reach the light quicker. Someone told me recently that if you want to get a sense of what the crowds must have been like in Jesus' time, you ought to go to Appleby, one of the largest gipsy and travellers' fair, which takes place every year over a few days in Cumbria. Crowds eating, washing, arguing, buying, selling together outdoors, pushing each other, bringing their cattle to the priest to be blessed and their children to be baptised. At the other end, polite society can usually offer heavily bolted doors, privacy, suspicion, distance and reserve.

I am certainly not one of the four friends, but upon reflection, I am glad to say I do know people like the four friends --- strong, determined, undeterred and selfless. People who would knock again and again until a door opened, people who would rush to the Lord with enthusiasm and simplicity of heart, men and women who would pray relentlessly until their prayer was granted, people who would do anything for a friend, even cut a hole in the roof. And what this Gospel

passage tells us first of all is that the Lord wants us to be brave and relentless in our efforts to reach Him, have complete faith in His power to heal us. But most of all, He wants us to bring our friends to Him, to make sacrifices and tire ourselves for the good of others. The sins of the paralytic man are forgiven because of the faith and efforts of his friends: “*He saw their faith*”.

As to the paralytic himself, he is rewarded for putting his faith in his friends, with forgiveness of sins and healing of mind and body. But having been granted this gift of health and freedom, he is then asked to do something himself. He cannot be carried by friends or by Jesus any more. He has been freed from the paralysis of sin in order for him to pick up his bed and walk. He has to act for himself and carry his bed, as we are asked to carry our cross. The daily struggles and difficulties have to be faced by the healed man and by all of us who have received the healing sacrament of forgiveness in confession. Others have brought us to Christ, who has freed us from our sins. In our turn we have to pick up our bed and walk again like the paralytic and bring others to Christ to be healed like the four friends.

I may be very far removed from the four friends by culture, nature and habits, but the Lord is asking me and all of us to be like them in perseverance, faith and selflessness.

*Martha and Mary*

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

### Part II

In the 1<sup>st</sup> Part of the essay, I spoke about the view on the essence Bishop’s ministry according to St. Ignatius of Antioch. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> part, I compare his view with that of another early Church father – St. Irenaeus of Lyon. I then argue that the two views complement each other, and together provide a holistic interpretation of the role of the bishop in the Orthodox church.

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<sup>i</sup> *Irn., Against the Heresies, IV, xxxiii, 8.*

### 3. *Bishop’s ministry according to St. Irenaeus*

This section outlines St. Irenaeus’ views on the Bishop’s ministry, which, according to him, has a **teaching** character. Its essence is in preserving and teaching the rule of faith, given by the Apostles. The truthfulness of the Orthodox bishops is guaranteed by the gift of grace, which emanates from the apostolic succession.

#### 3.1. *Bishop, as a teacher of the Church.*

St. Irenaeus concisely expresses the essence of the Bishop’s ministry in this way:

True knowledge is the doctrine of the apostles, and the ancient constitution of the Church throughout all the world, and the distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ according to the succession of the bishops, by which they have handed down that Church which exists in every place, and has come even unto us, being guarded and preserved, without any forging of Scriptures, by a very complete system of doctrine.<sup>i</sup>

The bishop is entrusted to preserve and teach the apostolic rule of faith to the faithful. By emphasizing the teaching aspect of the Bishop’s ministry, St. Irenaeus does not deny its Eucharistic one. Rather the former is built upon the latter and complements it: ‘Our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion.’ But, as there is no Church without Eucharist, there is also no Eucharist without the Church. In other words, according to St. Irenaeus, unity in faith is the precondition of the Eucharist<sup>ii</sup>. Thus, teaching and preserving Orthodoxy is the necessary task of the Church.

#### 3.2. *The apostolic grounds of the Bishop’s ministry*

The paramount importance of the *Orthotomon* character of Bishop’s ministry renders it a necessity to establish the legitimate grounds of his authority. St. Irenaeus argues that Orthodox Bishops trace their succession to the Apostles:

Wherefore it is incumbent to obey the

<sup>ii</sup> *Irn., IV, xviii, 4-5.*

presbyters<sup>iii</sup> who are in the Church, - those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles; those who together with the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father<sup>iv</sup>

Thus, the unbroken line of apostolic succession, which endows a Bishop with the gift of grace, guarantees his correct knowledge of faith. True apostolic Bishops provide the safeguard against error and from the wrong interpretation of the Scripture.

The Bishop's teaching ministry has been so significant, that to this day it is reflected in the order of the Divine Liturgy. During the intercessions at the end of the Anaphora the deacon or priest commemorates the reigning Bishop asking God to grant him the ability of 'rightly teaching the word of Your [His] truth.'

### 3.3. *The Boundaries of Bishop's authority*

The Bishop's authority is **limited to the local church** where he inherits the throne. St. Irenaeus writes:

It is within the power of all, therefore, in every Church [sic.], who may wish to see the truth, to contemplate clearly the tradition of the apostles manifested throughout the whole world; and we are in a position to reckon up those who were by the apostles instituted bishops in the Churches, and [to demonstrate] the succession of these men to our own times<sup>v</sup>.

Despite its Apostolic grounds, the episcopal ministry is not identical to the Apostolic one, so are their ranges of authority. On the one hand, Apostles are supposed to travel around the world proclaiming the Gospel. On the other hand, Bishops, placed by Apostles at the local churches, should protect and teach the rule of apostolic faith only in those churches. Due to the inseparable link between the Bishop and the local church, his authority is limited to that church. Moreover, the very right of the apostolic succession belongs to

<sup>iii</sup> Note that there should be no confusion about the word "presbyters" in this quote. Ware writes: 'By "presbyters", as the context shows, Irenaeus means "bishops" - an interesting survival of the primitive New Testament usage'. See Ware, Kallistos. "Patterns of Episcopacy in the Early Church and Today: An Orthodox View", in (ed.) Moore P. *Bishops: But what kind?* (London: SPCK, 1982).

the local church but not personally to the Bishop<sup>vi</sup>.

## 4. *Analyzing the differences between the views of St. Ignatius and St. Irenaeus.*

This section begins by outlining the differences between the views of St. Ignatius and St. Irenaeus on the Bishop's ministry. It then argues using the historical background that these differences are not essential.

### 4.1. *Differences*

The independent analysis of St. Ignatius' and St. Irenaeus' views on the Bishop's ministry reveals the following differences:

- 1) **They emphasize different aspects of the Bishop's ministry.** St. Ignatius concentrates on the **Eucharistic and Christocentric** character of the bishop's ministry, while St. Irenaeus writes about the **Teaching** one, yet unreservedly accepting St. Ignatius' doctrine.
- 2) **They emphasize different sources of the Bishop's authority.** For St. Ignatius, it is the fact that the Bishop presides at the Eucharist, which makes him a living image of Christ, and his orders the God's orders. According to St. Irenaeus, a Bishop's authority comes from the unbroken line of apostolic succession, which endows them with the gift of grace thus ensuring the righteousness of their orders and teachings.

### 4.2. *Historical explanation for the differences*

**Putting the above differences into the historical context reveals that they are mutually exclusive but complimentary.** At the times of St. Ignatius, the main concern of the local churches was with ensuring the regularity and correctness of serving the Eucharist. This need

<sup>iv</sup> *Irn., Against the Heresies*, IV, xxvi, 2.

<sup>v</sup> *Irn.*, III, iii, 1.

<sup>vi</sup> Ware in that regard writes: 'There can be no true succession of persons that is not mediated through the community'. *Vid.* Ware, Kallistos. "Patterns of Episcopacy in the Early Church and Today: An Orthodox View", p. 13.

explains why St. Ignatius lays such an emphasis on the Eucharistic and Christocentric character of the Bishop's ministry. In his letters, he systematizes Soteriological aspects of the rule of faith and shows how they are related to the correct order of the Eucharist. He makes concise and clear for everyone the importance of following this order and obeying Bishops.

At the times of St. Irenaeus, the primary concern was with preserving Orthodoxy, which came under threat due to the death of the apostles and the growth of the ecclesial heresies. Heretical bishops inevitably assumed considerable authority in the eyes of their followers, thereby further increasing the number of apostates. Thus, the need to entrust somebody with the task of teaching Orthodoxy made St. Irenaeus emphasizing the teaching aspect of the Bishop's ministry, yet without denying or diminishing its Eucharistic and Christocentric one. Apart from presiding at the Eucharist, Bishops, in the eyes of their flock, also had to become authoritative teachers and custodians of the Orthodoxy.

The above explains why St. Ignatius and St. Irenaeus emphasized different aspects of the Bishop's authority. The ecclesial character of heresies at the times of St. Irenaeus made it necessary to distinguish between the "true" and "false" bishops. Visibly linking orthodox bishops to the apostles, St. Irenaeus showed the faithful which teachers they should uphold. However, since St. Irenaeus accepts the Eucharistic and Christocentric character of the Bishop's ministry, for him the ultimate source of the Bishop's authority abides in Christ.

### 5. Conclusion: complementarity between the views.

The differences between the views of St. Ignatius and St. Irenaeus on the bishop's ministry are complimentary. Each of them emphasizes a particular aspect of a Bishop's ministry due to the circumstances of the respective historical moment. Moreover, the fact that St. Irenaeus adds his views to those of St. Ignatius, without amending them, points to the complementarity between the two. This established complementarity finds its

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<sup>vii</sup> Zizioulas in that regard writes: 'The catholicity of the Church now [third century] began clearly to take shape as an expression of that Church which in the person of her own Bishop, who preserved the historical and charismatic continuity of her being,

confirmation in the fact that both views contributed to the development of the pre-Nicene notion of the "Catholic Church."<sup>vii</sup>

Dmitry Ismagilov

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## ATTENDING THE SERVICES AT CHURCH

To attend the in-Church services during November 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

combined at once right liturgical life and right faith'. *Vid. Zizioulas, Eucharist, Bishop, Church.*, p. 134.

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.

## NAMES OF DEPARTED LOVED ONES TO BE REMEMBERED THIS MONTH

Nov. 11: *Eleonora*  
Nov. 12: *Sir John Tavener*  
Nov. 29: *Ioanna*

### 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> Nov:* Sts Cosmas and Damian, the Holy Unmercenarys
- 8<sup>th</sup> Nov:* Synaxis of Archangel Michael and Gabriel and the other Bodiless Powers
- 9<sup>th</sup> Nov:* St. Nectarios the Wonderworker, Metropolitan of Pentapolis
- 10<sup>th</sup> Nov:* St. Arsenius of Cappadocia
- 11<sup>th</sup> Nov:* St. Martin of Tours (†397)
- 13<sup>th</sup> Nov:* St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople
- 14<sup>th</sup> Nov:* St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica
- 15<sup>th</sup> Nov:* **Beginning of the Nativity fast**
- 16<sup>th</sup> Nov:* Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew
- 17<sup>th</sup> Nov:* St. Hilda, Abbess of Whitby (†680)
- 21<sup>st</sup> Nov:* The Entry of our Most-Holy Lady the Theotokos into the Temple
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov:* St. Alexander Nevsky
- 25<sup>th</sup> Nov:* Great Martyr Catherine of Alexandria
- 30<sup>th</sup> Nov:* Holy Apostle Andrew the First-called

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)



*The Entry of our Most-Holy Lady the Theotokos into the Temple (image: [pravoslavie.ru](http://pravoslavie.ru))*

## Services at St Martin's in November

Sat. 6 <sup>th</sup>	18:30	Great Vespers*
Sun. 7 <sup>th</sup>	09:45	Holy Liturgy
Mon. 8 <sup>th</sup>	18:30	Vespers for St Nektarios*
Sat. 10 <sup>th</sup>	18:30	Vespers for St Martin of Tours the Merciful
Sat. 13 <sup>th</sup>	18:30	Great Vespers*
Sun. 14 <sup>th</sup>	09:45	Holy Liturgy for St Philip Apostle
Mon. 15 <sup>th</sup>	18:30	Vespers for St Matthew Apostle and Evangelist*. <b>Beginning of the Nativity Fast</b>
Sat. 20 <sup>th</sup>	18:30	Great Vespers for the Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple*
Sun. 21 <sup>st</sup>	09:45	Holy Liturgy for the Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple
Wed. 24 <sup>th</sup>	18:30	Vespers for St Catherine of Alexandria*
Sat. 27 <sup>th</sup>	18:30	Great Vespers*
Sun. 28 <sup>th</sup>	09:45	Holy Liturgy
Mon. 29 <sup>th</sup>	18:30	Vespers for St Andrew the First called*

\* Services online. 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/>. 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](#).

