

**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*

# PENTECOST – THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

## The Holy Spirit - Born by the power of God

St. Paul called this Spirit the Spirit of adoption and the Spirit of grace, inasmuch as in the waters of the baptismal font we are born again of water and the Spirit, and are adopted as [God's] children. In the same way, the Lord said to Nicodemus: 'Unless people are born of water and of the Spirit, they cannot enter into the kingdom of God'.

So, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of adoption and the Spirit of grace, since grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, for those who have been born by the power of God.

Moreover, the Spirit is called the Comforter, because He's also our advocate with the Father. And not only is He with the Father, but He's always with us, too, as a gift.

*St John Chrysostom*

## The Holy Spirit -- Becoming what we are!

The ministry of the Holy Spirit extends to each member of the Body of Christ not only when they are in Church, but also at home and at work throughout the day and night. We are to be full of the Holy Spirit throughout our lives.

Metropolitan Kallistos and others use the phrase "becoming what we are". What then are we? We are children of God. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit. We are partakers of divine grace. We are (being) saved. In the Homilies of St. Macarius we are told, "*Each of you has been anointed with heavenly Chrism, and has become a Christ by grace; each is a king and prophet of the holy mysteries*".

But the "becoming" is much harder. Metropolitan Kallistos writes: "*As pilgrims on the Way, then, it is our purpose to advance from the stage where the grace of the Spirit is present and active within us in a hidden way, to the point of conscious awareness when we know the Spirit's power openly, directly, with the full perception of our heart ... the Pentecostal spark of the Spirit, existing in each one of us from Baptism is to be kindled into a living flame. We are to become what we are*".

*Archpriest Michael Harper of Blessed Memory*



*Pentecost Icon with Mary at the centre, 17<sup>th</sup> Century  
(image [source](#))*

## THE KING'S SPEECH; THE QUEEN' ACTIONS

This month we celebrate the Queen's Jubilee -- seventy years on the throne! When asked about her greatest influence, she says that she owes so much to her father, the late King George VI.

"The King's Speech" is a film about our Queen's father who fought to overcome a speech impediment -- a stutter which was corrected with the help of a speech therapist. After Edward VIII abdicated, his brother George VI had to make a speech to the nation. George VI was not the obvious choice as King he was shy, yet he was thrust on to the world stage at the most difficult time at the prelude to the Second World War.

There are certain ironies that perhaps we should note here:

- Here was a man who did not want or expect to be a king who became King.
- Here was a man who had such difficulty in speaking but out of necessity and with great resolve overcame it in order to speak to the nation on the radio which was reaching into the homes of most of the population.

- Here was a shy man who became strong in order to raise the morale of the British people in the darkest of days.

What we say and how we speak says a lot about our character. It tells the other person where we come from if we have an accent, it tells someone if we are well mannered, polite or rude, arrogant or ignorant.

In my teaching career I found that certain teachers left their mark for good on the pupils that they have taught. Henry Brooks Adams the Victorian American educationalist once said “*A teacher affects eternity for he never knows where his influence stops.*” I can think of an English teacher when I first started teaching in Devon. You could always tell who had been taught by him in the first year of Grammar School because in addition to English grammar, he taught them how to write and how to speak English, how to construct sentences and learn the different parts of speech. Throughout the school his pupils took a pride in their writing and speaking, having inherited the gift of beautiful *copper plate* – cursive hand writing and correct pronunciation.

Another teacher I have in mind was a boarding master. One could tell who had been under his tutelage because his pupils would always greet you with “Good morning sir!” if they passed you in the street. In class they would **always** say “please” and “thank you,” the prologue and epilogue to any lesson!

Speech communicates our most profound scientific theories and deepest emotions. Our voice tells so much about our character and nature to the other person. There are times when we find it difficult to express something. Often when we read the words and actions of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are brought to tears.

The spoken word is important because it is powerful -- through words we make things happen -- they put expression to our ideas, our concepts; it is, we are told, how God created the universe. He spoke and things came into being. God said “let there be light and there was light.” St Paul writes, “even if I have the power to speak in the tongues of men and of angels but have not love I am like a clanging symbol”. Unless words are accompanied by loving actions we are hypocrites.

So, it was especially heart-warming when a former pupil who was visiting Lancaster asked if we could meet up for a coffee. We did and I asked him about his life’s journey since leaving school

in 2003. I was truly humbled when he said that he had come to say thank you to me for teaching him all those years ago.

King George was a compassionate and loving family man whose sense of duty and service enabled him to speak. His daughter, our Queen, inherited her father’s character and has acted upon his words and example. “The Word became flesh” as we read in John’s Gospel. God does not just speak -- when He speaks he acts. On one occasion Jesus said to the people, “I am the light of the world” but he didn’t just say this, he then healed a blind man. For those who have an integrity of spirit, words are always followed by actions.

*Fr Jonathan*

## ON GARDENING AND HOUSEHOLD CHORES

“Why not learn to enjoy the little things -- there are so many of them”.

*(St John Chrysostom)*

I have come to look upon everyday small practical matters as a small reflection here on earth of greater spiritual truths. The way I approach and deal with everyday small matters is definitely a reflection of my spiritual life, marked by inconsistencies and good intentions thwarted by weakness. I started paying attention to the small details of my humdrum existence and found great spiritual wisdom in them. We are told in Zechariah 4:10 not “*to despise the day of small things*”.

A wise father once told me: “When you weed in the garden, think about your soul. Weeds are like sins. They start small and then grow unexpectedly fast and take over your soul if you do not tend the garden regularly.” I have never forgotten these words pronounced a long time ago. Every time I weed, I think of my sins. The garden has become the mirror of my soul, created for beauty and all things good, but too often overrun by weeds which do not allow the flowers to grow.

There are also the other gardener’s enemies. When weeded and kept tidy, pests start to enjoy the fruit of our labour: ants, slugs and snails, rabbits and rats. May and June are for me the

months of discouragement. So much work has gone in to prepare for the crop, but during these months this start to go wrong: late frosts, pests, disease. I find it hard to keep optimistic about the outcome of the crops, to keep going, when the adversaries are so numerous and so powerful. Gardeners and people working in agriculture know that you have to be “philosophical” about plants: some will grow and some will not.

Appearances can be deceptive as well. Beautiful looking plants can be destroyed in one night by winds or frost. I have been known to cry like a baby over a spoilt cucumber crop.

Acceptance is a very hard lesson to learn both in practical matters like gardening and spiritually. This does not mean we ought to be resigned, but accept, joyfully if possible, God’s will. Acceptance begins with small matters like the death of cucumbers. Whatever the reason, we must accept this event as the will of God, since nothing happens without His will. Seeing every success as a gift and not something that is due to us and every loss as God’s will is the beginning of freedom. We will find that this school of acceptance without grumbling helps us to progress spiritually to accepting greater losses until we can finally and fully accept the cross itself joyfully and freely.

Another valuable garden lesson is hope. When we plant a seed, the journey to the fruit is incredibly long. So many things can go wrong and so often they do go wrong, but we must hope and keep pedalling. Otherwise, if we stop hoping and stop working, all will be lost. Hope is in effect trust in God’s mercy and in the way He has ordained things. Despite any opposition, we must trust and act. How many times in our spiritual life, a good deed is met with ungratefulness, a good endeavour with failure or a good intention followed by a terrible sinful fall in our life? Whatever the reason for this, whether it be a temptation from the evil one to discourage our good intentions or a trial sent by God to keep us humble or simply God’s unfathomable will, we must, just like the gardener, continue to tend to our good intention and pray over it for fruitfulness.

Patience is the third and maybe most important lesson of the garden. You cannot rush nature. You ought not rush it. You must do your duty and wait for the right time and season when our Lord decides to bestow the fruit. The fruit will come not sooner and not later than the right time.

Like a spoilt child, I want to shout sometimes “I have waited long enough. I want it now!” but we must understand that our forceful will can only spoil everything and all things will flower and fruit at the appointed time.

Moving into the house from the garden, piles of dirty dishes await me. Washing dishes has become, like gardening, a matter of spiritual wisdom since Father Jonathan spoke to me about it. Once, when I was despairing about repeating the same sins and always coming to confession carrying the same burden, father told me that just because we will eat from the same dishes again and get them dirty again, it doesn’t mean that we stop washing them. I find washing dishes a little less irksome since then. Thinking of my soul and cleaning every plate again and again so I may “eat the heavenly bread out of clean plates”.

If we come to look upon everyday life as a school of Christian virtue, we start to appreciate the small monotonous everyday gestures. *“True mysticism is to discover the extraordinary in the ordinary.”* (Olivier Clement)

Every act of every day can become an act of praise if performed with love and prayer.

*“Everywhere you may find yourself, you can set up an altar to God in your mind by means of prayer.”* (St John Chrysostom)

Martha and Mary

## ATTENDING THE SERVICES AT CHURCH

Dear brothers and sisters,

COVID pandemic is in retreat in the UK. Glory to God for His mercy! From the 27th of January 2022, the Government in England scraps almost all mandatory COVID measures, except for self-isolation rules for the infected. In line with these two facts, we relax the COVID rules in our church too. **Most importantly, there is no more cap on the attendance numbers, and you DO NOT have to register for attendance anymore.** Please come to the church whenever there is a service. There is no need to notify us of your attendance in advance or provide your contact details for the NHS Test & Trace.

COVID may be retreating, but there are still many cases across the UK and in the North West of England in particular. **Therefore, the following anti-COVID measures remain in our church:**

1. We **strongly encourage you to take a lateral flow test (LFT)** before attending the church. It is an easy way to ensure you are not ill and to protect the other faithful, some of whom are medically vulnerable. If you test “positive”, do not come to the church and follow the [government guidance](#) instead.
2. We **strongly encourage you to keep on wearing masks while in the church**, unless you are medically exempt. The wearing of masks in confined places is highly recommended by medical experts and in line with government guidance.
3. Windows **are to remain open at all times** during services in the Church to improve air-flow in line with the expert and government guidance.

## THANKSGIVING OF FAITH AND PRAYER

During the pandemic, we continue the standard 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.

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

Jun. 5: *Vasileios*

Jun. 22: *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

**2<sup>nd</sup> June: Holy Ascension**

**5<sup>th</sup> June:** Hieromartyr Boniface of Crediton, Archbishop of Mainz († 754). Fathers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Council

**9<sup>th</sup> June:** St. Columba of Iona, Enlightener of Scotland († 597)

**12<sup>th</sup> June: Holy Pentecost**

**13<sup>th</sup> June:** Monday of the Holy Spirit

**16<sup>th</sup> June:** St Tychon the Wonderworker, Bishop of Amathus († 425)

**17<sup>th</sup> June:** St. Botolph, Abbot of the Monastery of Ikanhoe († 680)

**19<sup>th</sup> June:** The Sunday of All Saints. Thaddeus (Jude) the Apostle and Brother of Our Lord († 80)

**22<sup>nd</sup> June:** St. Alban, Protomartyr of Britain († 304)

**24<sup>th</sup> June:** Nativity of the Forerunner and Baptist John

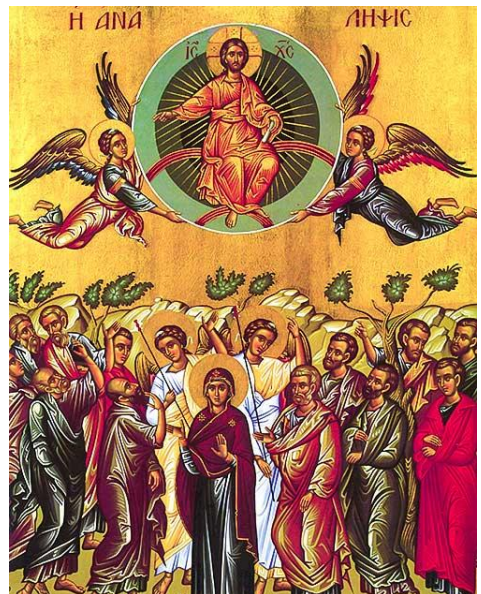
**26<sup>th</sup> June:** Appearance of the Icon of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos of Tikhvin

**29<sup>th</sup> June:** Peter and Paul, the Holy Apostles

**30<sup>th</sup> June:** Synaxis of the Twelve Holy Apostles

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)



*Holy Ascension (image [source](#))*





## Services at St Martin's in June

Sat. 4 <sup>th</sup>	16:00	Great Vespers
Sun. 5 <sup>th</sup>	09:45	Holy Liturgy
Sat. 11 <sup>th</sup>	16:00	Great Vespers
Sun. 12 <sup>th</sup>	09:45	Holy Liturgy
Sat. 18 <sup>th</sup>	16:00	Great Vespers
Sun. 19 <sup>th</sup>	09:45	Holy Liturgy
Sat. 25 <sup>th</sup>	16:00	Great Vespers
Sun. 26 <sup>th</sup>	09:45	Holy Liturgy

*“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](#).

