



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

The Stavronian

Monthly magazine and newsletter published by the Holy Cross Synodia



*Ἐπιθρονος Χριστός, Ζωοδότης.
(Φ. Κόττογλου, 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

THE DIVINE THEOPHANY

We sink in the sea of His sovereign will
Who calmed the lake in words “*Be still!*”
Ineffable love of our Lord please keep
Those who in Your promise sleep.

***Christ baptised for our salvation
Brings good news to every nation***

The Word became man of a Virgin maid
Sin of fallen Adam paid
Baptised by John, a man of earth
Blessed Jordan for our rebirth

***Christ baptised for our salvation
Brings good news to every nation***

Voice of the Father from above
the Holy Spirit as a dove
descends on Christ, blessed Trinity
At the feast of Theophany

***Christ baptised for our salvation
Brings good news to every nation***

Submerged in waters by His grace
We rise once more with shining face
To stand before the King of glory
in His recreation story

***Christ baptised for our salvation
Brings good news to every nation***

Fr Jonathan

FROM THE CHAMBER TO THE TEMPLE

As I was sitting at the dinner table this Christmas, surrounded by family, everybody enjoying their food and all talking at once, I realised how blessed I am to have this hubbub of voices around me. All these people are united by some genetic bond, but most importantly by bonds of love, despite the squabble over the last piece of cake and over the fact that one person received more presents than



Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Image taken from oca.org

the other. The sight of this togetherness is very joyous, but I also became acutely aware of the necessity of spending time with each person individually to exchange some intimate thoughts to hear their secret sadness and their struggles. These are hard to share in a community.

I found this to be a very simplistic parallel to the delicate balance of our spiritual life. Time together in church spent in communal prayer, time spent together with our brothers and sisters in helping, encouraging each other or just rejoicing together is an essential part of being a Christian. “*Where two or three are gathered in My name, I am there in the midst of them.*” (Matthew 18:20) There is nothing a parent loves more than to see his children love one another. Our Father in heaven wants us to be one in spirit.

Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.” (Philippians 2:2)

Time spent in church in the community is an opportunity to show the love of Christ towards

our brothers and sisters and to forget our own narrow concerns but pray and worship with one mind and one mouth for the needs of the community and the world.

“Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another; according to Christ-Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 15:6)

Nevertheless, time spent together with our Father in private prayer in our room is equally essential for our soul. These two forms of worship are complementary.

“When you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly” (Matthew 6:6)

Without time spent with our Father in intimacy, we cannot worship in the community because we have no love to offer if we have not connected to the Source of love and grace. What can we offer our brothers and sisters if we are empty ourselves?

In the very beautiful words of Fr Serafim of Mull Monastery,

“Prayer is by definition openness to God and His creation. Even more, prayer is not reduced to words; it is a real relationship, and a relationship always changes, always transforms. People who are afraid to love, people who are afraid to suffer, people who run away from the world -- they will never know prayer; because prayer is precisely love, prayer is precisely suffering, prayer makes you one with this crumbling, suffering world.”

Being a Christian is being in a living, personal and intimate relationship with God and at the same time being in a relationship of love with all people in our community, in the world and with all creation.

“The beginning, the content and the end of prayer is love.” (Fr Serafim)

Martha and Mary

BACK TO THE FUTURE

In the 1980's there was a very successful trilogy of science fiction comedy films produced by Steven Spielberg and starring Michael J. Fox having the title *Back to the Future*. The series deals with time travel and whether it is possible to change or repair history whilst being able to return to the present or see the future.

At the beginning of the New Calendar Year we often take stock of the past year and make New Year resolutions. We ask ourselves “How can we change the past and be better?” The Gospel lesson for the beginning of the New Year is designated by the Church to answer that precise question. Matthew 4:12-17:

¹⁷From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

The Greek language has two words for time: *chronos* (ordinary time) and *kairos* (God's moment or opportunity); *chronos* can drag or go quickly yet we measure it by the clock. *Kairos* is outside time yet it is both transcendent and immanent. Repentance is a change of mind, a transformation. It is like the double headed eagle of Byzantium -- with one head facing the past with repentance -- the other facing the future with faith. It is the mystery of Confession that is offered by the Church that enables us to erase our sins and grow in the Holy Spirit.

In order to move forward we have to think back and repent of those things in which we have offended God and our neighbour. A new year can mean a new life if we truly repent -- it is not merely the negative “sorry” with all the regrets, remorse and reflections on wasted opportunity, “*if only I could live my life over again*”; it is the positive opportunity to live fully in the present moment. With God we are **victors** able to change the direction of our life and we can find the calmness, peace and strength to face all that the New Year will bring -- without him we are **victims** drifting through the year subject to the vicissitudes of circumstance and change.

Progress as the world understands it is about economic development, but this is not how the Church understands progress. C.S. Lewis wrote: “*We all want progress. But progress means getting to the place where you want to be. And if you*

have taken the wrong turning, then to go forward does not get you any nearer. If you are on the wrong road, progress means doing an about turn and walking back to the right road; and in that case the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive man. There is nothing progressive about being pigheaded and refusing to admit a mistake. And I think that if you look at the present state of the world, it is pretty plain that humanity has been making some big mistakes. We are on the wrong road. And if that is so, we must go back. Going back is the quickest way on." ("Mere Christianity", C.S. Lewis)

As to whether history can be changed or re-written, this is no science-fiction for therein is the truth and the purpose of the Incarnation. God the Son entered into the arena of history, marred by ancestral sin, in order to restore our communion with the Father who bestows to us the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁶For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Back to the future, with Christ!! Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near!!

Fr. Jonathan

SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Dear brothers and sisters, the wearing of masks is encouraged in Church but is not compulsory.

Safeguarding

To ensure our church is a safe place of worship and fellowship, we implement the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Policy, which may be found [here](#).

Alexandra McCafferty is the Parish Safeguarding Representative. She assists the parish priest with the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy. She is the official point of contact for anyone who needs to report concerns about safeguarding issues. You can contact Alexandra by email at [alexispet\[at\]yahoo.com](mailto:alexispet[at]yahoo.com).



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

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

Sun. 1 st	09:45	Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great. Circumcision of the Lord
Fri. 6 th	18:30	Theophany. Great Blessing of the Waters⁺
Sat. 7 th	16:00	Great Vespers
Sun. 8 th	09:45	Divine Liturgy. Sunday after Theophany
Sat. 14 th	16:00	Great Vespers
Sun. 15 th	09:45	Divine Liturgy. Sunday of the Blind Man
Sat. 21 st	16:00	Great Vespers
Sun. 22 nd	09:45	Divine Liturgy. Sunday of Zacchaeus
Sat. 28 th	16:00	Great Vespers
Sun. 29 th	09:45	Divine Liturgy. Sunday of the Canaanite Woman

In case a service takes place online, please join this [Skype group](#) to watch or participate. The live services are also broadcasted simultaneously in the Church's [Facebook group](#).

⁺Please, bring bottles to take Agiasmos Holy Water home. See or contact Fr Jonathan for Home blessing.

“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

www.orthodox-lancaster.org.uk

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](#).

