



**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*

# VISIT OF OUR METROPOLITAN

Dear Friends in Christ,

Sayedna give the blessing! May God bless you all dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

His Eminence Metropolitan Silouan will visit our Parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> -- Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> of February. God willing, he will attend Great Vespers and preside at the Hierarchical Liturgy on Sunday morning. I understand that, sadly, some of you will be away that weekend but this is the only time he is free. Please put these dates in your diary for this most important event in the life of our Parish.

Below is the programme of the visit which Sayedna has blessed:

## Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> February

ETA

- 14.30. Arrive at Lancaster House Hotel
- 15. 45 Memorial in Church for Maria's parent.
- 16.00 Great Vespers followed by finger buffet and meet the faithful in Church.
- 18.00 Return to Hotel for rest
- 20.00 Evening meal with Omar and Maha

## Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February

- 09.45 Hierarchical Holy Liturgy
- 11.30 Meet the children and parents
- 12.00 Light lunch (finger buffet)
- 13.00 Depart for London

Please make every effort to attend on Saturday as he wishes to meet the faithful after Great Vespers. He may not have so much time on Sunday after the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy as he has to return to London.

Please invite your family and friends to the services so that this Episcopal Visit is a blessing for many.

*Love and prayers,  
Ev Χριστώ*

*Fr. Jonathan*

## Pastoral Visit of His Eminence Metropolitan Silouan

to the Parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross in Lancaster

When: Saturday and Sunday, 4-5<sup>th</sup> of February

Where: Saint Martins Church Centre, 3 Altham Rd, Morecambe LA4 4UG

### Program

#### Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> of February

**15.30:** Meeting of His Eminence at our Church  
**15.45:** Memorial service for Maria's parents  
**16.00:** Great Vespers, followed by a light meal at the church and meetings of His Eminence with the faithful

#### Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> of February

**09.45:** Hierarchical Divine Liturgy  
**11.30:** His Eminence meets the children and parents  
**12.00:** Light lunch  
**13.00:** His Eminence departs for London



## DESPAIR VS JOY

Why are you so sad oh my soul  
Why still don't you know which way to go?  
Sadness, confusion, despair one might see  
abundance of selfishness and the egotistic ME.  
Haven't you taught me to speak to Thee?  
I close my windows, pull the curtains  
And yet You shout of joy to me  
Which through my hardened heart  
Is difficult to see.  
I am alone in my darkness, unwilling, asleep,  
But You don't give up on me  
And bring the light to my soul,  
That is so hard to find today.  
The abundance of love You pour out on me  
Giving me hope endlessly.  
You bring me the courage I lack  
And the perseverance I ought to have.  
Your peace surrounds me  
When battles and struggles confine me.  
I thank Thee for the everyday showering of  
Grace upon me.

*Martha and Mary*

## A 30 YEARS JOURNEY INTO THE ORTHODOXY

2022 is the end of an era, 30 years after some of us in 1992 began the journey into the Orthodox Church, this is the 30th anniversary of a spiritual journey from PTO (Pilgrimage to Orthodoxy) to the Deanery in 1995 and to the Archdiocese as it is today in the British Isles and Ireland.



*Photo from left to right:* Fr Geoffrey Neal, Fr Alexander Haig, Mr Nicholas Chapman, Fr Jonathan Hemmings, Fr Kosmas Wittwer, Fr John Nield, Fr Michael Harper, H.B. Patriarch Ignatios IV, Fr David Sennitt, H.G. Bishop Gabriel (Saliby), me! (Fr Gregory Hallam), Fr Chrysostom MacDonnell, Fr Samuel Carter, obscured face at rear Fr Michael Keiser, Fr Tony Clements, Fr Ignatios Bacon, Fr John Read. (I stand to be corrected if I have any of these wrong). Of this group only 5 of us remain today in this Archdiocese of 30 clergy.

Although our Antiochian Archdiocese has existed (by decree of the Holy Synod) since October 2013, our Metropolitan did not arrive here, after his consecration in 2015, until February 2016. Since then the Archdiocese achieved charitable status in 2017, but with the "old" Deanery charity running in parallel during an extended period of transition.

2021 saw the Metropolitan receive Indefinite Leave to Remain residency status, which was a key step in our journey together as an

Archdiocesan family with our father-in-God and Archpastor, Silouan, (may the Lord grant him many years!) This year, 2022, will probably see, subject to Sayedna's timing and blessing, the closure of the Deanery charity and the transfer of its assets to the Archdiocese.

In the next chapter of the Church here we will doubtless be taking a fresh look at our structures to make sure that these best serve the pastoral needs of the people of God, and the mission of the Church in this Archdiocese to ALL the peoples of these Isles.

For those of us, including me, (photo centre back row with my arm in a sling!), who met with the then Patriarch His Beatitude Ignatios IV and his Vicar, His Grace Bishop, Gabriel in Paris (both, Memory Eternal!), this has been a long, sometimes challenging, but always hugely rewarding and blessed journey. Along the way we have also been served as a Metropolitan in Europe and before the creation of the Archdiocese by John, now His Beatitude the current Patriarch of Antioch and all the East.

Antioch, we believe, has shown what can be achieved by the grace of God when holy people of vision put their shoulders to the wheel, serve and evangelise! Glory be to God!

*Fr Gregory Hallam*

## MY LORD, MY REFUGE AND MY HOPE

*I will love You, O Lord, my strength.*

*The Lord is my foundation, my refuge, my deliverer;*

*My God is my helper; on Him I will hope*

*My champion, the horn of my salvation, and my protector. (Psalm 17)*

As Christians we find in our God the ultimate freedom, the relief from sorrow, the safety of a child in a parent's arms. If we allow ourselves to be wholly dependent on God, if we trust Him to do what is best for us, we become light and care

free. No circumstances can get in the way of our liberation and joy: poverty, persecution, illness, emotional distress, incarceration. When we find ourselves in extreme and desperate situations, we turn to God and place ourselves in His power and care. Sadly, more often than not, in our daily lives, when we are not in danger or distress, we do not look to our Maker for counsel, but place our trust in the passing comforts and securities of this life. We find our safety and stability in beautiful homes, remunerative jobs, savings accounts, in our social circle, holidays and entertainments of all sorts. We forget that all things are but passing including our lives, we forget that all of us are exiles in this land, exiles from Heaven, whence we shall hopefully return after our wanderings.

Our great God in His infinite wisdom has allowed afflictions and temptations to come our way so we may not entirely forget Him, so we may call upon Him again and again to rescue us from our predicaments.

*The Lord is also a refuge for the poor man,  
A helper in seasons of affliction;  
And let those who know Your name put their  
hope in You;  
For You, O Lord, do not forsake those who  
seek you. (Psalm 9)*

When all else fails and our whole world is crumbling around us, when there is nowhere to run, we find our refuge and the strength to carry on in God.

*Be to me a God who protects me,  
And a house of refuge to save me.  
For you are my **strength** and my **refuge**.  
(Psalm 30)*

King David appeals to the Lord in the Psalms for refuge, for a place of safety and protection from pursuit, danger, difficulty and temptation. As I was dwelling on the word “refuge”, I was reminded of all the exiles and refugees in the Old Testament. Christian history is in fact a history of people who have wandered, got lost or appeared lost and were found again. The first man and woman were exiles from Paradise just as we are now; Abraham, father of all nations was a refugee, so were Joseph and his brothers; Jacob fled Laban; God’s own chosen people were slaves in Egypt and wandered in the desert for 40 years before arriving in the promised land. The history of wanderings, slavery and refuge continues

throughout the Old Testament. But in all the generations, the Lord God guides and shows the way, protects and above all, is always present.

*He who dwells in the help of the Most High  
Shall lodge in the shelter of the God of  
heaven  
He shall say to the Lord: “You are my  
protector and my refuge” (Psalm 90)*

I started wondering why the Lord loves so much to be with the poor, the oppressed and the foreigner. It is first of all because, when we lose our bearings and our worldly securities, we call to Him and welcome Him in our lives. It is also because He is infinitely compassionate and merciful. He cares above all for those who suffer, for those who are meek and vulnerable. He cares so much that in all His ordinances He makes provision for the foreigner and the poor.

*Also you shall not oppress a foreigner, for  
you know the heart of a foreigner, because  
you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.  
(Exodus 23)*

Our Lord reminds Israel how they themselves had been strangers and oppressed in Egypt and asks for justice towards the stranger.

*You shall not pervert judgement due to the  
stranger and the fatherless and the widow  
[...] But you shall remember you were a  
servant in Egypt and the Lord your God  
redeemed you from there; therefore I  
command you to do this thing. (Deuteronomy  
24:17)*

God asks Israel to provide for the poor and the stranger. We should certainly view this as an exhortation to ourselves, His adopted children. He decrees how the poor should be cared for in great detail.

*When you reap the harvest of your land, you  
shall not wholly reap the corners of your field,  
nor shall you gather the gleanings of your  
harvest. Also you shall not glean your  
vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of  
your vineyard; you shall leave them for the  
poor and the foreigner; I am the Lord your  
God (Leviticus 19:9-11)*

He also asks for mercy for those in need, for the poor, the lonely and the marginalised. The people of Israel fail obey the Lord’s commandments, so

through the prophets He reminds them again and again about being merciful and just

*Do not oppress and act ungodly towards the foreigner, the orphan and the widow (Jeremiah 22)*

As we make any offering to our Lord, be it prayer, sacrifice of any sort or charity, like King David we must remember that we are exiles living upon His mercy.

*But who am I and who are my people, that we are able to be zealous in offering to you? For all Things are yours and of Your own we give to you. For we are strangers before you and sojourners as were all our fathers, our days upon earth are as a shadow, and there are none that remain. (1 Chronicles 29:14)*

The most shocking and awe-inspiring event in history is the fact that Our God Himself was born of a woman in a manger and was a refugee. He had to flee as a babe in arms in the night and live in a foreign land seeking shelter from persecution and death.

*Now when they had departed, behold an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother; flee to Egypt and stay there until I bring you word, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy Him. When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod." (Matthew 2:13)*

As Jesus Christ begins His redemptive mission He is once again a "wanderer" and a "stranger".

*"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (Luke 9:58)*

The migrant or refugee issue is one of the most present in the news today. It is a highly politicised and complex issue with millions of people displaced though famine, war and persecution. While Europe threatens to be overwhelmed by the huge numbers of migrants, as Christians, as God's adopted sons and daughters, migration ought to be not so much an economic or political problem, but one of conscience and obedience to God's word.

If fear dominates the way we look upon our brothers and sisters, we are surely not in obedience to God's command, which is to love.

Love is the antonym of fear. If we fear that by sharing with the destitute, we might not have enough for ourselves and our families, if we worry that our customs and traditions and our faith itself might be diluted or undermined by the many other people coming in our countries, if we fear that they shall take what is rightfully ours, we surely must be in error. Because our Lord asks us to be just and to leave our surplus to the stranger, he urges us to care for those in worst circumstances than us. After all, everything belongs to God, so what is ours that can be stolen? It is all God's and it is all for sharing.

Looking at images of naked people who have nothing in the world, who have no refuge or comfort in this world, I wonder how, as Christians, we can possibly be impervious to their cry for help to their appeal for refuge. As our Lord always hears our prayers and rescues us, it is undoubtedly our duty to reach out our hand to the poor, the sojourner, the destitute and the oppressed.

*Martha and Mary*

## BUSYNESS

Lately, I am surrounded by a feeling of expectation. It seems that we are all waiting for something. During the lockdowns, we were waiting for it to end. Waiting to see family and friends, to travel, for workplaces and schools to reopen. Now, that the lockdown has ended, we are still waiting for the holidays, for better weather, for the weekend, an event or a journey. Continually striving for something in the future. In fact, most of the time, it feels that the future takes up all our present. Scattering and distracting our mind from the importance of today and the only hour, where we can be fully and truly alive, the only moment that is of significance.

We run to complete every task, responsibility and desire. Always trying to fit more than we can, into our day and week. One task leads to another, and everything is placed at the same level of priority, all boxes must be ticked. It reminds me of me, when I try to tidy my house, everywhere at the same time. I begin in the kitchen, when I find something, that doesn't belong there, I take it to its rightful place. There I find something else, that needs my attention, forgetting about the kitchen, I

begin to tidy a messy children's room. This way, I am scattered and usually not much gets done! Other times, the opposite happens, I manage to complete everything, but at the end, I feel empty, because through busyness, I have stripped myself of the important, of the spiritual, of stillness and reflection, of prayer and contemplation.

In the evening, finding excuses for the lack of prayer, having the abundance of tiredness, looking at the icons, I may think and say: I have been busy, o Lord, and I wonder if He may reply: too busy for Me.

One might call it a temptation of busyness. Busyness can become distraction caused through anxiety. We read in the Book of Genesis, how God rested on the seventh day and blessed it. In Luke's Gospel, we note how Mary sat at Our Lord's feet with enthusiasm to listen to Him, whilst her sister Martha became stressed through busyness and distraction. The key to our demanding, modern lifestyle, is to recognise and not to fall into temptation to confuse busyness with enthusiasm.

Enthusiasm is driven by zeal and attentiveness. With joy and discernment, striving to do daily obediences, not neglecting the communion with God and saints.

Through chasing after something better and different, after the past and future or the next task to complete, I am cheated of the reality of the present given to me. The only moment we can live in is the present moment, which is the intersection of time and eternity. I sober up, through the prayers of the Saints and my spiritual father and understand that I am obliged to live every moment in the fullness of God's Grace poured out abundantly for those who strive for it. *"That we may complete the remaining time of our life in peace and repentance, let us ask the Lord."*

*Martha and Mary*

## OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

Father give the blessing,  
Just wanted to check in on you, father. How are you doing?

My family and I recently moved to Washington, D.C. I think we found a new spiritual home at St. Sophia's. I also wanted to share with you the attached photo and that I am happy to have taken my boy to church for the first time today. I

have been to a few on my own in Washington DC, scoping out the terrain. I think that St. Sophia will be a good home for my growing family.



I hope and pray to be a good example, support and guide to Lauren and Maxim. I also hope to go to St. Sophia's more regularly, really show Lauren the beauty of Orthodoxy and baptise our boy Maximos.

*Asking for your holy prayers,  
Nik*

## 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@yahoo.com](mailto:alexispet@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

Feb. 2: *Dimitri*

Feb. 2: *Eleni*

Feb. 21: *Pisistratos*

### 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> Feb: St Bridget of Kildare (†525)

2<sup>nd</sup> Feb: The Meeting of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Temple

3<sup>rd</sup> Feb: St Nicholas, Archbishop & Enlightener of Japan

5<sup>th</sup> Feb: Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee. Tri-odion begins

10<sup>th</sup> Feb: Hieromartyr Charalampos

18<sup>th</sup> Feb: St Colman (†675)

23<sup>rd</sup> Feb: St Polycarp, the Holy Martyr & Bishop of Smyrna

24<sup>th</sup> Feb: First & Second Finding of the Venerable Head of John the Baptist

26<sup>th</sup> Feb: St Photine, the Samaritan woman

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 February

#### Visit of His Eminence Silouan to the Parish of the Holy Cross

Sat. 4 <sup>th</sup>	15:30	Meeting of His Eminence at Church
	15:45	Memorial Service
	16.00	Great Vespers, followed by a light meal at the Church and meetings of His Eminence with the faithful
Sun. 5 <sup>th</sup>	09:45	<b>Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. Sunday of the Tax Collector and Pharisee.</b>
	11.30	His Eminence meets the children and parents
	13.00	His Eminence departs for London
Sat. 11 <sup>th</sup>	16:00	Great Vespers
Sun. 12 <sup>th</sup>	09.45	Divine Liturgy: Sunday of the Prodigal Son
Sat. 18 <sup>th</sup>	15:45	Saturday of Souls. Memorial
	16:00	Great Vespers
Sun. 19 <sup>th</sup>	09.45	Divine Liturgy: Sunday of Meatfare; Sunday of the Last Judgement
Sat. 25 <sup>th</sup>	16.00	Great Vespers
Sun. 26 <sup>th</sup>	09.45	Divine Liturgy: Sunday of Cheesefare; Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise; Forgiveness Sunday, followed immediately by Forgiveness Prayers

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](#).

*“God cares for everyone. Despair is in effect a lack of faith”*  
-- St. George Karslides –



*For further information please contact:*

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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](#).

