No. 240

November 2026

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

The Stavronian

Monthly magazine and newsletter publicised by the Holy Cross Synodia

Ἐνθρονος 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 Archbishop Silouan.
Our Patriarch is His Beatitude John X.

The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch
(Acts 11:26)

ONE

*I believe in **one** God, the Father Amighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;*
*And in **one** Lord, Jesus Christ, the son of God, the **Only** Begotten, begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, True God of True God, begotten not made, of **one** essence with the Father; […]*
And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the prophets.
*And I believe in **one** Holy Catholic and Apostolic church*
*I acknowledge **one** baptism for the remission of sins.*

At the heart of our faith, as proclaimed in the Niceean Creed, lies the mystery of Oneness. The spiritual reality of One God as Trinity is breathtaking in its mystery and beauty because it teaches us, in the most simple and clear terms, that we are destined for Oneness since we are ourselves created in the image of the trinitarian God. The Master of the Universe, from whom Creation has sprung forth is Three, yet One.

St Patrick's breastplate beautifully captures the quintessence of this truth:

I bind unto myself the Name,
The strong Name of the Trinity;
By invocation of the same.
The Three in One, and One in Three

Likewise, we, believers, the people of God, are called to perfect unity in prayer and the Eucharist. In the Eucharistic Prayer during the Holy Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, the priest says:

*And grant that with **one mouth and one heart** we may glorify and praise Thine all-honourable and majestic name: of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*.

Our Lord and Maker delights in oneness, He constantly calls us to Himself, to holiness, He asks to come and dwell in us so that "we may be One". Sin is therefore nothing other than a rejection of this perfect Oneness which God has designed for us, the oneness which is the cornerstone of our faith, to which God calls us unequivocally in the Gospels, in the Eucharist, in prayer.

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all." (Ephesians 4:4–6)

Unsurprisingly then, the evil one specialises in division tactics, separation, isolation, duplicity and confusion. Sin is setting ourselves apart from God through wilfulness, ungratefulness, refusal to accept His plan and His gifts. We sin when we reject the least of our brothers instead of identifying with him, when we belittle, argue with, gossip about and judge our fellows.

Sometimes, we are not even at one with ourselves, we are divided inside. We have inside ourselves a multitude of voices arguing with each other and articulating in our mind opposite ideas. We do not know who we are, where to go or what to do. Peace can only be attained when we are at one with ourselves and this can only happen when we listen to the voice of God.

"Men are like points on a circle. Whenever these points go far away from the centre, they are more separate between themselves, but whenever each point draws closer to the centre of the circle, it gets closer to the other points. Communion with God is the ground on which people gather. Unity in Christ brings out our unity."
(St. Maximos the Confessor)

Love of self is the very antithesis of the love of God and the love for another. Just as self-will is the opposite of doing the will of God. Only when we surrender completely our will and our self to God, we can fully delight in the communion with others and with Him. In this mysterious way, when we offer ourselves, God receives us, transforms us and returns us to ourselves as new beings, infused with Himself and able to commune with our fellow beings.

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

Through dying to ourselves, which is indeed a painful crucifixion, we become alive and One with Christ and His Creation.

Union, unity, communion are only truly possible through love. Love in our homes, love of

all our brothers and sisters in Christ, love our enemies, love of those we find difficult and those who hurt us and irritate us. Such is the nature of love that it annihilates all barriers and makes all creation One in Christ.

"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28)

I love seeing children with their parents. Looking at the child, you see features of both parents in their little faces: skin, eyes, eyebrows, chin… both parents made one in this new creation. When I used to look at my little daughter and son, I saw in them my husband too and my love doubled. I also sometimes caught glimpses of my own mother and father in their faces, and a gesture of the hand suddenly reminded me of my brother-in-law. Even in the physical realm, God has ordained this beautiful synergy by which many linked by blood and love, become one. Even more moving, I would look into the face of my baby and see the face of Christ, imprinted in their visage indelibly, the image of our God and Creator. How marvellous is this condescension of our Lord!

Just as in the physical realm, our genes come together to form an entirely new human being, who is a new creation, we, Christians, are called in baptism, in faith and in the eucharist to become a new creation, to be One with Christ and with each other, without conditions or limitation clauses.

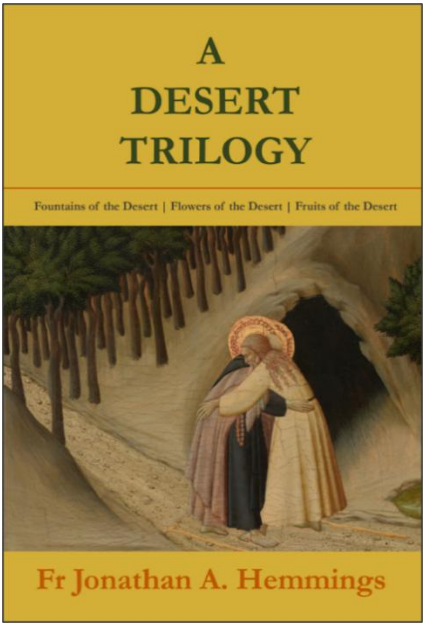
"For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body." (1 Corinthians 12:13)

Martha and Mary

FORTHCOMING BOOK RELEASE: *A Desert Trilogy* by Fr Jonathan A. Hemmings

Stavronian Press is pleased to announce the forthcoming publication of *A Desert Trilogy* by Fr Jonathan A. Hemmings, to be released in hardback on 1 December 2026 and available through Amazon.co.uk.

Bringing together three complementary



volumes, *A Desert Trilogy* draws on the rich spiritual heritage of Orthodox Christianity and offers readers guidance, encouragement, and reflection for the Christian life today. The trilogy consists of:

Fountains of the Desert -- reflections inspired by the teachings of St Antony the Great, the father of Christian monasticism.

Flowers of the Desert -- a collection of original poems accompanied by passages from Holy Scripture and the Orthodox spiritual tradition.

Fruits of the Desert -- a gathering of spiritual aphorisms and reflections born from prayer, contemplation, and experience.

In his foreword, His Eminence Metropolitan Silouan describes the work as a meeting of "the timeless wisdom of the Desert Fathers, the witness of Holy Scripture, the living Tradition of the Church, and reflections drawn from [the author's] own journey of faith." He notes that the wisdom of the desert is not merely a treasure of the past but "a living inheritance for the Church today."

Reflecting on the trilogy's central theme, Metropolitan Silouan writes that the imagery of fountains, flowers, and fruits beautifully expresses the Christian journey: drawing deeply from the Gospel and the Fathers, cultivating the

heart through prayer, humility, repentance, and love, and ultimately bearing fruit in a life faithful to Christ. He also highlights one memorable phrase from the book: “Christians are verbs, not nouns!", a succinct reminder that the Christian faith is lived through prayer, repentance, love, and faithful action.

Fr Jonathan was Chrismated by Fr Alexey Young (later Hieroschemamonk Ambrose), a spiritual son of Fr Seraphim Rose, and was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Gabriel Saliby in 1995. He is co-founder and serving priest of the Parish of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross, Morecambe, and is the author and translator of several works on Orthodox saints and spirituality.

For those seeking to deepen their life in Christ through the wisdom of the Desert Fathers and the living tradition of the Orthodox Church, this new work promises to be a source of inspiration and spiritual nourishment.

A Desert Trilogy is published with the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Silouan and will be released on 1 December 2026, God willing. The author has dedicated all proceeds from the sale of this book to the Parish Church.

PARISH NEWS

The Library Table

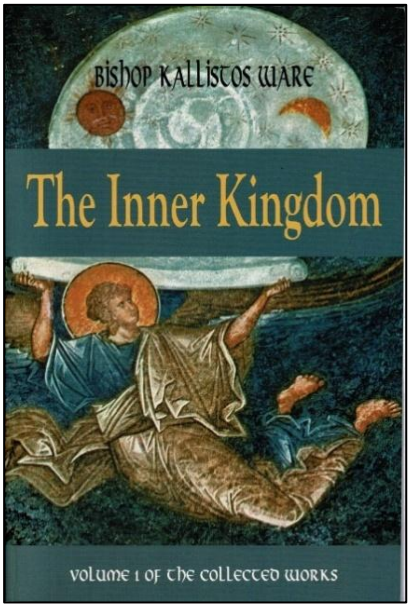
“When you immerse your mind and heart in spiritual books, you will always be filled, for spiritual reading gives you a foundation in God.” St. John Chrysostom

You can now browse the Holy Cross Library catalogue anytime by visiting:
https://www.librarycat.org/lib/Holy.Cross.Orthodox

We warmly invite you to contribute to this Library Table feature by sharing short reviews of books that have inspired, encouraged, or supported you in your spiritual life. Your reflections may be just the encouragement someone else needs.

Our library also welcomes donations of books on Orthodox topics. If there are titles you would love to see on our shelves, please speak with James. (Please note that any books outside the Orthodox tradition will need a blessing from Father before being added.)

Spotlight on Our Latest Addition



The Inner Kingdom by Bishop Kallistos Ware

Metropolitan Kallistos Ware (1934-2022) was an English bishop, scholar, and theologian, best known for *The Orthodox Church*, *The Orthodox Way*, and his contribution to the English translation of the *Philokalia*.

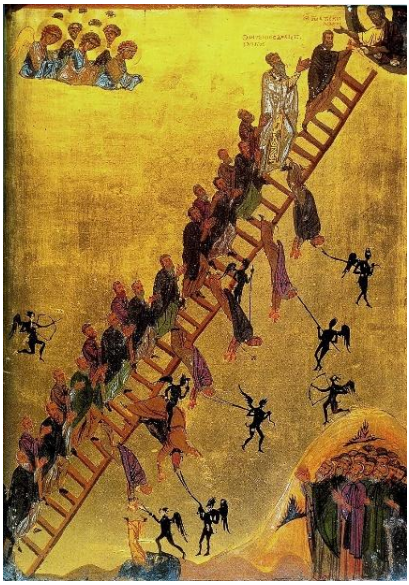
The Inner Kingdom explores themes central to Eastern Christian worship and spiritual life. The opening chapter recounts the author's journey to Orthodoxy, followed by profound reflections on death, bereavement, resurrection in Christ, and repentance. Four subsequent chapters introduce the world of the desert ascetics and hesychast monks. Combining scholarly rigour with practical counsel on prayer, Metropolitan Kallistos makes the riches of the Orthodox tradition accessible to contemporary Christians. Further chapters consider personal vocation, martyrdom, spiritual guidance, and the path of the fool for Christ's sake, before a brief meditation on time and eternity. The volume concludes with a discussion of Origen's legacy in relation to Saints Gregory of Nyssa, Isaac the Syrian, and Silouan the Athonite.

The opening chapter, entitled Strange Yet Familiar, recounts the author's journey to Orthodoxy. Reflecting on this theme, Fr Jonathan writes:

"I find the words 'strange yet familiar' consistent with my own initial experience of Orthodoxy. Like Metropolitan Kallistos, my first experience of an Orthodox service was in a foreign language (in my case Greek, not Slavonic). On every page, I found myself saying 'yes, exactly' to this movement of the Holy Spirit, which Bishop Kallistos describes. I am sure that enquirers and catechumens, as they are drawn inexorably into that circle of grace, will benefit greatly and relate equally to this book. May they also discover, or rather recover, the historic, apostolic, and authentic truth that Bishop Kallistos describes in his journey to the fullness of faith."

St John Climacus Bouldering Club

Aka the 'Bearded Boulders'
Moto *'Hanging on by a whisker'*



A recreational bouldering club has been started within the community of Holy Cross. Climbs are held every other Friday at 18:00, and as time allows, at the Lancaster Wall.

Holy Cross is not connected to or liable for any injuries incurred. Participate at your own risk and wallet.

Requirements:

- *Males only
- *Open to Orthodox and Catechumens
- *Beards strongly encouraged

For more details, contact on WhatsApp

- Joseph: +44 7778 626493, or
- Nicodemus: +1 208 899 3790

Summary of church council meeting No. 25

Held at the Church of St. Martin of Tours,
Westgate, LA4 4UZ
Sunday, 11th October 2026

The Parish Council meeting of October began with a report of the parish finances for September, which saw a return to the trend of recent months of online donations being quite high while plate collections were relatively low. The acquisition of a card-reader for church-shop payments was discussed but not settled upon. It was decided, as a trial, to move the shop location into the main room as opposed to out by the door. The council moved on to discuss the upcoming, St Nicholas' Fayre. A number of parishioners have put down their names for a stall but there are still spaces – please feel free to volunteer! Do so by speaking to Alexandra McCafferty. There will be a collection box for the Lancaster and District Homeless Action Service, to which we will also be donating 10% of the fair's proceeds. Discussions and arrangements are being made to accommodate our Orthodox services for the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord and Theophany at St Martin's. Fr Jonathan also announced the publishing of a book of his, titled, *A Desert Trilogy*. It will hopefully soon be available on amazon.co.uk.

Online donations

Our Orthodox Community of the Holy and Life Giving Cross has been blessed to have a building for a Temple that serves the needs of the Orthodox Christians in the Lancaster area. To this end, we are making **an appeal to help raise funds to cover the rent and other needs of the Church** on a permanent basis. Our monthly expenditure also includes purchasing food, drinks, disposable cutlery and dishware, paying insurance, and other costs. Hence, regular on-line giving to the Church, instead of cash donations on the plate, would help the parish to budget better and plan for the future.

If you would like to give regularly, the details

are provided below:

Name: The Orthodox Church of Holy Cross
Bank: Lloyds Bank Plc
Sort Code: 30-96-26
Account Number: 80662168

IBAN: GB23LOYD30962680662168
BIC/SWIFT: LOYDGB21446

Post code: LA1 4XJ
City: Lancaster
Country: United Kingdom

We give thanks for the special ministry that God has given to us over two decades serving particularly the Liturgical and Pastoral needs of Orthodox students from Lancaster University and the citizens of the nearby towns. We aim to continue this ministry but to broaden it to serve the families who now attend our Community.

We are indeed blessed in having support from so many former parishioners "Stavronians" and having our extended family who offer prayers and donations to us from Cyprus, Greece, Romania, USA and elsewhere.

We ask your prayers in this holy task which is now before us and ask a blessing upon you in the name of the Holy, Consubstantial, Life-Giving and Undivided Trinity.

May God prosper this little plant in His Vineyard!

Iconostasis extension

With the blessing of Metropolitan Silouan, our Iconostasis is now planned to be extended by Christmas 2026. A preliminary sketch is shown above. If you would like to donate, please use the credentials above and specify "Iconostasis" in the description of payment.

NAMES OF DEPARTED LOVED ONES TO BE REMEMBERED THIS MONTH

Nov. 8: *Fr Tosko*
Nov. 11: *Eleonora*
Nov. 12: *Sir John Tavener*
Nov. 19: *Geronda Gregorios*
Nov. 24: *Katerina*
Nov. 29: *Ioanna, Susan*

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 Nov: Sts Cosmas and Damian, the Holy Unmercenaries and Wonderworkers
8th Nov: Synaxis of Archangel Michael and Gabriel and the other Bodiless Powers
9th Nov: St. Nectarios the Wonderworker, Metropolitan of Pentapolis
10th Nov: St. Arsenius of Cappadocia
11th Nov: St. Martin of Tours (†397)
13th Nov: St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople (†407)
14th Nov: St. Gregory Palamas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Thessalonica

***15th Nov*: Beginning of the Nativity fast**
16th Nov: Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew
17th Nov: St. Hilda, Abbess of Whitby (†680)
21st Nov: The Entry of our Most-Holy Lady the Theotokos into the Temple
23rd Nov: St. Alexander Nevsky
25th Nov: Great Martyr Catherine of Alexandria
30th 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. The Orthodox Calendar and Scriptural Readings Lectionary, including the British and Irish Saints, is available online at www.antiochian-orthodox.com/calendar

Services at St Martin's in November*

Sun. 1st	09:15	Shortened Matins and confessions
	09.45	Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, followed by fellowship meal (usually every Sunday)
Wed. 4th	18:30	Online Prayer group of St Etheldreda and St Seraphim**
Sat. 7th	15:45	Great Vespers and confessions
Sun. 8th	09:15	Shortened Matins and confessions
	09.45	Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, followed by fellowship meal and Parish council
Wed. 11th	18:30	Online Prayer group of St Etheldreda and St Seraphim**
Sat. 14th	15:45	Great Vespers and confessions
		*Beginning of the Nativity Fast.***
Sun. 15th	09.15	Shortened Matins and confessions
	09.45	Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom
Wed. 18th	18:30	Online Prayer group of St Etheldreda and St Seraphim**
Sat. 21st	09:45	Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Entry of the most Holy Mother-of-God into the Temple. *No Great Vespers*
Sun. 22nd	09:15	Shortened Matins and confessions
	09.45	Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom
Wed. 25th	18:30	Online Prayer group of St Etheldreda and St Seraphim**
Sat. 28th	15:45	Great Vespers and confessions
Sun. 29th	09:15	Shortened Matins and confessions
	09.45	Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom

*May be subject to changes, which would be announced. Please monitor the email updates and the parish's Facebook page.
**Via WhatsApp: https://call.whatsapp.com/video/1WnKsoP45eHcAukXpIYXrl
***Fish ,wine and oil allowed apart from Wednesdays and Fridays

2026 Fasting Calendar

LEGEND:
Abstain from meat, dairy, eggs, fish, olive oil, wine
Abstain from meat, dairy, eggs, fish, olive oil
Abstain from meat, dairy, eggs, fish
Abstain from meat, dairy, eggs
Abstain from meat

Note: On the day of a parish's patronal feast, fish, wine and oil are allowed if it falls on a fasting day.

January						
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May						
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31						

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November						
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29	30					

December						
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

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

For further information please contact:

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Orthodox Church of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross:
www.orthodox-lancaster.org.uk

The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of
the British Isles and Ireland: www.antiochian-orthodox.com

Orthodox online liturgical guide: www.antiochian.org/liturgicday

Online Orthodox Calendar and Scriptural Readings Lectionary:
https://www.antiochian-orthodox.com/calendar

The following blogs of Old Stavronians are available in English at orthodoxcityhermit.com

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