

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

DIOCESE OF SOUROZH

CATHEDRAL OF THE DORMITION OF THE  
MOTHER OF GOD

67 ENNISMORE GARDENS, LONDON SW7 1NH



# *Cathedral Newsletter*

February - March 2017



*'Love grants prophecy, miracles. It is an abyss of illumination, a fountain of fire, bubbling up to inflame the thirsty soul It is the condition of angels, and the progress of eternity.'*

*The Ladder of Divine Ascent, St John Climacus*

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*Dear Readers,*

*We are happy to inform you that the Media and Publishing Department of the Diocese of Sourozh now has an on-line store, Sourozh Publications, where you can obtain the publications of the diocese. You can subscribe to the English or Russian editions of Cathedral Newsletter, and purchase the diocesan journal ‘Sourozh’ and the Diocesan Calendar and Lectionary. For prices and full information please visit the store at <https://sourozh.myshopify.com>.*

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## Diocesan News

### FESTIVE CELEBRATION ON THE PATRONAL FESTIVAL OF THE SISTERHOOD OF ST ELIZABETH

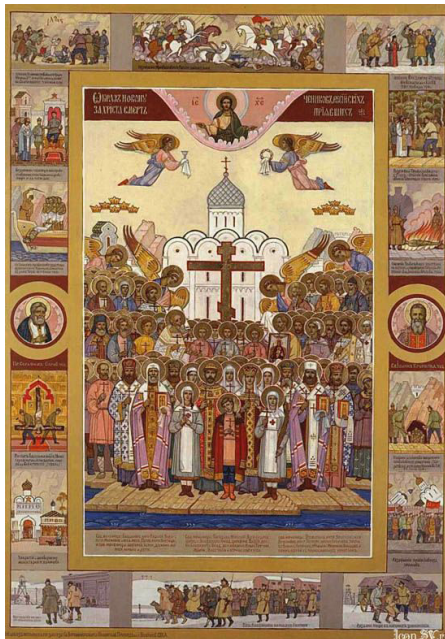
On the 4th of February the Russian Orthodox Church celebrates the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, among them – the Venerable Martyrs Grand Duchess Elizabeth and the Nun Barbara.

The Divine Liturgy and Panikhida were celebrated by Archpriest Stephen Platt. In his sermon, Fr Stephen reminded us that the last 100 years of the history of Russia gave the Orthodox Church more martyrs than the early years of Christianity. Amongst the martyrs we remember the endurance and sacrifice of St Elizabeth, of the Royal Passion Bearers - Tsar Nicholas II and his family, and the prisoners of Solovki. Fr Stephen emphasised that we ought to remember them and find inspiration in their holy heroic deeds. He drew our attention to the Greek word ‘martyros’ from which ‘martyr’ is derived; ‘martyros’ means “witness”. A Christian martyr is thus not only a person who died for Christ or did not turn away from Christ in the face of death, but a person whose life bore witness to Christ. In this case all of us are called to be and could become martyrs.

‘Many Years’ was sung to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow

and All Russia and to His Eminence Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh. Father Ierotheos Georghiou from the Greek Orthodox Church of St Mary Magdelene in Hastings was a guest at the Feast and blessed the festive trapeza. It was warm and homely atmosphere in the sisterhood that once again united English and Russians; those who had been supporting the community for years and those who came to celebrate the Feast for the first time.

*Yana Reznik*



*Icon of the New Martyrs and Confesors of Russia*

## *Cathedral News*

### **DIVINE LITURGY ON THE DAY OF THE MEETING OF THE LORD IN THE TEMPLE**

On February 15th, the feast of The Meeting of the Lord in the Temple, His Eminence Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh concelebrated the Divine Liturgy with His Eminence Metropolitan Silouan of Great Britain and Ireland (Antiochian Orthodox Church). After the Liturgy Vladyka Elisey in his address reminded the congregation that today the Antiochian Church is a suffering Church enduring very hard times. We all believe that very soon Christians in the Middle East will be able to come back to normal life and practice their faith openly. Metropolitan Silouan was named after the Russian Saint Silouan of Mount Athos, who is well-known among Russian Orthodox people in Britain. Metropolitan Silouan in his address thanked Vladyka Elisey and the congregation for the invitation and underlined that the Christians of the Middle East value our prayers for peace. Archbishop Elisey also reminded the congregation about the International Orthodox Youth Day which the Russian Orthodox Church celebrates together with other churches on February 15th. Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia addressed a message to all young Orthodox Christians and their teachers, in which he spoke about the importance

of a patient and lenient, but vigilant approach to the education of the younger generation in the spirit of love and goodwill.



*Metropolitan Silouan  
(Antiochian Church)*







***Congratulations to  
Father Dmitri Nedostupenko!***

*Fr Dmitri Nedostupenko celebrated his 40th birthday on Thursday Feb. 9th, the day of the translation of the relics of St John Chrysostom. Greeting him after the Divine Liturgy, Archbishop Elisey recalled that the Prophet Moses began his service to God at this age of maturity. Vladyka wished Fr Dmitri that his service to the people of God would be for him always new and inspiring and presented him with an icon of St Nicholas the Wonderworker.*

## **PARISH ASSEMBLY MEETING**

On 26th of January the Parish Assembly took place. It was opened by Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh, who summarised the main events of the past year. The central theme of 2016 was the festive celebration of 300 years of the presence of Russian Orthodoxy in the British Isles. The culmination of the celebration was the Primatial visit of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia to Britain in October, in the course of which the Great Consecration of the Cathedral was performed. His Holiness also met with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. This was a meeting of heads of Churches in which they discussed

questions of Christian life in the contemporary world. Both sides expressed their concerns regarding moral decay and the importance of faith in the world.

Archbishop Elisey raised the specific question of what is most important in the Church, and why do we come to the Church? The only answer is the internal birth of a new human being within the church community, the Body of Christ. Therefore both the clergy and the parishioners should establish the conditions that would enable our parishioners to develop spiritually. The members of the Assembly are responsible for how the church functions and for its

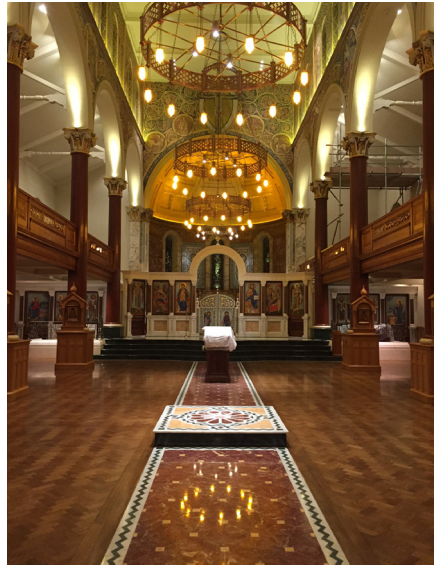
representation in the outer world.

Prior to presenting the report of the work that had been done last year, the Churchwarden Natalia Tkachuk expressed her gratitude for the ceaseless labours of those who help to improve our cathedral, especially the volunteers.

In 2016 the major reconstruction of the cathedral that has lasted three years was completed. A new iconostasis had been erected. There was a special forum consisting of artists and architects who shared their ideas on how the new icons should be painted in order for them to be in harmony with the existing adornments of the church, including the sgraffito, which is a recognised masterpiece.

The semi-dome over the altar was regilded and the reordering of the sanctuary completed. The bell tower underwent a total reconstruction, including the replacement of its roof.

There is now a new metallic staircase leading to the top of the bell tower. The mechanism to control ringing of the clock bell was repaired. All of the church buildings were upgraded, including the small rear garden, which was tidied up and beautified. An icon of the Mother of God was placed in front of the cathedral, so that it be venerated even when the church is closed. For many parishioners this shrine has become very dear. Last year the grave-stone of Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh was replaced. Instead of the old monument there is



now a white marble cross.

Natalya Tkachuk mentioned the structured organisation and smooth running of the candle desk and the bookshop. The bookshop, however, lacks space; therefore not all of its stoack can be displayed. There are certain issues with proshphora making, principally due to the lack of people who are able to do this hard work. However, there is hope that soon there will be a new baker available, which will speed up the work.

Although there are only 11 full-time workers in the cathedral team, there are about a hundred people who help to keep the church in best condition on a voluntary basis. All the volunteers are now split into small groups with specific duties and responsibilities being allocated to different people.

The Information Unit headed

by Dmitry Loktionov and Yelena Mulenkova is running smoothly. Recently they visited all the Parishes of the Diocese of Sourozh and created a few highly professional videos about the life of the Diocese. Currently they are working on a documentary film about the 300 years of the presence of the Russian Orthodox Church in Britain and Ireland. Mikhail Sarni published a new photo album of church history, which includes new archive materials that were not published previously. The magazine 'Sparrow' for children has started publication again. The journal 'Sourozh' and the 'Cathedral Newsletter' are published on a regular basis.

There are many volunteers who sing in the cathedral choir. There are even families whose children have grown up on the choir loft. A new group of bell ringers has been established. Although many people were interested only a few people acquired the necessary skills.

There is a group of florists responsible for floral decorations in our church, which is anything but simple. There is also a lack of experienced sewers, so we hope to get help from those who have sewing skills and are able to work accurately.

Around 200 children and 300 parents are involved in the children's festive celebrations, with many of the parents actively participating in the preparation of materials. It



must be admitted that the Parish school director, Yelena Nikolaevna Poplavskaya, puts in a lot of effort so that the school is not just a source of knowledge, but also a source of culture, for example when preparing the stage performances she writes the scripts and lyrics by herself.

There followed the report of the Cathedral Treasurer who presented the financial report for 2016 and the budget projection for 2017. It was decided that the final results of the financial report will be discussed at the next Parish Assembly following a more detailed financial audit.

The question regarding Archbishop Anatoly of Kerch was raised specifically. Archbishop Elisey said that Archbishop Anatoly has been undergoing long term medical treatment in Russia and that he is in constant contact with those taking care of him. We pray for Archbishop Anatoly's health and strength and continue to hope that we shall see him in London once again.

***By Julia Pliauksta***



***Veronika Souslova - Memory Eternal!***

*It was with great sadness that we heard that after a serious illness Veronika Souslova departed this life on February 16th. The parishioners of the Dormition Cathedral are praying for the newly departed Veronika and will remember her as a very faithful and kind-hearted person. The funeral service took place on February 24th, and Veronika was buried in Brookwood Cemetery, Woking, Surrey on the same day. Memory eternal, dear sister Veronika!*

**A THOUSAND YEARS OF  
RUSSIAN MONASTIC  
PRESENCE ON MOUNT ATHOS**

A unique event took place at the Cathedral on Monday 6th February. A spiritual education evening entitled 'In the Garden of the Most Holy Mother of God. Russia and Mount Athos: 1000 years of Spiritual Union' brought together many guests. Sergey Shumilo, the Director of the International Institute of the Athonite Legacy in Ukraine and the editor of the almanac 'Athonite Legacy', delivered the presentation.

To begin with, a documentary 'A Thousand Years of Mount Athos' was shown about the links between Kievan Rus and Mount Athos, which had all the guests holding their breath. The first mention of a Russian monastery on the Holy Mountain was made in 1016. From ancient times, Russian monks have contributed generously

to the spiritual and cultural traditions of the Holy Mountain, just as Mount Athos has influenced the Russian Orthodox Church. The film also shows incredible stories of living monks – former bankers and even musicians – who 'died' to the world after they had discovered that nothing compares to the joy of communion with God.

After the film Mr Shumilo gave a lecture in a conversational style. The guests overwhelmed the Kievan researcher with questions. Clergy of the Cathedral who visited the Holy Mountain many times shared their impressions. The multinational parish united in a lively discussion.

The speaker told us that prayer never stops on Mount Athos. The services can last up to 24 hours and usually take place during the night. There is a saying that, while the world sleeps or sins, Mount Athos prays for the whole world.





The Mother of God is considered to be the ‘Abbess’ of this Autonomous Monastic State, the only such state in the world. The researcher stressed that the ban on women on the Holy Mountain has nothing to do with gender discrimination. ‘A monk or a nun leaves the world, taking monastic vows for the sake of personal encounter with God, and forsakes any interaction with the opposite sex’. We were reminded that some convents ban men from entering them.

At the end of the evening there was a presentation of unique photos taken on Mount Athos. Mr Shumilo donated to the Cathedral library several publications of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) and of the Institute of the Athonite Legacy dedicated to the 1000th anniversary of the Russian monastic presence on the Holy Mountain. These included a special issue of the almanac ‘Athonite Legacy’ and a book about Saint Paisius Velichkovsky.

The lecture-presentation at the Cathedral was one of a series of events dedicated to the 1000 years

of Russian monastic presence on the Holy Mountain. Just before it, an international conference ‘Mount Athos and Russia 1016-2016’ had taken place from 3rd to 5th of February at Madingley Hall in Cambridge. It was organised by ‘The Friends of Mount Athos’, a British society ([athosfriends.org](http://athosfriends.org)).

You can find more information about the Holy Mountain and its monasteries, advice to pilgrims and information about the International Institute of the Athonite Legacy in Ukraine on the website [afonit.info](http://afonit.info) (the language is Russian). You can also watch films there and read the electronic version of the almanac ‘Athonite Legacy’.

*By Tatiana Salmon*



## *Notes on the Church calendar*

### THE MEANING OF THE PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

Every day of Great Lent, with the exception of Saturdays and Sundays, the prayer “O Lord and Master of my life” is read. According to tradition, this prayer was written in Syria in the fourth century by the ascetic Mar Afrem or, as we have grown accustomed to calling him, Ephraim the Syrian. He was a monk, poet, and theologian, one of the most eminent sons of the Syrian Church, who entered world literature as a remarkable writer.

The words of the prayer, which were quite accurately transmitted by Pushkin, sound as follows when translated from the Syrian: **“O Lord and Master of my life,”** that is: Ruler of my life, Who gave me life, Who is the center and focal point of my life. **“Give me not a spirit of idleness,”** that is, laziness, which is, according to the old adage, the mother of all vices. Laziness seems like an innocent thing, but it engenders much that is dark and black.

**“Despondency.”** Christianity is a joyful doctrine; joyful, too, is he who is despondent – for it will leave him. St. Seraphim of Sarov, the great Russian saint of the nineteenth century, said: “We have no ways to be despondent, for Christ has saved everyone.”



*St Ephrem the Syrian*

**“Ambition.”** This means love of authority. Everyone has it; do not think that the cult of personality exists only in politics: it can also be present in the family or in any small community. Everyone has in himself the seeds of the aspiration to crush the will of others, to strangle and subdue it.

**“Idle talking.”** I exempt children: they have the right to chatter, but only until the age of fifteen or sixteen. When children chatter they are learning to communicate and are practicing their language; but when these “children” are already twenty, or sometimes older than forty – this means they are being pitiless towards their own lives. Let us consider (and let us be honest with

ourselves): how much longer do we have to live? Not much longer at all. Therefore, I repeat, we should value life and love the gift that God has given us, remembering that we will carry into eternity only that which we have in our hearts. Idle talk and blathering are frightful words, for they involve killing time.

Further on the prayer says: ***“a spirit of chastity... patience, and love bestow upon me Thy servant.”***

Chastity is purity of relations with the world and with people, wholeness of soul, without duality, and without the passions gaining possession over you.

***“Humble-mindedness.”*** This means the wisdom of the healthy person. Humility here, in the given context, means knowing where you stand against the backdrop of eternity. Do not inflate yourself like the frog in Krylov’s fable—it burst. There is no need to exaggerate, but one should know one’s worth. The wisdom of modesty is extraordinary and beautiful. The wisdom of modesty is not abasement beyond pride, but healthiness of soul. Here is an example for you. When someone begins to imagine himself as something that he is not, he is only a few steps from megalomania. Megalomania is a pathological state of pride. One person announces that he is the chairman of the Council of Ministers or Napoleon, and he is placed in a psychiatric hospital; another makes no such pronouncement, for which reason he is not in the hospital, but in his soul he

thinks he is superior to everyone else.

***“Patience, and love.”*** What is patience? I will put it briefly so that you will remember. Patience is not the state of cattle, which tolerate everything. It is not humiliation – not at all. It is not a compromise with evil – under no circumstances. Patience is the ability to maintain equanimity of spirit in circumstances that impede such equanimity. Patience is the ability to achieve one’s goals when encountering various obstacles along the way. Patience is the ability to maintain a joyful spirit even when there is an excess of grief. Patience is a victory and an overcoming; patience is a form of courage. This is what real patience is.

Finally, love. Love is the utmost happiness of man; it is the ability of our souls to be open, immanent (as the philosophers say), inwardly open to the other person. When you are riding the escalator in the subway, test yourself to see if you are able to love or not. When you look at the people riding on the other side and you find it repulsive to look at their faces, it means that all the pores of your soul are clogged and that your feeling of love is in an embryonic state.

But the power of Christ’s grace is capable of rebuilding a person in such a way that he sees people in an entirely different manner; so that his first reaction will be benevolence; so that he will immediately see the beautiful in both women and men, in as inspired

manner, even where no one else notices it; so that when seeing a suffering face he will feel compassion; so that he will be open. Such a person is always happy, because he is united with people and lives lovingly.

At the end of the prayer it says: ***“Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my failings and not condemn my brother.”*** You understand this. The greatest cure from condemnation is the ability to criticize oneself. We are extremely careful – I would say observant and even psychologically sophisticated – when we are considering the sins of our neighbours or the sins of other people. Here we display maximum knowledge of all moral

laws in all their subtleties. Here we act like strict judges, although we have no right to do so, since we ourselves are guilty of the very things of which we condemn others.

You ask me: perhaps this is appeasement and compromise with evil? Under no circumstances. Never. We must call evil by its name. But we must have compassion for the person who falls into this sin.

This is the essence of this prayer read daily with prostrations during Great Lent.

***Archpriest Alexander Men (1990)***

*From the lecture “Great Lent,” delivered on April 1, 1989.*

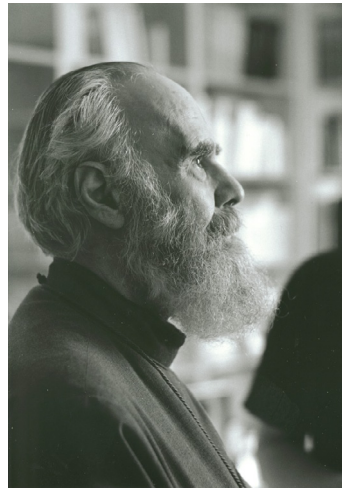
## *Legacy of Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh*

### **FORGIVENESS SUNDAY**

**February 25th, 1996**

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

To-day two themes dominate the readings of the Holy Scriptures. St Paul speaks to us about fasting and the Lord about forgiveness, and St Paul insists on the fact that fasting does not consist simply of depriving oneself of one form of food or another, neither does it, if it is kept strictly, obediently, worshipfully, give us any ground to be proud of ourselves, satisfied and secure, because the aim of fasting is



*Metropolitan Anthony*



not to deprive our body of the one form of food rather than the other, the aim of fasting is to acquire mastery over our body and make it a perfect instrument of the spirit. Most of the time we are slaves of our bodies, we are attracted by all our senses to one form or another of enjoyment, but of an enjoyment which goes far beyond the purity which God expects of us.

And so, the period of fasting offers us a time during which we can say not that I will torment my body, limit myself in things material, but a time when I will re-acquire mastery of my body, make it a perfect instrument. The comparison that comes to my mind is that of tuning a musical instrument; this is what fasting is, to acquire the power not only to command our body, but also to give our body the possibility to respond to all the promptings of the spirit.

Let us therefore go into fasting with this understanding, not measuring our fasting by what we eat and how much, but of the effect it has on us, whether our fasting makes us free or whether we become slaves of fasting itself.

If we fast let us not be proud of it, because it proves simply that we need more perhaps than another person to conquer something in our nature. And if around us other people are not fasting let us not judge them, because God has received the ones as He receives the others, because it is into the heart of men that He looks.

And then there is the theme of forgiveness, of which I will say only

one short thing. We think always of forgiveness as a way in which we would say to a person who has offended, hurt, humiliated us, that the past is past and that we do not any more hold a grudge against this person. But what forgiveness means more deeply than this is that if we can say to a person: let us no longer make the past into a destructive present, let me trust you, make an act of faith in you, if I forgive you it means in my eyes you are not lost, in my eyes there is a future of beauty and truth in you.

But this applies also to us. Perversely, we think very often of forgiving others, but we do not think sufficiently of the need in which we are, each of us personally, of being forgiven by others. We have a few hours left between the Liturgy and the Service of Forgiveness tonight, let us reflect and try to remember, not the offences which we have suffered, but the hurts which we have caused. And if we have hurt anyone in one way or another, in things small or great, let us make haste before we enter into Lent tomorrow morning, let us make haste to ask to be forgiven, to hear someone say to us: in spite of all that has happened I believe in you, I trust you, I hope for you and I will expect everything from you. And then we can go together through Lent helping one another to become what we are called to be - the disciples of Christ, following Him step by step to Calvary, and beyond Calvary to the Resurrection. Amen.

**"LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY"  
(LUKE 11:1)**

*When it comes to a rule of prayer, there are three important components: moderation, constancy, and quality.*

**1. Moderation.** This is beneficial to all our actions: be they everyday activities or spiritual efforts. It is very difficult to achieve this 'golden mean'; nevertheless this is the key to success. When it comes to a prayer rule this principle is acute and important. On the one hand prayer must be regular, but it is equally important to refrain from over enthusiasm. One must not be lazy, but also must not push oneself too hard. I believe that it is better not to do enough and to feel a longing for prayer the following day. Overdoing it can cause the opposite effect, leading to protest and rejection. Spiritual fathers say that a short prayer rule is priceless. Obviously, there is the need for help from an experienced and judicious spiritual father. However, his counsel should still allow for a certain degree of freedom and personal choice for those who seek advice.

Try not to compose a large prayer rule. Let it be one that you manage to follow during your whole life. Remember: the prayer rule is for man, and not man for the prayer rule.

Various factors such as age, state of health, marital status, nature of work, etc should be considered. Acquiring a



prayer rule of suitable length keeps us in spiritual shape and allows us to remain joyful and willing to pray. It also results in internal peace and deep humility of the soul.

**2. Constancy.** You should pray regularly. This is the instruction of St Paul. Commitment and regularity determine the success of any work. However, that's not all. While it is true that there is no gain without some pain, we need to remember that we are co-operating with God: "*So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow*" (1 Corinthians 3:7). It is crucial for our works to be blessed by God. The Holy Fathers talk about synergy between our constant prayers and God's grace-filled help. This is the key to success. There should be no stops in the work of prayer. Prayer is similar to riding a bicycle or sailing a boat against the flow: only constant work helps us to go forward. The same rule applies when it comes to praying: "*pray continually*" (1 Thess. 5:17). As a result of continuous prayer, eventually

a feeling of weariness and dullness will be changed into a feeling of being energised and a willingness to pray, which is the true sign of God’s grace-filled help. It means that you are on the right path.

**3. Quality.** Everyone who starts praying should remember that sometimes less is more. Quality of prayer is determined by two properties: alertness of mind and penitence. St John of the Ladder calls alertness the soul of prayer and recommends everyone to fix the mind on the words of prayer. Initially we all find that difficult, but we must not avoid it and give up. Instead, we should try hard and eventually God will help us and send us the Guardian Angel of our prayer.

Penitence and deep humility of soul is the true altar from which God accepts our spiritual sacrifices, and prayer is one of the most important of them. When praying, one should be similar to a babbling and innocent child - remember no evil and pray for those who hurt you. Remember your irredeemable debt to God and it will make it easier for you to forgive other people. It is important to obtain this internal weeping of the soul about your sins, because it is a sign of true penitence.

It is understandable that the fulfilling of these conditions is possible when your prayer rule is small. Things of true quality are often very unique.



When it comes to music, children are asked to play a simple melody clearly, when it comes to foreign languages it is important to be able to construct simple phrases, and a learner driver is asked to park a vehicle without knocking down the signs. Experience comes with time, and then you can increase the volume of your prayer rule. While following this prayer rule on a daily basis, we should be internally monitoring its quality and remembering that it is not our works that determine success, but the will of Almighty God that makes everything possible.

*By Archpriest Andrey Ovchinnikov*

*Source: [www.pravoslavie.ru/100077.html](http://www.pravoslavie.ru/100077.html)*



## Sacraments of the Church

*We are printing a series of short texts about the Sacraments of the Church. They are copied from *An Orthodox Online Catechism*, which is based on the book *The Mystery of Faith* by Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev).*

*They are presented here by the kind permission and blessing of the author.*

### PART 4. THE EUCHARIST

#### Part 1

The Eucharist (from the Greek eucharistia, ‘thanksgiving’), or the sacrament of Holy Communion, is ‘the sacrament of sacraments’, ‘the mystery of mysteries’; it is ‘the perfection of every sacrament and the seal of every mystery’. The Eucharist has a central significance in the life of the Church and of every Christian. It is not merely one of a number of sacred actions or ‘a means of receiving grace’: it is the very heart of the Church, her foundation, without which the Church cannot be imagined.

The sacrament of the Eucharist was instituted by Christ at the Last Supper as related by all four evangelists, as well as by St Paul, who says:

*‘For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is*



*the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes’ (I Cor. 11:23-6).*

This supper Christ took with the disciples was, in its outward form, the traditional Jewish Paschal meal when the members of every family in Israel gathered to eat the sacrificial lamb. It was attended by Christ’s closest followers: not his blood relatives, but that family which would later grow into the Church. Instead of the lamb, Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was destined ‘before the foundation of the world’ for our salvation (I Pet. 1:19-20). At the Mystical Supper Christ transformed the bread and wine into his body and blood, gave Communion to the apostles and commanded them to celebrate this sacrament in remembrance of him. After his death on the Cross and his Resurrection, the disciples would gather on the first day



of the week (the so-called *'day of the sun'*, or Sunday, when Christ rose from the dead) for the *'breaking of bread'*.

Originally the Eucharist was a meal accompanied by readings from Scripture, a sermon and a prayer. It would sometimes continue through the night. The book of Acts relates how Paul brought back to life the youth Eutychus at one such supper. Paul's conversation continued for such a long time that the young man 'sank into a deep sleep' and fell out of the window. Paul went down, bent over him and raised him from the dead. After that Paul went back upstairs. *'When Paul had . . . broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak'* (Acts 20:9—11).

Gradually, as the Christian communities grew, the Eucharist was transformed from an evening supper into a divine service. There is a second-century description of a baptismal Liturgy by Justin Martyr:

After the believer has been cleansed in this fashion [i.e. after baptism], we lead him to the so-called brethren gathered in a general assembly in order to pray both for ourselves and the newly illumined and all those present. . . After the prayers we greet each other with a kiss. Then bread and a cup of water and wine is brought to the presiding brother: he takes it and in the name of the Son and the Holy Spirit offers up praise to the Father and likewise completes the thanksgiving . . . All of

the people present reply: Amen . . . After the thanksgiving of the president and the exclamation of all people . . . the deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread over which thanks have been given and the wine and water, and then take them away to those who are absent. This food we call the Eucharist and nobody else is allowed to participate in it apart from those who believe in the truth of our teaching and have been cleansed for the remission of sins . . . For we receive this not as ordinary bread or ordinary food; but as Christ was incarnate and took Flesh and Blood for our salvation, then in the same way this food over which thanks are given is, as we have been taught, the Flesh and Blood of the incarnate Christ.

The most ancient elements that constitute the eucharistic rite are mentioned by St Paul and St Justin: these are the reading from Holy Scripture, prayers for all the people, the kiss of peace, thanksgiving to the Father (to which the people reply 'Amen'), the breaking of bread and Communion. In the Early Church, each community had its own Eucharist, but all these elements were present in every eucharistic rite. The bishop's prayer was originally improvised and only later were eucharistic prayers written down. Thus many different eucharistic rites were in use. They were called 'Liturgies' (*from the Greek leitourgia, which means 'common action, 'work', or 'service'*). Each Liturgy that was celebrated bore

the name of a particular apostle or holy hierarch as its author.

The Eucharist is a sacrifice in which Christ himself is *'the Offerer and the Offered, the Receiver and the Received'*. Christ is the one true celebrant. He is invisibly present in church and acts through the priest. Orthodox Christians believe that the Eucharist is not merely a symbolic action performed in remembrance of the Mystical Supper. Rather, it is the Mystical Supper itself, renewed daily by Christ and continuing without interruption in the Church from that Paschal night when Christ reclined at the table with his disciples to the present day. *'Of Thy Mystical Supper, O Son of God, accept me this day as a partaker'*, say the believers as they approach Holy Communion. Not only the Mystical Supper but also Christ's sacrifice on Golgotha is renewed at every Liturgy: *'For the King of kings and the Lord of lords cometh to be slain and to give himself for food to the faithful.'*

According to the Council of Constantinople of 1156, the Orthodox Church holds that the sacrifice of Christ is offered not only to the Father, but to the Holy Trinity in its entirety. The eucharistic celebration is trinitarian by nature. Prayers are addressed to God the Father, but it is through the action of the Holy Spirit that the bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ: *'Send down thy Holy Spirit. . . and make this Bread the precious Body of thy Christ. . . and that which is in this Cup the precious Blood of*



*thy Christ. . . changing them by thy Holy Spirit.'* In an ancient liturgical rite ascribed to Gregory the Theologian, all the prayers are addressed to Christ, and the words of the transformation are expressed somewhat differently: *'O Master, change that which is here set forth, for thou art the author of this mystical service . . . Send down thine All-Holy Spirit so that he may sanctify and change these precious Gifts here set forth into the very Body and Blood of our Redeemer . . . and make this Bread to be thy holy Body, of our Lord and God and Saviour and Almighty King Jesus Christ. . . and this Cup to be thy precious Blood of thy New Covenant.'*

The Orthodox Church believes that in the Eucharist the bread and wine become not only a symbol of Christ's presence, but his Body and Blood in actuality. This belief has been held in the Christian Church from the very beginning. Christ himself says: *'For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and*

*drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him'* (John 6:55—6). At the end of the first century, Ignatius of Antioch spoke of the Eucharist as *'the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins'*, and Justin Martyr also states that *'this food is the flesh and blood of the incarnate Christ'*. All the ancient liturgical rites emphasise that the eucharistic bread and wine are the 'precious Body and Blood' of our Lord Jesus Christ (Liturgy of St Basil the Great), 'the very Body and Blood of our Redeemer' (Liturgy of St Gregory the Theologian), 'the holy Body and precious Blood of Christ' (Liturgy of St James), 'the true Body and the true Blood of Christ' (Liturgy



of the Armenian Church), 'the most holy Body and Blood of the Son of God' (the Roman Catholic Mass).

***To be continued.***

*Source: [www.orthodoxeurope.org/page/10/1.aspx#41](http://www.orthodoxeurope.org/page/10/1.aspx#41)*

## *How I became Orthodox*

### **TEENAGE REBELLION... PHILOSOPHIC EXPLORATION... ORTHODOXY!**

#### **Part 1**

I grew up in a fairly strict Calvinist home in South Africa, yet without intolerance towards adherents of other beliefs. The Calvinist, or Reformed, form of Protestantism had been brought to Africa by the Dutch in 1652, when they founded a trading post at the Cape of Good Hope. It has ever since been the religion of most Afrikaners (i.e. the descendants of the Dutch, German and French Huguenot settlers), and our family was no exception. As a young child I

was convinced of the saving love of Jesus Christ, but by my late teenage years this had become replaced first by doubt and then by rebellion. Thus in my final school year I was engaged in debate with some of our town's Dutch Reformed ministers in front of the assembled teachers and pupils, during which they argued in favour of God's creation of the world while I argued in favour of the modern theory of evolution. Due to my extremely limited understanding of the latter, my motivation at the time was probably more a case of youthful rebelliousness than anything else. The real, philosophically based rebellion was still to come.

During my military service I underwent a conversion experience and made a commitment to Christ, within the Protestant understanding of course. I became involved with the so-called Pentecostal movement, but within a few years came to realize that their much-vaunted ‘gifts of the Spirit’ amounted to little more than excessive emotionalism, which further entails a rejection of rational thought and thus of proper theology. By that time I was working in a government office in Cape Town and had begun reading philosophy, in addition to part-time studies for my first degree in Politics. Initially I read the so-called Christian existentialists such as Kierkegaard and Tillich, while also discovering the work of Dostoyevsky which made a profound impression on me. Before long, still in my early twenties, I was reading the atheistic existentialists such as Camus and Sartre. The mental earthquake came with my discovery of the radical philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, whose writings would become my guiding light for several years to come. Although I have since departed from major aspects of Nietzsche’s philosophy, such as his rejection of metaphysics as ‘illusory’ and of Christianity as entailing ‘slave morality’, I remain an admirer of his aristocratic view of life. From an Orthodox viewpoint, the German philosopher’s main value lies in his wide-ranging attacks on humanism (i.e. the world-view according to which humankind and not God is



*Vladimir de Beer*

the measure of all things, and which underlies all of the modern ideologies in the Western world) rather than in his alternative vision of the value-free *übermensch* motivated solely by the will to power.

After approximately a decade as an existentialist, during which time I also dabbled with Germanic neo-paganism, I began to experience a desire for a meaningful spiritual life. At first I was drawn to the so-called New Age movement, which in effect allows one to concoct an individual ‘spirituality’ from elements of various traditions without making a commitment to any of them. Having discovered Buddhism through Religious Studies, I also strove to live according to the Buddha’s teachings and practised meditation whenever my laziness allowed such a degree of discipline. However, within a few years I realized that my attempt to cultivate an ‘inner



god' had failed and that I had arrived at another cul-de-sac in my spiritual quest. Without knowing it at the time, I had been prepared to discover the traditional Christian religion through twenty years of rebelling and searching.

Thus it happened that I heard, almost by chance, about Orthodox reader services which were being held in Afrikaans in a house chapel in Cape Town. Something (or perhaps Someone) prompted me to attend one of these services in order to find out what Orthodoxy was about. Somewhat to my astonishment I found myself drawn to such unfamiliar elements as the icons, incense, candles and chanting in the chapel. I then started reading Orthodox theology, beginning with Metropolitan Kallistos Ware's *The Orthodox Way*. In its pages I came across a statement which suddenly, like a flash of lightning, convinced me why the Virgin birth of Christ (which had always been a stumbling block to me) was not only necessary but also logically meaningful: 'The Son of God was begotten outside time from his Father without a mother, and He was begotten within time from his Mother without a father.' At the same time I became convinced of the supreme importance of the Mother of God in our lives and in our salvation. In addition, as a lover of European art music (a.k.a. classical music) since childhood, I began listening to Orthodox music and enjoyed the harmonies thereof.

Of decisive significance in my movement into Orthodoxy was the life and teaching of Father Seraphim Rose of Platina, the well-known American convert to Russian Orthodoxy. Although not daring to compare myself with his spiritual level, I was struck by the similarities in our quests. Both Father Seraphim and I were raised in Protestant homes, both of us rebelled against Christianity under the influence of Nietzsche and other radical thinkers, and both of us tried to find salvation in Buddhism before discovering Orthodoxy. Early in 1999 I was busy reading his biography, *Not of this World*, when my daughter and I were involved in a serious car crash on a mountain pass near Cape Town. The vehicle we were travelling in was a wreck and had to be written off, but we both came out with light injuries despite not even wearing seat-belts. The mentioned book was lying next



to me on the car seat at the time of the crash and broke into several parts held together by the plastic covering. I came to believe that it was Father Seraphim's prayers which had helped to save us from death and even from serious injury. We now have a beautiful icon of Blessed Seraphim at home.

Later in the same year, when I was in my late thirties, I received the Orthodox Baptism in Cape Town from a dear old Serbian priest, Father Mirko Skrobonja, who together with his parishioners had suffered much during the civil war in the former Yugoslavia. When he asked what my

Orthodox name would be, I replied without hesitation 'Vladimir'; for some reason I had always liked this name. Without having known this in advance, Father Mirko gave me a small icon of St Basil the Great as baptismal gift. Only a few years later did I discover that St Vladimir, Great Prince of Kiev, received the name of Basil at his baptism in 988. This 'coincidence' gave me the spiritual version of goosebumps!

*To be continued*

***Vladimir de Beer***

*6 November 2016: Feast of the Icon of the Mother of God 'Joy of all who sorrow'*

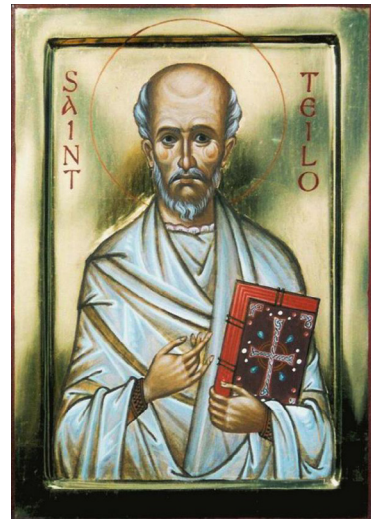
## *British and Irish Saints*

### **SAINT TEILO OF WALES**

***Commemorated:  
9th/22nd February***

The veneration of St Teilo (c.500-560 or 580) throughout Wales and in Brittany was widespread; many churches across Wales and in western England were dedicated to him. His Life was composed in the twelfth century by Geoffrey of Llandaff.

Teilo was born in Penally in present-day Pembrokeshire in south-western Wales. He was related to the royal family, but from his childhood decided to devote his life to the service of Christ. Young Teilo gave away all his possessions and learned the basics of



*St Teilo*

monastic life first through St Paulinus of Whitland, and later, St Dyfrig. He became a friend of St David of Mynyw. Later for some time he lived at Mynyw Monastery together with Sts David and Aidan of Ferns. Two deer once helped the ascetics Teilo and Aidan bring firewood from the forest to the monastery.

Having gained spiritual experience, Teilo resolved to follow in the footsteps of these saints. Teilo is the founder of the Monastery of Llandeilo Fawr (“large church of Teilo”) in Dyfed which became one of the main centres of monasticism and learning in Wales. Teilo left many disciples and spiritual followers after him in this monastery who were venerated as saints. Llandeilo Fawr was one of the centres of Teilo’s ministry. Teilo also served as a bishop. His main see was probably in Llandaff, now a town near the capital city of Cardiff. Teilo served as abbot and bishop in Llandaff where he headed a monastic school and built the first cathedral church. 1,000 monks studied in Llandaff under Teilo at the same time.

Later, after many years of successful preaching, Teilo transferred his diocese to Llandeilo. The foundation of monasteries in Penally and other sites in Wales is attributed to him. This holy man established many churches and communities in various districts of the country, especially in South Wales. Llandeilo Fawr along with numerous smaller communities established by

him, were interconnected and assisted each other.

During the epidemic of plague in 549, Teilo together with St Samson and other monks, guided by an angel, travelled to Brittany; there Teilo and Samson tirelessly preached the Gospel and planted many fruit trees in Dol. Some of those trees grow to this day. Teilo vanquished a “winged dragon” (a demon) who had terrorized the population of a small Breton kingdom.

Seven years later Teilo returned to Wales where he reposed either in Llandeilo or Llandaff.

Teilo performed numerous miracles in his lifetime (he raised one man from the dead, healed another one from the palsy) which continued after his repose. In the Middle Ages Teilo was loved as one of the greatest Church figures in the country’s history. His veneration from Wales extended to Cornwall, Devon, Brittany and neighbouring regions.

The ancient shrine of Teilo, along with his skull, survive at Llandaff Cathedral to this day and attract pilgrims. What is believed to be his tomb with the main relics stands to the right of the high altar and his head relic is kept in the chapel which bears his name and is housed in a specially constructed reliquary. For many centuries it was a custom to take an oath on the saint’s shrine. The shrine of Teilo at the cathedral was opened in 1850 and also earlier in 1736 by an architect and it turned out that the saint’s remains

*Llandaff Cathedral*

along with his episcopal crozier, cross, chalice and other items were intact. A statue of this saint today can be found in the west front of the cathedral. Some parts of Llandaff Cathedral are from the twelfth century; though this church was heavily damaged during the Second World War, it was restored in all its glory. St Teilo together with Sts Peter and Paul, Dyfrig and Euddogwy is a joint patron-saint of this cathedral. He is also a patron-saint of the Welsh capital city of Cardiff.

From a considerable number of churches dedicated to St Teilo in Wales most can be found in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Glamorgan. Churches and toponyms that bear his name are also scattered in Cornwall, Devon and Brittany. The modern Anglican Diocese of St Davids alone has twelve churches dedicated to him. Quite a few schools are named after him.

Today Llandeilo is a little town in Carmarthenshire. Here Teilo founded

his main monastery, served as abbot and bishop, lived as a hermit. The town church is dedicated to its founder. It is medieval by origin but was rebuilt in 1850. After repose of Teilo the Llandeilo Fawr Abbey continued to develop. Around the ninth century a beautiful and ornate Gospel, called “St Teilo’s Gospel”, was kept in Llandeilo. Afterwards it was transferred to the English town of Lichfield where it is displayed to this day. From 1290 on, on the orders of King Edward I an annual fair in honour of Teilo was held near the church in Llandeilo. Fragments of two Celtic crosses (date to c.900) are kept in Llandeilo church. There is a holy well of St Teilo near the church.

In the coastal village of Penally where the saint was born, a church is dedicated to Sts Nicholas and Teilo. Among its treasures there are a ninth-century fine high Celtic cross and a smaller ancient stone cross. In the Middle Ages there was a monastery here which preserved a portion of his relics. From the fourteenth century till



the Reformation it was a convent.

It is known that formerly over twenty places in Wales bore the name that means "church of Teilo". No fewer than forty-five toponyms in Britain and Brittany comprise the name of Teilo. The saint is depicted on stained glass windows of a number of churches of Wales, for example, at the Holy Trinity Church in Abergavenny. A thirteenth-century church in the village of Llantilio-Crossenny in Monmouthshire is dedicated to St Teilo. Due to its large size it is often nicknamed a "baby cathedral". In this spot a battle between a king of Gwent and pagan Saxons took place in the sixth century. St Teilo took a cross, stood on the hillock and began to pray. And under the effect of his prayer the Saxons scattered.



*Head relic of St Teilo at  
Llandaff Cathedral  
(photo from Flickriver.com)*

Small portions of his relics may still be preserved in several localities of Brittany.

***Dmitry Lapa***

*Source: [www.pravoslavie.ru/english/90880.htm](http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/90880.htm)*

## **A TEENAGER'S MEETING WITH GOD**

*In the teenage years a person finds himself at the crossroads: He is reevaluating what his parents have already managed to teach him, is looking for his "own way", his own approach to truth. How can we talk to young people about the Church? How can we find the right words and not drive them away? How must we ourselves spiritually prepare ourselves for this dialogue, which is not so simple? Archpriest Alexander Ovcharenko answers these questions.*

How to talk with children about the Church... If this is still possible to do with little children, then a special ap-

proach is needed for teenagers. Certainly there is no recipe. And thank God! We are all different, and our children are all different. Therefore we must approach everything with discernment. Everything that is done and spoken without discernment can lead to extremely sorrowful spiritual consequences... There is no virtue without discernment.

In beginning a conversation with a teenager, a parent, an adult, or a priest should first of all (of course it all depends upon the circumstances, the time, or the incident leading up to the conversation) find himself - the self



who stands before God in the mystery of confession or in rare minutes of attentive prayer and feeling the presence of God. This is something that must be remembered - I must remember myself, who I am in reality, without the masks; and this is the state that I must be in before talking with children. Whether voluntarily or involuntarily, we all wear many masks - "teachers", "leaders", "sufferers", "experienced", and so on. These masks, these disguises are deliberately false clothing over our personalities. Teenagers feel this falseness very acutely and quickly. It is vital that the moment of conversation bear a sincere character of concern, caring, pain - not for ourselves but for them! There is a great difference!

The faith of children is still only "mama and papa's faith" - because they "have to" have it, so that they won't be scolded, or (in the teenage years) out of inertia if they went to church from infancy. They have not yet had the personal Meeting, that one and only, amazing Meeting, which should happen in their lives. This is a rare, exclusive event, one could even say a unique event, and, undoubtedly, when we observe a real,

living, and firm faith in holy children it can be assessed only as the action of special grace.

It is very hard to speak to children about faith, especially to teenagers... These are very special people, with whom we cannot speak just for fun, or use clichés and dead images. After one minute of boredom they will already be in another world, and in five minutes, they will have run away from us. But this does not mean that we should play with them and entertain them. I repeat, only sincerity and only respect for the person we're talking with (and I emphasize, respect), I would even say acceptance of him as an equal in conversation and not some stupid kid, has any effect.

First we must establish a mutual relationship, and only then mutual action (that is, we must first establish the proper human relationship in order to have a successful conversation). And everyone has his own individuality. We mustn't cite morals to them. An improper sermon or ostentatious piety repels the teenager from God and the Church. Words must be simple and accessible. Christ preached to His apostles and to the people in parables that they could understand. If we hit the teenager over the head with the Gospels, his instinct of "self-preservation" in his teenage world will kick in. But if we do not force or pressure him we then give him an opportunity to open up to us and meet us half way. We must not "herd" children into the Kingdom

of Heaven, but rather we should try to befriend them. It would be good to find out their interests and problems, that is, begin a simple conversation “heart to heart”. And then there will be plenty of bridges that would lead to conversation about the “one thing needful”.



It's better not to pre-digest everything; it's better to give spiritual food from the heart and then leave it - give the youngster the opportunity to think for himself, suffer, contemplate, and come to his own conclusions. Of course, it is an art to direct Him to Christ; but there is no other way. If we truly want them to become real believers we have to take risks. But that's how it is for anything. We always have to differentiate between their ages - this is very important. It also makes a big difference whether it is a boy or a girl. There are specific points. We have to recognize their right to their own choice and mistakes. God Himself has granted this right, in the form of their free and unique souls. This is a priori.

In general, any conversation about faith should begin not with theological points but with the right heart. Remember the words of the apostle Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians? Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual (1 Cor. 15:46). For example: A cup was shattered. Children were playing. One second, and the child's gaze is searching for support - just a moment ago he was sinless and happy (the fiftieth Psalm is not appropriate here), but now he is worried; he's not frightened yet but he's already expecting... What is the child expecting? What might he hear from us? There are in fact only two possibilities. The first is his parents' fury and rage, then punishment - and as a result, fear, paralysis of thought and feelings, and finally, in the future, weakness of soul. No conclusions were drawn whatsoever. We are hasty in punishing children, and as a rule we punish them not for moral transgressions (laziness, deceit, baseness, cowardice) but because they kept us from “relaxing”, or we've lost something. And second: What a wonderful opportunity for the adult, for the parent, is this spontaneous example in life. How can we set priorities? We have to take advantage of them and show what is most important. For example. The younger one broke the cup, and the older sister cleans it up. We can suggest to the younger one that he should thank his sister and kiss her on the cheek; that he should not be

afraid to admit his mistake and know how to correct it. We can teach him that he should be careful with things - after all, he has to keep his conscience clear with respect to God, people, and things. This of course applies more to the older children. And for the older children it will be a good example of love and helping others, as well as a good exercise - don't count your merits and good deeds. A cup is a little matter, but great benefit can come out of it.

In any case, it is not your company but his friends' company that interests the teenager, and you have to recognize that that's how it is; it's obvious. But our conversation should be heart to heart, and then the youngster cannot but feel this and appreciate it. We cannot force

them never to make mistakes or commit sins; this is impossible in principle. They act as did the inexperienced, inattentive, self-assured Eve. They think that the whole world lies at their feet, and they want to try sin "with their teeth". However, it is one thing to spit it right out, but another thing to reach for the next "fruit". Here we can succeed in building a foundation, a backbone, which will someday be our children's support; and we hope that they will make their choice in favour of goodness and virtue.

**Archpriest Alexander Ovcharenko**  
(*Translation by Nun Cornelia (Rees)*)

*Source: pravoslavie.ru, images were taken from pravmir.ru*

## Cathedral Newsletter 30 years ago

**December 1987, № 193**

### **1987: JUBILEE YEAR FOR THE ICONS**

In 787 the Church held a General Council in Nicaea, the Seventh, and clarified its thinking and practice concerning Church art. In this twelfth centenary year of the Council, we will present a number of aspects of this teaching on the pages of the Newsletter; at the same time, we are inviting our readers to send their comments and questions on this subject, which - when relevant - will

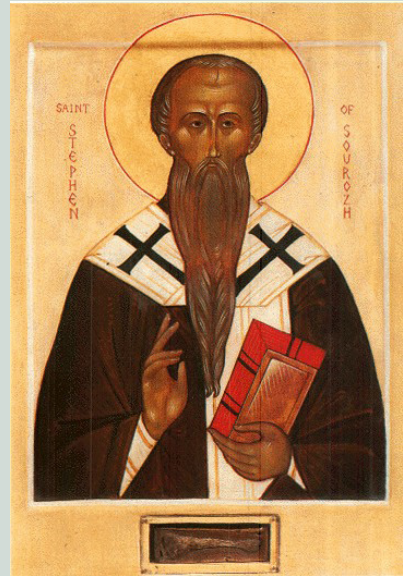
also be published (questions can be published anonymously if you wish). We will also endeavour each month to print the photograph of an icon on the front page.

As the Diocese of Sourozh, we are fortunate to have a teacher in the person of our patron saint – Stephen, Archbishop of Sourozh, whose feast we celebrated on Sunday 15/28th December. His defence of the icons against Iconoclasm took him to the capital, Constantinople, where he is said to have sternly admonished the Emperor himself, Leo the Isaurian, who was fighting the use of icons in

Church. St Stephen was imprisoned for his outspokenness, and suffered much torment in captivity. When he was finally released, he returned to his diocese in the Crimea - an acknowledged confessor of the Orthodox faith, as he is known today.

As a young man, St Stephen received an excellent education in Constantinople and, like so many before him (St Basil and St Gregory in particular), took the monastic profession and withdrew into the desert for the next thirty years of his life. When Patriarch Germanos eventually called him to become a bishop, he emerged from the desert endowed with the theological consciousness of a true teacher of the Church.

What does a hermit learn in the desert? His life of prayer is made of repentance and of contemplation. Among the bare stones and the animals of the desert, the hermit discovers the existential ground of his being, he discovers God in the depth of his existence, his Origin and his Goal. May we see a link between this momentous personal discovery and the art of the icon, which St Stephen



*St Stephen of Sourzh*

went to defend so fiercely as soon as he left the desert? Indeed, the ground of our deepest being is the Risen Lord Christ, Jesus our God, who saves us from death by giving us a share of His life.

The icon of Christ is a true witness of His Risen life and of His abiding presence. Contemplation of the Holy Face fills us with the certainty of the Resurrection, every day of our life.

*Fr Michael*

### *For Reflection*

***It is better to pray with good will for our neighbor, rather than to denounce him for every sin.***

*(St. Mark the Ascetic, Homilies, 1.132)*



## INTERVIEW WITH KIRA CLEGG

In the previous issues of the Newsletter we featured an interview with Alexandra Smirnova - a lady familiar to many of the long-time parishioners who for many years have been taking care of our Parish and the Diocese with their efforts and prayers.

One of Alexandra's good acquaintances was Kira Clegg, or simply Kira, as everyone used to call her. She belonged to the first generation of Russian immigrants in Great Britain. The surname 'Clegg' is well-recognised within political and medical circles of British society. However, this is not the reason why Kira is so dear to our Parish. For many years she was somehow warming people's hearts with her quiet and friendly disposition. She was disposing people to be friendly with each other, and I remember well how she was finding it sadly ironic when people were frittering their values away. I must admit that for me it was precious to find a person who did not lose her faith in the possibility of good and sincere communication between people.

This is how the idea of interviewing Kira came to my mind. The interview got published in the July 1999 issue of the Newsletter. Much water has passed under the bridge since then and unfortunately Kira is not with us anymore. Nevertheless, as we



*Kira Clegg with her cousins*

have been marking 300 years of the presence of the Russian Orthodox Church in Great Britain, it seems somehow appropriate to talk about a good and spiritual person named Kira Clegg.

For many years Kira was under the pastoral care of Archbishop Anatoly helping him with translations of letters and sermons into English. Thanks to the translated sermons a book came about. It was published by another spiritual daughter of Vladyka – the nun Seraphima. Both of these devout women have already reposed to the Lord: Kira died on 5th August 2005, on the day of the icon of the Mother of God of Pochayev. Sister Seraphima passed away in 2008 on August 4th, which is the day of commemoration of St Mary Magdalene, Equal to the Apostles. We hope that we will manage to talk about her in the future issues of the Cathedral Newsletter, but today we shall talk about Kira.

*- Kira, please tell me about your*

***life in Russia or, more precisely, in Estonia which was part of the Russian Empire at the time.***

- Well, it's not exactly like that. Until the age of three and a half I lived in Beryozovaia Rudka – it's in the Ukraine, in Poltava region, on the estate which belonged to my grandfather – Ignaty Platonovich Zakrevski. He was a famous lawyer in the Senate. There is an interesting fact in his biography: at the time of the Dreyfus affair he became indignant with the whole thing and wrote a letter in French to "The Times" in London (it was published as an original) where he criticised the French authorities. This was considered imprudent for a Russian senator because the relationship between France and Russia at the time was quite difficult and he was forced to leave his post. My grandfather supported the French writer Emil Zola who also spoke in defence of Dreyfus.

When I was almost four years old I was sent to Estonia together with my governess where I stayed on the estate of the Benckendorfs. My mother's sister, my aunt, was married to one of the Benckendorfs.

***- What language did you speak?***

- Predominantly English but, of course, we had to speak Estonian as my uncle was a Baltic German, my aunt was Russian, my governess was English, and this is why we had to learn all these languages at the same time.



Every winter we visited our grandmother in Saint Petersburg. Our last visit there took place during the winter of 1917-1918 after the Revolution had begun. We lived in Mohovaya Street and every Sunday we went to Shpalernaya Street to visit our grandmother. Also, every Sunday my governess took me to the Russian church. I think she was instructed to do so by my grandmother. We went to someone's domestic chapel, not far from Mohovaya Street.

***- How old were you when the Revolution took place?***

- I was eight. When we were planning to go back to Estonia all the borders were already closed. We left in a horse-drawn carriage accompanied by a gentleman. At that time the Germans occupied Estonia. My uncle was there. My aunt remained with her sick mother in Saint Petersburg. Immediately after Russia, Estonia had its own revolution. All the landowners were deprived of their land (until then the land belonged to Baltic barons; some of them were married to Russians like my uncle, for example).

My uncle had a big estate which was taken from him, and we had to move to a small house situated in the forest. It was a beautiful place! You see, the Estonians deprived their landowners of the big estates but they still left them with a little bit of land. That revolution wasn't bloody but still there were unrests and shooting.

For several years we lived in the deep

forest. By us I mean my cousins who were younger than me, our Russian nanny, an English governess and my uncle. Once my uncle went to see his former estate and was shot. We went to look for him and found him dead on the road. However, we still continued to live in that little house... Eventually, Estonia became an independent state.

*To be continued.*

## SACRAMENT OF HOLY UNCTION

**Dear Brothers and Sisters! The rite of the Sacrament of Holy Unction during Great Lent begins with General Confession.**

During Lent in the Dormition Cathedral the Sacrament of Holy Unction will take place every week:

**4th week, Thursday, 23rd March, 6pm,** General Confession in English.

**5th week, Thursday, 30th March, 6pm,** General Confession in Russian.

**Holy Week, 12th April, Great Wednesday Matins, 5:30pm**

**Sacrament of Unction, 6:30pm,** General Confession in Russian.

*Children of 7 years or under, who do not yet participate in Confession, do not participate in Holy Unction.*

*During the Mystery of Holy Unction, the faithful are anointed with the holy oil on the forehead, nostrils, cheeks, lips, chest, and both sides of the hands. It is important to come dressed appropriately. Hair and scarves should be arranged so as to leave the face open, shirts and blouses must be open*



*at the neck to permit anointing of the chest, sleeves should be short so that the oil does not come into contact with them.*

*If you are holding a candle, please give it to your neighbour when the priest comes to anoint you so that it does not get in the way.*

*You may bring some cotton wool to wipe off excess oil. This you may take home with you to anoint yourself or family members at times of illness. It should be burned when it is no longer of use.*

*During Lent it is blessed to participate in the Sacrament of Holy Unction only once.*

***It is essential to determine in advance the date of your participation in the Sacrament of Unction and to record your name at the candle desk or in the bookshop for commemoration during the sacrament.***



## For Children and about the Children



### **THE ARCHITECTURE OF OUR CHURCH – a creative assignment for the pupils of the Parish School**

*The building of our cathedral is more than 150 years old. It is a former Anglican church. The west front of the church façade is a faithful copy of the façade of the basilica of Saint Zeno in Verona (Italy).*

*In creating their artwork the pupils of the Parish school were trying to replicate the external architecture of our church. All the wall paintings of the Dormition Cathedral were completed using the sgraffito technique, which literally means scratching.*

*In order for the pupils to understand the experience of the artists who decorated our church, the Parish school teachers proposed that the children tried to work using this scratch-work technique.*

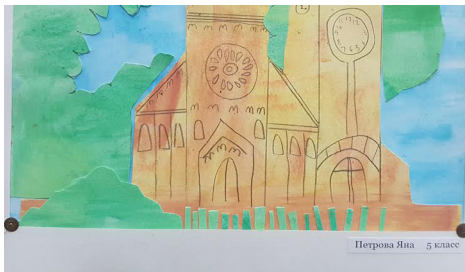
*The editorial team of the “Cathedral Newsletter” selected a few of the children’s creative works to be published in the February issue.*



**Lloyd Sophia, 4th grade**



**Shmatko Lora, 4th grade**



**Petrova Anna, 5th grade**



**Khristov Arseniy, 4th grade**





## CHRISTMAS IN YOUR HEART

With the blessing of Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh, a Nativity performance was staged by the children's Parish school.

Preparations for the performance began in September: the teachers, together with the parents of pupils, designed theatrical sceneries, wrote the scripts, held rehearsals, perfected actions and speeches, chose background music and recorded audio and visual effects. We are grateful to God for giving us a chance of meeting Svetlana Hvorostovksy and for the experience of working with her for many years. Svetlana taught us everything.

We wanted 'Snow Queen', the most Christian of winter fairy tales, to reach the hearts of every spectator. We were hoping to convey the most important message of the fairy tale: love for one's neighbours. This is

the best choice of a story to glorify the Nativity, because it is essential that our hearts glow with the light of love that fills the whole world at Christmas-tide.

During the Soviet era, Andersen's original text of this wonderful fairy tale was severely censored. All mention of God was removed. Fortunately, those times have gone and now we can read the translation of the author's original text.

In this tale Kay is a proud and clever boy who would accept nothing apart from the rational way of thinking. On the other hand, Gerda is a humble, kind-hearted and sincere girl who loves God. She grows roses, since roses were mentioned in psalms that she knew by heart, and reads the Gospel with her grandmother. Andersen makes us understand why it was Kay who was kidnapped by the Snow Queen and why it was Gerda who was able to rescue him.



Saint Innokenty Veniaminov, whose 220th anniversary is celebrated this year, said: 'Education of the mind always must follow behind the education of heart. Filling the mind with pure knowledge without developing the spiritual and moral side of human personality, as is done in most contemporary secular educational establishments, creates the danger of young people being carried away by the deadly rationalisations of the "civilisers", leading to the corruption of the morals of the nation and, as a result, to its spiritual death.'

Kay is an educated boy who was close to death, however the tireless prayers of Gerda helped to save him. The little girl managed to fight against a whole army of snowmen. Kneeling down, she read the Lord's Prayer. In his other fairy tale, Andersen said, 'Everything that a human can ask is contained in one short prayer, the "Our Father". It is a drop of divine mercy, a God-given pearl of comfort. It is put into a child's cradle, next to his heart, like a most precious gift. My dear child, guard it as the apple of your eye. Never lose it, even when you grow up, and you will never get lost on the confusing paths of life. This prayer will be glowing inside of you and you will never perish!'

Following the performance, the harp was played magnificently and the Parish children's choir sang Christmas carols in Russian, Ukrainian and English.

The festive celebrations concluded

with Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh's Christmas congratulations. All the children present were given sweets by His Eminence and a group photo with all the participants of the performance was taken.

I would like to conclude my article with the words of the final scene of the fairy tale:

*'Take note of the beauty  
around,*

*Truth and goodness treasure,*

*Others surround with your  
love,*

*And let Christmas into your heart!''*

***Elena Poplavskaya,  
Head of the Parish School .***





*Cathedral Newsletter is published with the blessing  
of His Eminence Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh*



Online-version is available via the diocesan website: [www.sourozh.org](http://www.sourozh.org)

E-mail: [londonsobornylistok@gmail.com](mailto:londonsobornylistok@gmail.com)

We welcome your stories of finding faith, conversion, pilgrimages etc. If you would like to leave feedback or contribute content to the Newsletter, please contact us at the above address. We are always happy to hear from our readers.

Any donation to support the work of the church, however small, is welcome. You can donate by:

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