

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

DIOCESE OF SOUROZH

CATHEDRAL OF THE DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

67 ENNISMORE GARDENS, LONDON SW7 1NH



Sourozh Messenger

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Annual Conference "Unity of the Church"
26th - 28th May 2017
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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 online 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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Annual Conference "Unity of the Church"

ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE SOUROZH DIOCESE "UNITY OF THE CHURCH"

The Annual Conference of the Diocese of Sourozh took place from 26th to 28th May at the Hayes Conference Centre in Derbyshire. The theme this year was 'The Unity of the Church'. The old mansion with its surrounding new buildings was the setting for a weekend of prayer, serious work and a good break in the company of like-minded people.

The participants of the Conference included Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh, Bishop Antony of Bogorodsk, Head of the Department for Institutions Abroad of the Moscow Patriarchate, Bishop Flavian of Cherepovets and Belozersk, Bishop Matthew of Skopin and Shatsk, clergy of the Sourozh and Skopin dioceses, sisters of the Holy Dormition-Vysha convent, together with lay people from the United Kingdom and Russia. For many people the Annual Conference is the once a year opportunity to meet friends from



around the diocese, so there was real joy in the meeting. Bishop Jonathan Goodall of the Anglican Church, who is responsible for relations with the Orthodox Churches, was an honoured guest at the Conference. A special feature of this year's conference was the presence of two sacred objects from the Vysha monastery – the wonderworking Vysha icon of the Mother of God of Kazan and a reliquary containing a relic of St Theophan the Recluse of Vysha. For this I would like to express deep gratitude to Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh and to all those who organised the bringing of these holy objects from Russia. The work of the Conference began with a moleben celebrated before the icon and the relic, and there was further opportunity to venerate and pray before them during the Divine Liturgy and at other times.

On the evening of Friday 26th May the film producer Dmitry Loktionov presented his films about the Diocese of Sourozh and the history of Orthodoxy in the British Isles as well as some short





videos of a missionary character. These can be found on the new diocesan media portal www.sourozhsphere.net.

On the next day, after common morning prayer and breakfast, Father Stephen Platt, who was chairing the sessions, invited the first speaker, Father Andrew Louth, to present his paper. Fr Andrew shared with us his thoughts on the theme of unity. 'The glorification of the Name of the Lord is union with Him, the bringing of oneself as an offering to God, just as Christ offered Himself to the Father'. The text of the Liturgy itself speaks to us about unity. Fr Andrew drew our attention to what is said at the beginning of the Liturgy: 'for the

union of all, let us pray to the Lord'. Peace is not just the absence of war; it is not an external state. It is peace in our souls, peace in our thoughts, which we bring to the outer world, thereby enriching the outer world with inner peace, with grace. Thus the well-known phrase, 'the peace of the whole world' gains a completely new connotation.

The second talk, which was given by Hieromonk Nikolai (Sakharov), was entitled 'Inter-Orthodox Unity'. The main idea of Fr Nikolai's talk was that our unity in the Church is something completely achievable, it is not an abstraction. One feels this especially here, far from one's homeland. For the majority of those who come from countries with a predominantly Orthodox population, the Orthodox sphere seems very homogeneous, something pertaining to a single people. Here we can rejoice in every fellow-believer, be he Serbian, Georgian or Bulgarian. A very striking event was the visit of pilgrims of different nationalities to the birthplace of St Silouan the Athonite in the Lipetsk region. For



the first time prayers were offered there in the Georgian and Romanian languages. For the local inhabitants this was the first preaching of the unity of Orthodoxy – we are one, we are not some fragment, we are many and we are different. For Fr Nikolai this was the most authentic feast of Orthodoxy, the understanding that it is not only my own people who are the bearers of Orthodox tradition, but different people, different nations. We are not



just an ‘appendage’ of some culture or other, but the bearers of Truth. The next speaker was Doctor Paula Nicholson – a scholar, Churchwarden and one of the founding members of the Parish of St Silouan of Mt Athos in the South of England, a mother and, above all, a Christian. The experience of community presented by Paula was a very good example of the drawing together of different people. In her paper she emphasised that in a community the faithful must both pray for one another and take care of their neighbours. This is difficult in so far as we are very different, particularly in a multinational parish, but without such care what we call community will not

emerge. It was interesting to hear that the common English word ‘parish’ has somewhat negative connotations – arrogance, provinciality, coldness; such are the associations that arise in those who grew up with classical English literature. However, common work and prayer in the context of a parish can transform the place to which we go into the place where we become a community – one in Christ, in the Eucharist and in the Spirit.

Where are the boundaries of the one Church? This question was at the heart of the reflections of Father Antony Ilyin who, based on his medical education, explained to the audience in some detail how boundaries are not simply obstacles but life-saving barriers. Our skin, for example defends us from the external world. The expression, ‘Our fences do not reach to heaven’ is attributed to various theologians, but we remain in the world for now and we have to think about those who are our neighbours and about what is going on in the world around us. Certain things beyond our fences are matters of common concern, for example, attitudes to marriage and family life among Orthodox and heterodox. Questions about safeguarding human dignity are an area where Christians see things in similar terms to Jews and Muslims. Such themes can be points of contact with those who are far from Orthodoxy. Another fertile area for seeking points of contact for us in Britain is the ancient saints of Britain and Ireland. They are

venerated by Catholics and are generally considered to be key figures in the history and culture of antiquity. In such a way we can seek unity with the representatives of various faiths without infringing canonical rules. At the plenary session on Sunday morning Fr Stephen summarised the talks and gave an opportunity to anyone who wished to put questions to the speakers. The main event of Sunday, however, was of course the Divine Liturgy, at which many people were able to receive Holy Communion. After lunch, those who wished set off on a pilgrimage to Saint Bertram, whose relics lie less than an hour's journey away. This Conference was something really special, a multinational gathering, talks in two languages, the singing of a combined choir, sacred objects brought from Russia as well as the local British holy places – all this witnessed to the unity of the Church and of Orthodox believers.

Julia Pliauksta

In following issues we plan to present the Conference talks in more detail.

DIOCESE CONFERENCE: REFLECTIONS BY PARTICIPANTS FROM RUSSIA

The Annual Conference of the Diocese of Sourozh took place from May 26th-28th, 2017. During the Conference the participants from Russia were provided with the opportunity of significantly broadening their horizons, since in Russia Russian Orthodoxy is an habitual cultural milieu, while in Great Britain it is oases of faith, uniting people who live in a completely different culture. That is why the contrast between prayer in the church and the rest of the world is quite substantial: the joy of communal prayer is very intense and concentrated, and the feeling of a long-awaited meeting is extraordinarily sharp. In here, the choice is made more deliberately than in Russia, it is more of an existential choice since it also has to do with preserving one's identity. It is important to mention that there are many Christian relics in the British Isles, which could be quite surprising for many. The informal atmosphere was very





Fr Stephen leading the choir

striking, the harmony of unity and freedom, the absence of pomposity; the sessions had a warm, domestic feel to them. One of the most striking impressions was the presence of Orthodox British people such as priests who came to Russian Orthodoxy while searching for spiritual depth in their homeland. The sincerity of their faith and the depth of their prayer were amazing; to take

took the role of the choir director during the services and who led the Conference meetings with great love and a sophisticated sense of humour. If a Russian person who lives abroad finds in the Russian Orthodox Church a return to their roots, the path to Christ from and through their homeland, and greatly values that, then for a British person to find their way to Christ through Russian Orthodoxy is a real miracle and spiritual accomplishment. For those who live in Russia, it is very important to see and feel all this, in order to appreciate all that they have and be grateful to God.

Sophia Kudrina

Diocesan News

THE FESTIVAL “FROM HEART TO HEART” WAS HELD IN LONDON AND DUBLIN

The spiritual and educational festival ‘From Heart to Heart’ was held at the Dormition Cathedral in London from 4th to 7th of May, and at the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in Dublin from 11th to 14th of May. The festival was held with the blessing of Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh and Metropolitan Pavel of Minsk and Zaslavl, Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus. The programme of the four-day festival included exhibitions of monastery workshops, master-

classes for the production of icons in which all wishing could take part, performances of the monastery choir, children's theatres and, of course, conversations about Orthodoxy and life in the monastery. One of the icons which was written during the festival by iconographers of the monastery and blessed in the Dormition Cathedral - the image of St George the Victory-Bearer – took part on the 9th of May in the March of the Immortal Regiment (an annual event in Russia and Russian communities abroad honouring the veterans of the Second World War – ed.).



The festival turned out to be very colourful and homely - in London the Cathedral chapel became for a few days an island of Eastern-Slavonic culture, with a miniature hut, embroidered tablecloths, traditional crafts and even scented honey and herbal teas. Those who visited the festival spoke about the fact that it left the warmest impression of them, told them about Russian Orthodoxy, Belarus and its folk art, and for some it was the first encounter with St Elizabeth the Grand Duchess. Sisters of the monastery hold similar festivals in different cities of Europe in order to tell about their faith, folk traditions and to present the life of a monastic community, not hidden from society, but labouring for its

good. Consequently, all the proceeds from the sale of souvenirs, icons and food products were directed to the charitable purposes of those in need in the Republic of Belarus.

Julia Pliauksta



DIVINE LITURGY AT ST KENTIGERN'S CHURCH IN CUMBRIA

The church of Saint Kentigern is situated in the small village of Caldbeck in the County of Cumbria. The church has been refurbished and extended many times but the main part of it was built in the 12th-13th centuries. But this church was not the first there – it was built on the site of a previous one, which had been there since the 6th century. According to tradition that was the time when St Kentigern, Abbot, Bishop and founder of Glasgow (also known as St Mungo) prayed in this church during his well-known missionary work. For many centuries St Mungo has been venerated as one of the apostles of Scotland and

the patron of Glasgow.

On May 20th, the Dean of North England and Wales, Priest Dimitry Nedostupenko, assisted by Deacon Anatoli Vihrov, celebrated the Divine Liturgy in St Kentigern's Church. Lay people from several parishes from Northern England and London participated in the Liturgy. After the service Father Dimitry led a procession and Moleben near St Kentigern's holy spring, which also dates to the 6th century. After the services the clergy and parishioners gathered for a lunch and talks. St Kentigern, pray to God for us!

HOLY RELICS FROM RUSSIA VISIT MANCHESTER

On Monday May 29th, 2017, the miracle-working Vysha Copy of the Kazan Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God and a fragment of the relics of St Theophan the Recluse of Vysha visited the Patriarchal Church of the Intercession of the Most Holy Mother of God in Manchester. The Divine Liturgy was headed by Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh, Bishop Matthew of Skopin and Shatsk and other distinguished guests.





TO THE SEA BY “VARYAG” FOR VICTORY DAY CELEBRATIONS

On 13th May, the Feast of St Ignatius Brianchaninov, Glasgow Russian Orthodox School visited the Varyag memorial in Lendalfoot, Scotland, on the North Channel coastline. The children celebrated Victory Day there.

Fr Georgy Zavershinsky, Rector of the Russian Orthodox Parish of St. Kentigern in Glasgow of the Diocese of Sourozh, served Litiya for the departed seamen by the memorial, near the place where the legendary Russian cruiser sank in 1920. She was famous for her crew’s stoicism at the beginning of the Russo-Japanese War at the Battle of Chemulpo Bay (1904).

“As it is said in many poems, if you are a seaman and died at sea, you have neither a cross nor a grave. There’s nowhere to come and mourn for the

departed. That’s why we came here, to the coast’, Evgeniya Vladimirovna Akshenceva, a literature teacher, told everyone. Together we observed a minute of silence in the memory of those who fought and suffered.

After that the children read poems dedicated to the heroism of Russian seamen, which they had learnt by heart. Then all who came sang songs about Varyag. “These are the songs we especially prepared for this event. The children learnt them during singing lessons”, said Evgeniya Vladimirovna. “This memorial is a symbol of courage”, she added.

Marina Sergeevna Shumickaya, the acting director of the school, thanked the guests – the Veterans of the school (“War children”) – for coming to visit Varyag. They were given flowers and cards. At the end the children laid wreathes to the memorial. Both children and adults set paper ships into the water in the memory of the seamen.

Interestingly, St Andrew is the patron saint of both Scotland and the Russian Navy. The diagonal cross, on which he was crucified, is used on the Scottish flag – the Saltire. The same cross is on the St Andrew’s flag – the Russian Navy Ensign.

Glasgow Russian Orthodox School has been operating at the Parish of St. Kentigern since 2005. It is the only Orthodox children’s school in Scotland.

Tatiana Salmon

Cathedral News

MYRRH-STREAMING HAWAII ICON OF THE MOTHER OF GOD OF IVERON IN THE CATHEDRAL

The wonderworking Hawaii myrrh-streaming icon of the Mother of God of Iveron came to the Dormition Cathedral in Knightsbridge in the evening of Saturday 20th May. Orthodox believers came to venerate



the myrrh-streaming icon and to pray during the Vigil. The icon stayed in the Cathedral until the end of the service.

The wonderworking Hawaii myrrh-streaming icon of the Mother of God of Iveron inexplicably began to stream myrrh in the home of a pious Orthodox couple in Honolulu, Hawaii, on September 23rd / October 6th, 2007. This phenomenon was recognised as authentic and miraculous by the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia.

This image is famous for the healings of many pious people from cancer,

blindness, diseases of the kidneys and liver, chronic illnesses and other infirmities. The icon is presently in the care of the Russian Orthodox Church in Honolulu, but it frequently travels around the world and grants healings.

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF FR JOSEPH'S PRIESTHOOD

On June 3rd, after the Divine Liturgy the clergy and laity of the Dormition Cathedral congratulated Archpriest Joseph Skinner on the 10th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. Many people had brought flowers and wanted to thank Fr Joseph in person, expressing their gratitude to him and Matushka Sarah for their service to God and people, their kindly attitude to our needs and a willingness to help anyone who seeks God. Many years, Father Joseph!



CHILDREN'S FESTIVE EVENT TO MARK THE 220th ANNIVERSARY OF SAINT INNOKENTY VENIAMINOV

On the 20th May 2017, with the blessing of Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh, the Day of Slavic Writing and Culture took place at the Parish School of the Dormition Cathedral of the Diocese of Sourozh. The festivities were held to mark the 220th anniversary of the birth of Saint Innocent Veniaminov, Metropolitan of Moscow and Kolomna. The atmosphere during the event was very amicable. The cartoon 'Saint Innocent, the Apostle of America and Siberia' was screened. A special surprise during the festivities was the performance by Svetlana Yegorova-Johnson, who brought and played a Yakut musical instrument called the 'homus'. At the close of the event, Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh addressed all the children that were present, their parents, teachers, and guests, with his message on the importance of the missionary and educational activities of Saint Innocent. His Eminence mentioned that works of the saint



were reminiscent of the works of St Cyril and Methodius. The brother saints composed the Cyrillic alphabet and taught the Slavic people reading and writing skills, while St Innocent created an alphabet for the native people of the North in his turn. What is most important, is that he brought the Gospel to the remote populations of the North.

Archbishop Elisey expressed his gratitude to Svetlana Yegorova-Johnson for her considerable contribution towards the organisation of the festivities and presented her with flowers. The principal of the Parish School – Elena Poplavskaya, presented souvenirs to the guests – handmade figurines of little angels made of pearly beads by the Parish School pupils. Saint Innocent, pray to the Lord for us!

Elena Poplavskaya





CELEBRATIONS OF THE 220TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF SAINT INNOKENTY (VENIAMINOV)

With the blessing of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, the year 2017 is marked by the celebration of the 220th anniversary of the birth of Saint Innokenty (Veniaminov), Metropolitan of Moscow and Kolomna, Apostle of Siberia and America, an honorary member of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society and Moscow Imperial University, outstanding in his work in linguistics, ethnography and geography, a craftsman who built temples with his own hands, a man of heroic endurance. For his love of God and of the Church and of people, the Lord raised him to great spiritual heights and to the highest position in the Russian Church at that time. Born in a village in the Irkutsk Oblast in the year 1797, he spent his whole life in the eastern parts of the Russian Empire: Eastern Siberia, Russian America (Alaska), and the Russian Far East including Yakutia, the Amur and Kamchatka,

until he became Metropolitan of Moscow and Kolomna in 1867. St Innokenty was a great missionary who led thousands of people to the Lord and thanks to his incessant work and prayer the independent Yakut diocese was established. He was a talented translator of Orthodox literature into the languages of the ethnic minorities to whom he preached the Gospel; a man of devout prayer, he blessed Archpriest Dimitry Khitrov, the future bishop Dionysius, to compile the alphabet and grammar of the Yakut language. He himself composed the alphabet and the grammar of the Aleut language however his works were not limited to the Aleut language, he also studied Tlingit and Alutik. The scale of his personality and the scope of his works in the regions of Siberia, the Far East and North America, puts him on a par with the outstanding educators of the Russian state. His life is worthy of thoughtful and careful study. In 1997, as tribute to his immortal heritage, there was a series of international events dedicated to the 200th anniversary of his birth, initiated by the laity and the leadership of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and with the blessing of Bishop Herman. The 210th anniversary of the birth of St Innokenty was celebrated during the Days of Yakutia festival in Moscow in 2007, where a liturgy in the Yakut language was celebrated by Patriarch Alexy in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. The Republic



of Sakha (Yakutia) acted as a sponsor of the above-mentioned events.

Twenty years ago, in 1997, a blessing to celebrate the 200th anniversary in England was given to us by the ever-memorable Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh. There was a lecture by Egor Spiridonovich Shishigin who travelled from Yakutia, along with Claudia Ivanovna Fedorova, as an interpreter and students from the city of Mirny. Today, the initiative to organize the celebration of the 220th anniversary of St Innokenty and the 40th anniversary of his canonization comes from his native Irkutsk. A national project, ‘The Way of Saint Innokenty’ is underway in 10 regions of the Russian Federation: the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Irkutsk, Amur, Magadan, Sakhalin regions, Khabarovsk, Kamchatka and Zabaikalsk Territories, Chukotsky Autonomous District and Moscow. This reflects the relevance of the project and the status of Metropolitan Innokenty (Veniaminov) on an international level.

St Innokenty had a special approach to the indigenous peoples of different nations in the vast regions where he served in the nineteenth century, seeking to study and include native

languages in the liturgical life of these peoples, similar to Saints Cyril and Methodius among the Slavs in the 9th century. In this respect, St Innokenty followed the continuous apostolic tradition in the Orthodox Church.

Here in the UK we also make our contribution to the celebration of the 220th anniversary of the birth of the saint. Events began in the Diocese of Sourozh with a cycle of lectures about the life and activities of the saint in the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Mother of God in Ennismore Gardens, London.

In May 2016, during the annual Diocesan Conference, a presentation of Irina Dmitrieva's book "To the North through the Ages, Part 1" took place, which was devoted to the missionary activity of St Innokenty. On May 20th this year, a concert for the children of the Church Parish School took place, organized by the efforts of a small creative group of teachers who prepared an excellent script for the celebration of the 220th anniversary as part of the Days of Slavonic Writing and Culture dedicated to the memory of the Equals-to-the-Apostles Cyril and Methodius.

The UK jubilee events will end in October 2017, when there will be a presentation of the life of St Innokenty, a Divine Liturgy and a concert at the London Cathedral of the Dormition of the Mother of God.

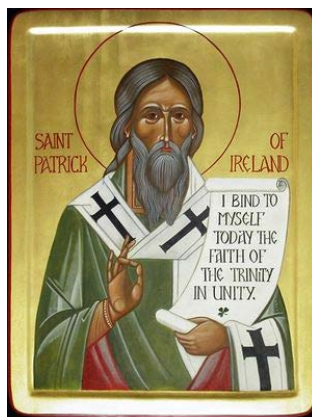
Svetlana Yegorova-Johnston

WESTERN SAINTS ADDED TO THE CALENDAR OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

St. Patrick, the great enlightener of Ireland, will be officially celebrated in the Russian Orthodox Church for the first time this year on March 17/30. At its March 9 session, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox, under the chairmanship of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, officially adopted St. Patrick and more than fifteen other pre-schism Western saints into its calendar, according to the report published on the Patriarchate's official site.

The decision was taken after hearing a report from His Eminence Metropolitan Clement of Kaluga and Borovsk, chairman of the commission for the compilation of the Russian Orthodox Church's Menaion, or calendar of saints, with the proposal to include several ancient saints who laboured in Western lands before the Great Schism of 1054.

The commission, created on September 18, 2014 by the blessing of His Holiness, had been working on compiling a list of Western saints guided by the following criteria: their unblemished confession of the Orthodox faith; the circumstances in which their glorification took place; the absence of their names from polemical works against the Eastern Church and rite; and their present veneration in foreign dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church and other Local



Icon of St Patrick of Ireland

Churches.

Also considered were the “Complete Menaion of the East” by Archbishop Sergius (Spassky), the report of St. John Maximovitch to the Holy Synod of the Russian Church Abroad in 1952, the articles of the Orthodox Encyclopedia and the Synaxarion compiled by Hieromonk Macarius of the Athonite monastery of Simonopetra.

The Western saints added into the calendar of the Russian Orthodox Church are:

Hieromartyr Pothinus, Bishop of Lyons, and those with him (June 21/5; c. 177)

Martyrs Blandina and Ponticus of Lyons (June 21/5; c. 177)

Martyr Epipodius of Lyons (April 22/May 5; c. 177)

Martyr Alexander of Lyons (April 24/May 7; c. 177)

Hieromartyr Saturninus, first Bishop of Toulouse (November 29/ December 12; c. 257)

Martyr Victor of Marseilles (July 21/August 3; c. 290)

St. Alban, Protomartyr of Britain (June 22/July 5; c. 304)

St. Honoratus, Archbishop of Arles and founder of Lerins Monastery (January 16/29; 429)

St. Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre (July 31/August 13; 448)

St. Vincent of Lerins (May 24/June 6; c. 450)

St. Patrick, Bishop of Armagh and Enlightener of Ireland (March 17/30; 451)

St. Lupus the Confessor, Bishop of Troyes (Gaul) (July 29/August 11; 479)

St. Genevieve of Paris (January 3/16; 512)

St. Germanus, Bishop of Paris (May 28/June 10; 576)

St. Procopius, abbot of Sazava in Bohemia (September 16/29; 1053)



Icon of St Genevieve of Paris

Legacy of Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

CALLING OF THE APOSTLES

It is essential for us to realise the link there is between Christ and the apostles. <...> If you read the Gospels you will see that the apostles and the Lord Jesus Christ were born and lived in the same area. Christ came to live in Nazareth as a child; the apostles lived all about the place of His abode. We know nothing about the early years of these men, but if we think that Cana of Galilee was less than 4 miles away from Nazareth, if we think that all the cities and all the villages in which Peter and Andrew, John and James and others



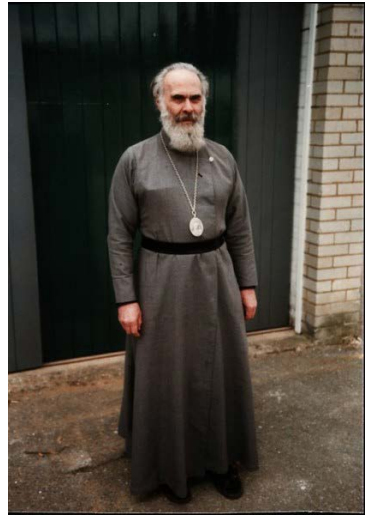
St Peter and St Paul

lived were around the same place, we can imagine that they had met and seen and heard the Lord Jesus Christ as a child, as a youth.

We know nothing about the impact of His personality growing harmoniously into the fullness of His human stature, but links of personal knowledge and familiarity existed. The disciples of John the Baptist, Andrew and John, were the disciples of a cousin of the Lord. James was the brother of John, Peter was the brother of Andrew. When they first met Christ, they sought out their friends Nathanael and Phillip. Even the words of Nathanael ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’ is not a mysterious saying. What would any one of us say if he was told that God Himself had become man in a village four miles away from his own village?

And then there is a whole process which we can trace in the Gospels in which one can see how, gradually, the disciples discover the Lord Jesus Christ, how He becomes gradually more and more to them. And one day their relatedness to Him is such that they could not leave Him even if they wanted to. When most of Christ’s disciples abandoned Him the Lord said to the Twelve: ‘Are you also going to go?’ And Peter answers: ‘Where should we go? Thou hast the word of eternal life’. This relatedness between the disciples and Christ that began perhaps in friendship, then in admiration grew to the relationship of disciples and Master, on the way to Caesarea Philippi becomes a recognition, proclaimed by one of them as a gift of God, of what He truly is: ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God’.

It is a relationship so deep, so perfect



Metropolitan Anthony

and complete that they cannot leave Him even if terror comes upon them. When Christ tells His disciples that He is going to Bethany because Lazarus has died, His disciples say: ‘Are you going back into Judaea? Were not the Jews about to kill you?’ And one of them says, ‘Let us go with Him and die with Him’. And that one is Thomas, the one who so often is thought as a doubter. No, he is not a doubter. He is ready to live and to die with his Master, but he is not prepared credulously to receive the news of Christ’s Resurrection with all its resurrecting impact and life-giving power without being sure — because when Christ died on the cross His disciples scattered, afraid, in hiding, and yet, attached to Him with all the fibres of their heart and mind and soul, they felt that life had gone out of the world, life had gone out of their lives. That happens to us when someone

who is infinitely dear dies. Then we discover that because this person has died everything which is shallow, trivial, small, too small to be as great as life and death, becomes irrelevant. We turn away from it, we become as great as our perception of life and death can make us.

That is what happened to them, but then there was no life, there was only crushing, destructive death. They could no longer live because life had gone out of their lives, but they could continue to exist. And all of a sudden they discovered that Christ was alive and that they could live and, more than this, that in a mysterious way because they had died so deeply and completely through love and oneness with Him, they could, through love and oneness — both His and theirs — be alive, but alive with an unshaking certainty that no death can deprive them of life any more, no kind of death; death was

defeated. This is what we sing at Easter, this is what we proclaim as the Gospel. Life has triumphed, death has no power over us. Our body has no power to kill us when it dies. This is one of the essential witnesses of the apostles: not simply that they are so faithful in their love for Christ that they are prepared to die, but that they are so certain from inner certainty, from the welling up of eternity within them, from the victory within them of the life of Christ, that death is no more. One can peacefully let go of temporariness, as St Paul says. For him death does not mean divesting himself of temporary life, it means to be clad with eternity, eternity fulfilled, what it was incipiently, germinally, fighting for the fulfilment in what he calls his body of corruption.

‘TRAVELS IN HOLY RUSSIA WITH THE TEMPLE GALLERY’

Sir Richard Temple, a well-known expert on icons, took a group of visitors on a two week trip to Russia to see the museums and churches in and around Moscow and St Petersburg. The exhibition ‘Travels in Holy Russia with the Temple Gallery’ – the beautiful outcome of the trip – was opened at the representative office of Rossotrudnichestvo in London on May 19, 2017.

The exhibition is comprised of fifty photographs taken by two travellers - Alain de Lotbiniere and Hans Matschukat, who tried to capture their responses to the corners of Russia they visited. The Temple Gallery also presented the Tikhvin Icon of the Mother of God (late XV century) as part of the exhibition.

In his opening remarks Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the UK Alexander Yakovenko noted his great appreciation of Sir Richard’s contribution to the development of human-

itarian cooperation and strengthening of Russian-British relations. He also presented Sir Richard with a personal letter of appreciation.

During the opening of the exhibition Sir Richard presented a pearl embroidered icon of the Smolensk Mother of God (XIX century) to the Russian Orthodox Church in the person of His Eminence Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh.

Richard Temple is a British citizen who dedicated his life to the study and collection of Russian icons. In 1959, he founded the Temple Gallery as a centre for the study, restoration and exhibition of ancient icons and sacred art. He is a member of the Advisory Panel of the Art Fund (formerly the National Art Collections Fund of

Great Britain) and has been active in in the acquisition of icons by several major museums, including the British Museum, the Musée du Louvre in Paris, the Timken Art Gallery in San Diego, California and the Museum of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. He has published many catalogues and scientific articles, as well as two books on icons.



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 6. ANNOINTING WITH OIL

The human person was created with an incorruptible and immortal body. After the Fall it lost these qualities and became corruptible and mortal. According to St Gregory the Theologian, the human person 'put on the garment of skin, which is our coarse flesh, and became



a body-bearer'. Illness and disease became a part of human life. The root of all infirmity, according to the Church's teaching, is human sinfulness: sin entered the human person in such a way that it polluted not only his



*Healing of the blind man.
Fresco at the Optina
Pustyn Monastery
(Foto A. Pospelov,
www.pravoslavie.ru)*

soul and intellect, but also his body. If death is a consequence of sin (cf. James 1:15), an illness may be seen as a situation between sin and death: it follows sin and precedes death. It is not, of course, that every particular sin results in a particular illness. The real issue concerns the root of all illness, namely, human corruptibility. As St Symeon the New Theologian remarks, ‘doctors cure human bodies... but they can never cure the basic illness of human nature, its corruptibility. For this reason, when they try different means to cure one particular illness, the body then falls prey to another disease’. Human nature, according to St Symeon, needs a physician who can heal it from its corruptibility, and this physician is Jesus Christ Himself.

During His earthly life Christ healed many people. Before healing someone, He often asked him about his faith: ‘Do you believe that I am able to do this?’ (Matt. 9:28) As well as healing the body, Christ also healed the human soul from its most severe disease, unbe-

lief. He also pointed to the Devil as the origin of all illness: of the bent woman. He said that she was ‘bound by Satan’ (see Luke 13:16).

The Church has always considered its own mission as the continuation in all aspects of Jesus Christ’s ministry, including healing. Thus, from apostolic times, a sacramental action existed which would later receive the name of Anointing with oil. It is found in the New Testament: ‘Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders (literally, presbyters) of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven’ (James 4:15-16). It is clear that the question here is not of a normal anointing with oil, which in ancient time was used for medical purposes, but of a special sacramental action. Healing qualities are ascribed here not to the oil, but to the ‘prayer of faith’; and physician is not a presbyter,

but ‘the Lord’.

In the modern-day practice of the Orthodox Church, the sacrament of Anointing has preserved all the original elements described by St James: it is conducted by seven priests (in practice, often, by three or two), prayers and New Testament passages are read, and the sick person is anointed seven times with blessed oil. The prayer of absolution is read by one of the presbyters at the end of the sacrament. The Church believes that, in accordance with St James’s words, the sins of the one who receives Anointing are forgiven. This, however, in no way implies that Anointing can be regarded as a substitute for confession. Unfounded also is the opinion of some Orthodox believers that in Holy Unction all forgotten sins, that is, those not mentioned at Confession, are forgiven. The sacrament of Confession, as we said above, results in the forgiveness of all sins. The intention behind the sacrament of Anointing with oil Unction is not to supplement Confession, but rather to give new strength to the sick with prayers for the healing of body and soul.

Even more misleading is the interpretation of Anointing as the ‘last anointing’ before death. This was the understanding of the sacrament in the Roman Catholic Church before Vatican II, and it still finds its place among Orthodox believers. This is a misinterpretation simply because Anointing does not guarantee that a person who received it will necessarily be healed.

Rather, one can say that Holy Unction makes the one who receives it participate in Christ’s sufferings, renders his bodily illness salvific and healing, liberating him from spiritual illness and death.

According to the Church’s teaching, God is able to transform everything evil into something good. In this particular case illness, which by itself is evil and a consequence of corruption, becomes for the human person a source of spiritual benefits. By means of it he participates in Christ’s sufferings and is risen with Christ to a new life. There are many cases when illness brings people to death, compels them to change their life and to embark upon the path of repentance that leads to God.

Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeev)





APOSTOLIC GUIDANCE FOR ORTHODOX ONLINE USERS

Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth (2 Timothy 2:23-25).

These apostolic lines are a great lesson for Orthodox online users who enjoy a bit of an online quarrel with other Christians. If two brothers in Christ were to meet in a real life, their conversations would most likely start with a greeting. Ideally, there would be a fraternal kiss following the Apostle's commandment. The meeting would definitely not start with a reproach. If the brothers were unacquainted with each other, their communication would begin with a brief introduction. How come things are so dramatically different when it comes to communication on web forums and comments on social networking websites?

Unfortunately, sometimes it seems that some Christians demonstrate degrading demeanour online, or perhaps they reveal their true faces.

It is all a big disgrace, since such dialogues always remain accessible.

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”(John 13:35).

If a secular user joins and reads through many dialogues of Christians on the social network sites, not only will he not be able to detect whose followers we really are, but for him the only sign of our belonging to the Orthodox faith will be the presence of quotes from the Bible and from patristic literature that do not say much to him. However, it is not about the quotes, it is about our demeanour and spirit. If our behaviour is far from what St Paul the Apostle writes to Saint Timothy and from patristic instructions, then what is the point of these quotes? It is better not to know something, but behave like a decent Christian. To summarise, there is only one word that can describe all this: disgrace.

Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies. According to the Oxford Dictionary, ignorance is not just the lack of knowledge or awareness in general, but also being ‘uneducated, unsophisticated’. If somebody begins his dialogue not with the greeting, but with writing something offensive (unconstructive criticism),

begins ‘trolling’ other users, it is best to avoid such conversations, since they lead to conflict. If a person begins his comment with ill-disposed undertones, it is usually a very indicative sign.

You know that they breed quarrels.

By the way, the fact that usually Christians (and not only Christians), prefer not to argue in public, is interesting. However, for some reason the people who argue online are not ashamed to do so in public Web space (forums, social networks). The sense of shame gets lost. This means that for some Christians, the online sphere creates an illusion of being transported to some different reality. In this parallel reality, they can allow themselves to do certain things that they would not normally do in real life. When it comes to behaviour online and in reality: it would be amusing if one Christian came to visit another one, and started to blame and shame him through the door, without revealing his face. For some reason, certain Christians do follow different rules when online and in reality. As long as your face is hidden behind an avatar, you can type whatever and how much you want. Nobody can see your face, and many people have no idea of who you are at all.

The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone.

If there is no affability, the motives of writing all sorts of comments are in question. A typical example: one brother posted something that

another one did not like. Here, the person who wrote this comment should ask themselves: what am I aiming to achieve with my comments, which instead of addressing someone by greeting or getting acquainted with them, contain unconstructive criticism? If an accuser wants to correct their brother, then he should be “kind to everyone, ***able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness,***” (even our opponents should be taught with humility, not to mention our brothers in Christ). Blessed Theophylact states: “Therefore a strong accusation has power when it is made with humility. It is more likely to touch someone’s heart when made with humility, than when shaming them with strictness’. It seems that if there is no humility, it is probable that the goal of the accuser is not to correct his brother; therefore, he is either trying to satisfy his passion in verbal argument, or he does it because of jealousy, or other reasons that don’t come as a result of fraternal love. If someone decides to accuse, it should be done in a Biblical way. Looking at these ugly discussions, one can feel sad and ashamed. Can you find this kind of communication among the Saints? No. Therefore, it means that instead of trying to follow their example, we are just throwing their quotes around, just in order to satisfy our vanity. Not only do we not feel piety; sometimes there is a lack of basic

respect and the rules of etiquette. In this context, all these high-flown words on the spiritual bond of Christians become empty chat. Not to mention rudeness, when instead of answering a direct question, your opponent brother might take it on a personal level and, moreover, jump to certain conclusions that are typical of those who consider themselves to be clairvoyant readers of people's souls. If there were love, there would be a greeting, and something along the following lines: 'Brother, may I ask, what did you mean when you wrote this or that? What did you feel in your heart? Did you not have at that point thoughts of judging or vainglory?' Whatever is done without love is sinful.

You cannot hide behind quotes from holy people. To copy and paste sayings from the holy fathers is really easy, but to fulfil the instructions of St Paul is more difficult. Is it really the case that the rules given to us by the Apostle are only applicable in case of face to face communication, and they somehow do not apply when it comes to online interactions? I am pretty sure that the answer to this question is evident for a Christian.

Antony Dulevich, Director of the Missionary Department of the Diocese of Kizil

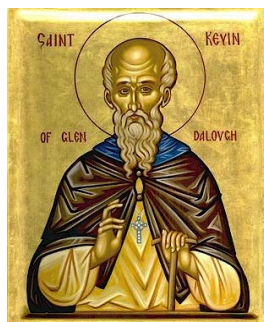
Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/103450.html>

British and Irish Saints

VENERABLE KEVIN OF GLENDALOUGH

Commemorated: 3rd/16th June

Venerable Kevin of Glendalough
Commemorated: 3rd/16th June St Kevin is one of the greatest saints of Ireland. He lived in the sixth and early seventh centuries. The saint was born in the province of Leinster to a noble family. His name means "of blessed birth". An angel appeared to Kevin's parents shortly before his baptism and told them to give him this name. As a boy Kevin was raised by St Petroc of Cornwall, who at that time was living in Ireland. At age twelve the



An icon of St Kevin

young man already lived with monks. Upon his ordination to the priesthood, Kevin, accompanied by an angel, crossed the mountains of Wicklow and settled at the upper lake in the place called Glendalough, which means "the



*St Kevin's Church at Glendalough,
Wicklow*

glen of two lakes” , since it has two lakes, upper and lower, situated close to each other. Here the saint lived for seven years in isolation and prayer in a cave. He walked barefoot, wore rough clothes and ate herbs and roots, only sometimes allowing himself fruit and fish. Disciples gathered around him and the saint founded Glendalough Monastery, which became one of the largest and most influential ones in Ireland. Kevin became its abbot. Kevin lived in harmony with nature, especially with wild animals. Even branches and leaves of trees sang sweet songs to Kevin! Once when Kevin was standing concentrated in prayer with his arms outstretched, a blackbird landed on his palms, built a nest on them, hatched eggs, cared for its nestlings and flew away. Artists liked to depict this scene from the saint's life. In one of the two lakes there lived an otter that helped the hermit. When he lived alone it brought him fish, and when Kevin was abbot it delivered salmon to the brethren. One time Kevin accidentally dropped his prayer-book in the water. The otter emerged holding the prayer-book in its mouth—the book was absolutely

undamaged. One monk was overcome by greed: he decided to kill the otter and to use its skin to make gloves for himself. But the clever mammal felt his evil intention and left that site forever.

The story of the foundation of Glendalough is interesting. While Kevin was praying in his cave, a cow came to him every day and licked his clothes. Whenever it returned to its master it gave as much milk as fifty cows could provide. The farmer resolved to follow the cow. Thus he saw Kevin, who converted the farmer to Christ. The latter was baptised with all his family. So the saint decided to leave his hermitage and undertake a mission across the district and to build a monastery. At that time Glendalough was ruled by an old pagan, King O'Tool. He had a goose which was also frail and could not fly. The ruler asked Kevin to make his goose young. The saint promised, but on condition that the king would grant him the land over which the goose would fly. Kevin touched the bird and it instantly became young. The goose flew over the valley of Glendalough and it belonged to the monastery from that time. No skylarks sing above Glendalough. When they began building the monastery the workers decided to rise as early as skylarks and go to sleep as late as lambs. But soon the masons were so exhausted that the quality of their work deteriorated. The saint prayed for a solution. In an instant, all the larks vanished; the building was completed successfully. Another

time a boar ran up to Kevin seeking protection—because hunters with hounds were chasing it. The hounds, seeing the saint with the boar, gently lay on the ground. The hunters wanted to kill the animal, but a flock of birds landed on the tree. The men saw a sign from above and retired. Once a man who suffered from fits was told in a vision to come to Kevin and eat an apple. But there were no apple trees at the monastery. Then Kevin ordered a row of willows to produce apples (against the laws of nature) and the trees obeyed. The sick man was cured and those willows



Upper Lake in Glendalough

produced apples a very long time. A worker was struck by a stone and one of his eyes was blinded. Kevin blessed the eye, and his sight was restored. Kevin loved the reclusive life, and after some years as abbot retired to his beloved solitude. Four years later the monks persuaded him to return to the monastery and resume his abbacy. The saint gladly returned, presiding over the brethren for sixty years. The monastery had seven churches, more and more monks joined the community and many men flocked to the seminary to receive training and instruction.

Numerous people from various regions flocked to Kevin for advice, consolation and healing. Kevin had a custom of praying zealously in the cold water of Glendalough lakes every day. Throughout his life angels were frequent companions and helpers of the holy man. This wonderful saint reposed in 618; he lived until the age of 120.

Glendalough continued to grow and develop, producing many saints. With time it was transferred closer to the lower lake. Glendalough became one of the most famous pilgrimage centres in Ireland. Its students and monks founded many other communities in Ireland and abroad. In 1398 this splendid monastery was destroyed by the English Army but the church continued to function afterwards. Kevin is venerated as patron-saint of Glendalough in Wicklow, as “wonderworker of all Ireland” and protector of animals.

Glendalough is a very quiet and idyllic site. Closer to the upper lake there are surviving buildings of the monastery. Previously Glendalough was like a “monastic city”. Apart from the main church, the monastery included living quarters for monks, scriptoria, workshops, an infirmary, farm buildings, and a hostel. The surviving buildings date back to the tenth-twelfth centuries. Among the monuments that can still be seen are the following: the gates to the monastic city; a “round tower” thirty metres high; a magnificent ruined cathedral;

St Kevin's cross, made from a single piece of granite (pilgrims believe that he who manages to embrace the cross with both hands can expect the fulfilment of his prayer requests soon); the priests' house (Kevin's relics may have been preserved there); Kevin's fine church; the churches of the Mother of God, the Holy Trinity, Christ the Saviour and "Reefert church" .

There is a holy well of St Kevin there. "Kevin" is a popular birth name in France, Norway, the Netherlands, Ireland, UK, Sweden, Hungary, Slovenia and Chile.

Dmitry Lapa

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/80048.html>

Journey to Orthodoxy

FROM THE IRISH AIR FORCE TO THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

Father Thomas Carroll is a 70-year-old priest in Dublin, Ireland.

He grew up rural county Tipperary, in a family with strong military ties. His grandfather fought in Gallipoli, while his great uncle was at the battle of Thessalonica during the First World War.

Growing up in a Catholic secondary school, he felt called to take holy orders but was told he was not ready, so he followed the family tradition and joined the military.

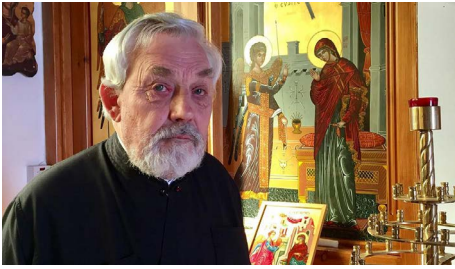
"We seem to be a family that was always involved militarily. There was discipline among us, but the rules were not too strict. Yet, I could never consider myself a free spirit," he recalls. It was while serving in Cyprus with the UN in the 1960s that Father Carroll's life, vocation and future were set on a

path that led him to a narrow brick-built church in the centre of Dublin. A church which stands out from others in the city because of the richly gilded decorated screen which separates the altar from the nave, but also because it is Orthodox.

To prevent its servicemen being influenced in anyway, the UN did not permit any interaction between them and either of the communities. However, Father Thomas could not entirely follow the discipline that both the peace keeping forces and his family had imposed on him.

"I had a few acquaintances with Cypriots, but the only person that I had a lot of communication with was a Greek Orthodox priest in a village," he recounts. Father Thomas would meet up with him on a regular basis, to talk about theology and argue regarding everything around it.

"We often could not agree on anything, but he left a lasting impression on me,"



Father Thomas Carroll

he continues.

That prompted him to explore the Orthodox religion further, but when he returned to Ireland there were only a handful of Greeks and Cypriots living in the country. They did not have an established community, so nobody could help him.

It was only when the Archbishop of Great Britain, Methodios, established the first parish in Ireland in 1981, that it became possible for him to talk to people with the same interest.

Prior to this he had contacted the Greek Orthodox archdiocese in London, but nobody responded to his letters. “They probably thought that I was some guy seeking only information,” Father Thomas says.

When the parish had been established by Methodios, a friend happened to mention it to him by chance. He then got around there straightaway, but it took him another 5 years before he decided to make the “big jump” and convert.

“I eventually became an Orthodox in 1986, so I do not do anything in a hurry as you see,” he jokes.

hurry as you see,” he jokes. “But after that, I was committed. I took early retirement from my job in 1996 and went to study theology for 5 years.”

After the conclusion of his studies, he initially served as a deacon for four years in his new parish, before eventually becoming a priest. And to him it is a vocation, not his profession. Ultimately, it was the outward portrayal and the beautiful liturgies of the Orthodox dogma that attracted him to it. “I came from the tradition that initially the Catholic Church came from, with many similarities in liturgy and rituals. But after the Second Vatican Council in the ‘60s, everything changed and became more simplified,” the priest explains.

For Father Thomas, the traditional poignant ceremonies had been stripped from the Catholic faith. Services had become to some extent “protestantized” in the method of worship, minimalised. So, he realised that it was not for him. This inevitably left a big hole in his spiritual life, in that he couldn’t relate to this new situation in the Catholic Church. “This is where Orthodoxy entered my life and gave me something tangible to hold on to. Something about the church itself, its layout, the rituals, even the smell of incense, would grab you straight away,” he describes.

At the time, among the Orthodox community in Ireland, there were about 20 nationalities. The original parish was founded for all Orthodox

Christians within the island of Ireland, regardless of any jurisdictions.

As immigration increased into Ireland, many of these new arrivals established their own communities and Father Thomas' parish eventually became primarily Greek. The community has grown in recent years due to the increasing emigration from Greece, thus the future of his parish looks secure.

For Father Thomas, a church is a living thing and must adapt to society, rather than society adapting to it. Another reason why he admires the Greek Orthodox Church is because it reaches out to every nationality. "All Greek Orthodox archdioceses in the UK have up to 30% clergy that are non-Greek, thus the liturgies are commonly English speaking. Other jurisdictions, like the Romanian or Russian, are operating in their language solely for their own people," he says.

The priest believes that breaking down language and nationality barriers is very important for a modern religion, especially when attracting young individuals. Otherwise they could be at the mercy of fundamentalist evangelical churches, while others may become attracted to radical Islam. "They are giving them something to live for, when often they have nothing," claims Father Thomas.

He is the only one who converted to Greek Orthodoxy in his family. "It did not make any difference to most of them, but I think today they would be

happy with my choices," he says.

"If you asked me how Ireland is responding to a Church of different dogma about 50 years ago, there would be quite hostile reaction to it. Now nobody cares. At the last count, there were about 130 different religions in the country, most of them established during the past 15 years," Father Thomas explains.

About 50% of those are ethnic African churches. "But the people of Ireland are accepting all religions in their country now. Maybe the reason is that most of them do not go to the church themselves," he continues. "Young people particularly, who are carrying on the Catholic faith in Ireland, have absolutely no animosity to anybody outside this tradition," he concludes.

Father Thomas is one example of a man who did not just follow a religion due to family, community or national traditions. He researched, reached out and when the time was right, he found what was best for him.

By Christos Mouzeviri

Source: <http://www.euroneews.com/2017/04/05/the-irish-soldier-who-became-an-orthodox-priest>



Greek Orthodox Church, Dublin

In the Footsteps of the Pilgrims

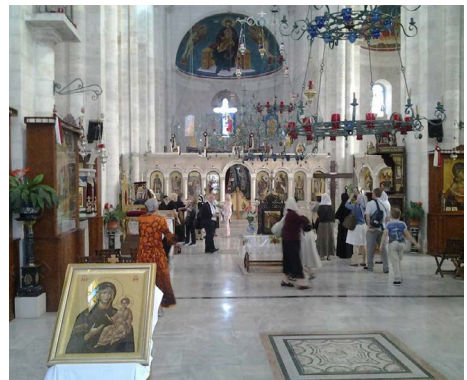
Second Day: Saturday, 12th November 2016 (continued).

After dinner in the hotel in Bethlehem we returned to Jerusalem for the Night Liturgy in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. We left Bethlehem at about 23.00. Our group had increased in size and now comprised all the Sourozh pilgrims plus about eight other people staying at the centre. We disembarked at the Jaffa Gate and made our way through the winding passages of the souk to the courtyard in front of the church. It was now just after 23.40 and time to venerate relics located in a small room. It was quite quiet when we entered but as we went to leave found it difficult to do so. We made our way to a suitable vantage point and waited for the start of the Service at about 00.30. This was made evident from a large procession of clergy and completed by three bishops with Archbishop Theodosius of Sebastia as principal. It was a very atmospheric service, mainly in Greek but with, for example, the Ectenia of Fervent Supplication sung by a young Russian deacon with a powerful voice. It must have been difficult to conduct the Liturgy in the area of the Tomb since much of the floor space has been covered by scaffolding and sheeting while renovation and archaeological work is still in progress. Communion was given in the large hall that contains

the Stone of the Centre of the World. Following Communion we all met in the Courtyard and after a careful head count made our way back to the Jaffa Gate. Sr Mariam took us back by a different route that seemed like our own particular reserved space. She set a cracking pace and like a good Middle East shepherd led her mixed flock back to the coach! We fell into bed just after 04.00.

Third Day: Sunday, 13th November 2016.

Breakfast was a little later today and it was just after 10.30 when we set off on our morning trip to Nablus (Shechem), about 60km north from Bethlehem. In the Old Testament this is mentioned as a city of refuge in Mount Ephraim (Joshua 20 v7). The road meanders and it was almost 12.30 when we arrived at the Greek Convent of Jacob's Well. Sr Mariam first came here in 1991, but I don't think that any of us expected such an exceptional building.





It is strongly associated with the new martyr Achimandrite Philoumenos (Hasapis), keeper of the Greek Orthodox monastery of Jacob's Well in Samaria. The life of Fr Philoumenos is an example that martyrdom for Christ is not of the past from the Roman Empire or Communist times, but is a reality in our own day.

Troparion (Tone 4) At Jacob's Well you were proved well named, loving Christ, confessing Him, pouring out your sacred blood. Being faithful in small things you were set over great. Worshipping in Spirit and in Truth, you are now Guardian of the Holy Places for ever.

We were able to venerate his tomb and to receive anointing from Fr Nikolay. In the crypt we came across the present rector, Fr Ioustinos. He enthusiastically sprinkled everyone with water from the well before retiring to manage his shop. This included a number of icons that he had made personally. Fr Nikolay had first turn at the well. This is the site of Christ's meeting with the woman from Samaria (John 4 v6).

The water was quickly transferred to bottles held by the pilgrims. *"The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4 v14).*

We then returned to Jerusalem for some sight-seeing in the afternoon, first stopping at a coffee shop for a typical piece of baklava and a cup of dark arabian coffee. Between the walls of the Old City and the Mount of Olives is the Valley of Jehoshaphat which at its southern end has the site of the 3,000 year old settlement that was to become Jerusalem, the City of David. The land rises again to the west to Mount Zion, an area of the city traditionally linked with the Last Supper and the Dormition of the Mother of God. According to Christian tradition she went to live on Mount Zion after Christ's death. The Church of the Dormition stands on the site where she fell into an "eternal sleep". In the crypt is a wood and ivory sculpture of the "sleeping" Mother of God, while the walls are adorned



Oak of Mamre

with images of women from the Old Testament, including Eve, Judith, Ruth, and Esther. In the rooms on the mezzanine are some remains from the site's previous churches.

On the first floor of a Gothic building in all that remains of a large Crusader church built to commemorate the Dormition, there is situated the Hall of the Last Supper or Coenaculum. This is believed to be over the site of an earlier building that was the location of the Last Supper. Some scholars however, believe that the true site is a small room beneath St Mark's Church in Ararat Street. Back at Bethlehem there



Icon of the Old Testament Trinity

was still time for some of us to explore the shops en route to a cash machine in Manger Square.

Fourth Day, Monday November 14th 2016.

After breakfast I watched in amazement as three coaches manoeuvred in the parking lot of the residence. We set off for Hebron 40km south of Jerusalem and one of the most densely populated towns. Its fame rests on coloured glassware which began in the Middle Ages and has always been managed by a single family. Hebron was the burial place for Abraham's wife Sarah and then became his own tomb and later that of his descendants Isaac and Jacob. In the Greek Orthodox monastery at Mamre there are some spectacular frescos and many icons on the theme of Abraham and the sacred grove of Oaks of Mamre. In Genesis 18 v1,2 it says of Abraham that "*the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; and he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground*". This is the scene depicted in Andrei Rublev's icon of the Old Testament Trinity.

The remaining Oak itself has new shoots at the base, although it is not flourishing. A man was selling a postcard and 2 acorns for \$1. Obviously the acorns haven't come from the last remaining Oak, but they've been there! We stopped at a greengrocer in Hebron and many people bought bunches of sage, so we had a sweet-smelling bus

for the rest of the day.

We were now on the desolate Judean Plain, home of the Desert Fathers, and next stop was the monastery of St Theodosius. He withdrew to a cave here but more and more people joined so that he started the first communal living in what became the monastery. He died in Rome, but his remains were brought back to the desert. We then downsized to a minibus to travel to the monastery of St Sabbas located in the wilds of the Judean Desert. It is one of dozens of retreats built in this area from the fifth century onwards by hermits seeking an austere life of solitude and prayer. His particular monastery was founded in 482 AD. This is a totally different world and the Greek community there follow Mount Athos rules so only males are allowed to visit the monastery. We were able to venerate St Sabbas' remains. We missed the scheduled stop at the Shepherds' Field outside of Bethlehem as the Greek monastery was not open. On our return to Bethlehem we were able to walk to the Church of the Nativity before our evening meal hoping to return there next morning for the Liturgy. The first evidence of a cave here being venerated as Christ's birthplace is in the writings of St Justin Martyr around 160 AD. The grotto is the church's focal point where a silver star is set in the floor over the spot where Christ was born. The wide nave survives intact from Justinian's time (c 530 AD) although the roof is 15th century with 19th century additions

and is currently undergoing extensive restoration. Fragments of high-quality mosaics decorate the walls. Sections of the mosaic floor survive from the 4th century basilica ordered to be built by Emperor Constantine. There was much food for thought at the evening meal in the residence in Bethlehem.



St Sabbas Monastery



For and about Children

EXPLANATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY - PART 2

The first part of this series, on the Proskomidia, appeared in the April 2017 issue of Cathedral Newsletter. Although not written specifically for children, we hope these articles will help parents to explain the main elements of the Divine Liturgy to their children in a way appropriate to their age.

The second part of the Liturgy is called the **Liturgy of the Catechumens** because the catechumens, those preparing to receive Holy Baptism, are allowed to participate in its celebration. By making the sign of the Cross with the Gospel over the Holy Table, the priest begins the Liturgy with a solemn exclamation that reveals

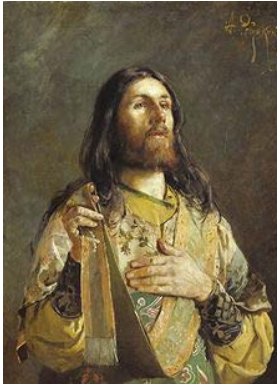
the key to the entire celebration: *Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.*

With these words the priest announces the goal of the divine service about to begin: the strengthening and expansion of the Kingdom of God brought to the world by Jesus Christ, to the Glory of the only one true God, worshipped in the Holy Trinity. The choir responds, "Amen". Amen means "so be it" in Hebrew.

The deacon, standing on the ambo, the raised area in front of the altar, and facing the Holy Doors, symbolizes the angel who encourages us to pray. He raises his stole, the symbol of the angel's wing, and in the **Great Litany** calls the whole assembly to pray the same prayers that have been assembled by the Church since Apostolic times. He begins with the petition for peace, without which prayer is impossible.

In this litany the various petitions made of the Lord are made in the order of their relative importance to the Church. The worshippers





Deacon leading the Litany
Andrei Ryabushkin 1888

make the sign of the Cross, and while harmonizing their hearts to the deacon's petitions, they cry mentally with the choir: "*Lord, have mercy.*" The Great Litany reminds us that, in order to pray successfully, we have to be at peace, that is, reconciled with all, having no resentment, anger, or hostility toward anyone. According to the teaching of the Saviour, we may not offer God any gifts if we remember that our "*brother hath aught against*" us (Matt. 5:23-24). "*For the peace of the whole world*" asks that there be no disputes or hostility among nations or races in the entire world. "*For the good estate of the holy churches of God*" is a prayer in which the Orthodox Churches in every country firmly and unwaveringly confess the Orthodox Church as the true, apostolic Faith, on the basis of the Word of God and the canons of the Church; and "*for the union of all*" asks that all may be drawn into the one flock of Christ (cf. John 10:16). We

pray "*for this holy temple,*" which is the principal sacred object of the parish and should be the object of special care on the part of each parishioner. We pray that the Lord will preserve it from fire, theft, and other misfortunes and so that those who enter it will do so with sincere faith, reverence, and the fear of God. "*For travellers by land, by sea, and by air; for the sick and the suffering*" is for all people who are away for good cause who especially need our prayers. The deacon concludes the litany by asking the faithful to entrust themselves and their whole life to Christ, to which we all respond: "*To Thee, O Lord.*" During the litany the priest prays that the Lord will look down upon the church, and those at prayer in it, and fulfil their needs.

After the Great Litany, Psalms 102/103 and 145/6, which are called **antiphons**, are chanted. In the ancient Church these psalms were chanted "antiphonally" — that is, with the verses alternating between two choirs. These Psalms describe the blessings bestowed on us by God for which we should bless the Lord. Originally the Old Testament composer of these beautiful songs had in mind mostly the earthly blessings of the Lord. But in the light of the New Testament, considering all that Jesus Christ did for us, these Psalms acquire a special meaning. The antiphons are separated by small litanies.

The following hymn, **Only-Begotten Son**, attached to the second antiphon,



is dedicated to the Son of God: This hymn composed by the Emperor Justinian sets forth the Orthodox teaching on the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God, Jesus Christ. He is the Only-begotten (one in essence) Son and Word of God, Christ God, Who, being immortal, became man, without ceasing to be God, and accepted a human body from the Holy Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary. By His crucifixion,

He with His death conquered death, “trampling down death by death,” as one of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, and is glorified equally with the Father and Holy Spirit.

While the choir sings, the priest silently prays in the altar: “*O Lord our God, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance; preserve the fullness of Thy Church; sanctify those who love the beauty of Thy house; glorify them in return by Thy divine power; and forsake us not who hope in Thee... O Thou who hast bestowed on us these common and united prayers, and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in Thy name, Thou wilt grant their requests, fulfil even now the requests of Thy servants as is expedient for them, and in the world to come, life eternal.*”

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