



“JOY OF ALL WHO SORROW”

No 7 June '09

PROGRESS REPORT

The speed at which the building work has progressed since Easter has been slower than we might have wished. However, the cupolas are made and should be hoisted into place in the first week of June. Then the roof and guttering can then be completed. God willing, the end of the building work is in sight and our church will be complete. Of course, we are still developing the interior. The Royal Doors and deacon's doors are in the process of being made by Nick Clarke. Also we have a pew! It is 11'6" long and was given to us by Gary Meyer several years ago. At last we have discovered a use for it. Nick will cut it into two and make two new ends. We will then have two shorter pews that can be placed on either side of the church.

We have also placed the ikon of All Saints of Russia in the church. This was a gift from Vladika Hilarion when he stayed in our house in London some years ago. He was Bishop of Manhattan then; now he is Metropolitan of New York and Eastern America.

On Tuesday 9 June the whole altar (sanctuary), to the front of the step, will be carpeted. Whiteman's of Bungay will be doing this work. Also we have now established the bookstall with a selection of ikons, prayer books and publications about the Faith.

RECENT GIFTS TO THE CHURCH

Since the last bulletin we have received a number of gifts. Costas Bell, who is a subdeacon in the Greek Church, brought us a large ikon of St John the Theologian, a sanctification cross, some incense and a large quantity of beeswax for making candles. Also we have received candlesticks, a rason and various other items from Costas & Catherine Kyirakides, from London, who were with us on the 4th Sunday of Easter. We also received a censer from John-Michael Mountney. At first we thought it was pewter, but polishing it revealed that it is silver with splendid pierced design of tongues of fire. The chains were incredibly long, even for a western-style thurible, and we've shortened them to make the censer suitable for use in Byzantine worship.

In the 1950s the Noakes family owned and lived in The White House. In 2004 we met, Daphne, the daughter of the family who spend her childhood here and now lives in Kent. Having told her that we are building a church here in the grounds of the house, she became very enthusiastic and sent us a donation to pay for an ikon lamp and/or whatever we need for the church.

To all who have supported us in various ways by your love, gifts and contributions, we say heartfelt thanks. All benefactors are remembered prayerfully in church, especially on Friday evenings when we sing the *Joy of All Who Sorrow* Akathist. May God bless and reward you all.

PENTECOST

This year, Pentecost is on Sunday 7 June. This day is also known as Trinity Sunday because the coming of the Holy Spirit, in the appearance of tongues of fire, confirms the Holy Trinity. We find this expressed in the Services for Pentecost. The biblical record of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles (Acts 2: 1-11) is read in church on this day. It tells how, having received the Holy Spirit, the Apostles were able to speak in other tongues, preaching Christ, in many languages, to the astonishment of all the people. In the Canon of Matins we read:

When the vivifying, violent wind of the All-holy Spirit came from on high, resounding unto the fisherman in the form of fiery tongues, they spake eloquently concerning the mighty deeds of God.

Also in the Canon we read:

They who had once been afraid became emboldened, and filled with joy were all those who loved the

Lord and Saviour, when the Spirit descended on this day from Heaven. He came and rested upon the disciples' heads and each one spake unto the peoples in other tongues. For lo, tongues as it were of fire were seen divided in their midst, and yet this fire consumed them not, but refreshed and rained dew upon them.

Speaking in different tongues was such a surprise to the people who were listening that some supposed it to be merely caused by alcoholic excess as the Canon explains:

When the Apostles spake eloquently concerning the divine and mighty deeds, the Spirit's power, whereby the Trinity is the one God of our Fathers, was thought to be drunkenness by those who did not believe.

In an Orthodox manner, let us proclaim with Divine authority the un-divided Essence: God the beginningless Father, and the Word, and the Spirit, Who are of equal authority, and let us cry: Blessed art Thou, the God of our Fathers.

The week following Pentecost, Monday 8 June - Sunday 14 June (All Saints Day) is free of fasting. The fast preceding St Peter & St Paul Day begins on Monday 15 June and lasts until the Eve of the feast. On Sunday 21 June, we commemorate All Saints of Russia. On the following Sunday, 28 June we commemorate all the Greek New-Martyrs who suffered under the Turks in the time of the Ottoman Empire.

SERVICES: In addition to the regular services (Fridays at 6pm and Sundays on 10.30am), the Vespers of Pentecost will be sung at 3pm on Sunday 7 June.

CONCERNING THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE OF THE CLERGY

Very often in the sphere of Church laws and traditions we, for one reason or another, allow ourselves to compromise. In our society today, the reasons and circumstances for such compromises can seem very justifiable. However, the danger lies in the fact that any compromise can become habitual, and compromised behaviour then becomes the norm, giving rise to further compromises and a general degradation of standards. At a time when we are perhaps at risk of completely losing the ideal in the realm of priestly attire, it is fitting to review the Church rules and directives concerning the attire of a clergyman.

The 27th Canon (Law) of the 6th Oecumenical Council states: "None who is counted among the clergy should dress inappropriately, when in the city or when travelling. Each should wear the attire that was appointed for members of the clergy. If someone breaks this rule, may he be deprived of serving (officiating in church) for one week". Here everything is clear. If you do not wish to wear clerical attire, do not dare to stand before the altar of God.

The great interpreter of the Church's Canons, Balsamon, in his interpretation of the 14th Canon of the 7th Oecumenical Council, which speaks of the ordination of readers, notes: "He who has put on black attire for the purpose of entering the clergy, cannot remove it, for he has stated his intention of serving God and therefore cannot break his promise to God and ridicule this holy image.....". If constant wearing of "black attire" is expected of the first rank of the priesthood, the reader, then all the more does it apply to those who are in higher orders.

In the questioning period of the candidate before the ordination, the candidate for the priesthood, in the presence of his spiritual father, makes the following promise: "I promise to wear the clothing appropriate to my clerical rank, not to cut my hair or my beard.....for through such unseemly behaviour I risk belittling my rank and tempting believers". It is important to note here that, in confirmation of his promise, the candidate kisses the Gospel and the Cross and signs his name.
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THE INCARNATE GOD

All the truths of Orthodoxy emerge from one truth and converge on one truth, infinite and eternal.

That truth is Jesus Christ- God Incarnate. If you experience any truth of Orthodoxy to its limit, you will inevitably discover that its kernel is the God-man Christ. In fact, all the truths of Orthodoxy are nothing other than different aspects of the one Truth.

Orthodoxy is Orthodoxy by reason of the God-man, and not by reason of anything else or anyone else. In it nothing exists through man or by man, but everything comes from the God Incarnate and exists through Him. This means that man experiences and finds out about the fundamental eternal truth of life and the world only with the help of the God-man, in the God-man. And it means something else: man learns the complete truth about man, about the purpose and meaning of his existence only through God Incarnate. Outside of Him a man turns into an apparition, into a scarecrow, into nonsense.

Why is the God-man the fundamental truth of Orthodoxy? Because He answered all the questions that torture and torment the human spirit. He brought down all the divine perfections from heaven to earth. And He did not just bring them down, but also taught them to us and gave us grace-filled power to transform them into our life, into our thoughts, into our feelings, into our deeds. Hence, our calling is to incarnate them in ourselves and in the world around us.

The God Incarnate is each and every aspect of Orthodoxy, for He infinitely magnifies man. He elevates him to God; He makes him a god by grace. And He did this without reckoning man less than God, but filled man with all divine perfections. The God-man has glorified man as no other has. Man has become divine majesty through Him.

In its very essence, Orthodoxy is nothing other than the Personality of God Incarnate, Jesus Christ, extended across all ages, extended as the Church. Orthodoxy has its own seal and sign by which it distinguishes itself. It is the radiant Person of the Christ the Son of God.

To be Orthodox means to have Christ constantly in your soul, to live in Him, think in Him, feel in Him, act in Him. In other words, to be Orthodox means to be a Christ-bearer and a Spirit-bearer. A man attains this when, in the body of Christ — the Church, his whole being is filled with the Christ from top to bottom. For this reason the Orthodox man is hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:1-3).

Hence, the purpose of man is: to fill himself with the God-man, in His body — the Orthodox Church ... Even while he walks prayerfully through the gloomy earthly anthill in the body, in his soul he lives above, where Christ Sits at the right hand of God, for his life is constantly stretched out between earth and heaven by prayers, like a rainbow that connects the summit of heaven with the abyss of earth. To become immortal in Him by the power of the Holy Spirit, to become God — this is the purpose, the true purpose of the whole human race. It is also the joy, the only joy in this world of boundless sorrow and toxic bitterness.

(taken from a longer article by Archimandrite Justin (Popovich)

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