



“Joy of All Who Sorrow”

No. 76 March 2015



Completing the Remaining Time of Our Life in Peace and Repentance

Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky) of New York

Great Lent has begun. Its first week is entirely dedicated to repentance. Both the Great Canon and nearly all this week's prayers call upon the human soul to undertake the penitential struggle and repent to the Omniscient God, Who is always ready to accept the repentant sinner.

Repentance is twofold. One kind of repentance is that by which one who has given himself over to sin and, until then, has lived a completely un-Christian life should repent: far from God, without God's law, far from the Church, he was a slave to his passions. But he has come to his senses; his conscience has spoken. Perhaps a good book has brought him to recognize this: in any case, he wants to repent. In this case, repentance is not simply a recognition of sins with the request that the Lord forgive them; this repentance – as implied by the very word in Greek, *metanoia*, which is translated as “repentance” – involves a “conversion,” i.e., a turning around, a decisive turn in another direction - in other words, a complete change of life. As the great Elder Ambrose of Optina said, for such repentance is needed neither years, nor months, but a moment.

Recall Mary of Egypt: she had been plunged in the abyss of sin; she was literally whirled about in “the abyss of sin.” But she, obeying some inner feeling, went to the Holy Land, where she wanted to venerate the sacred Live-Giving Tree. She saw how people approached it, but some force evidently held her back. This was the moment when the grace of God touched her soul, and she

suddenly and immediately understood all the ugliness of her life and all the horror of what she had committed. **One** single moment, and all was decided. She turned to the Heavenly Queen, that she might become her Helpmate in repentance. And then, after this good decision, she immediately venerated this great Holy Object **unhindered** and, inspired by God's mercy, left for the desert to undertake those extraordinary labours and struggles that turned her from a human into an angel. For we know that when the great ascetic, St. Zosimas, saw her there, he was "filled with utter astonishment," as it says in the canon. He was filled with utter astonishment because he thought he was seeing not a person, but an angel in the flesh: he saw how she crossed over the Jordan as on dry land; he saw how she was lifted up into the air in prayer. Her repentance was already so complete, her spirit was already so enflamed in aspiring towards God, that her very body, which had once so sinned, was so spiritualized and transfigured that it followed the soul in ascent and rose up to God. This is what repentance is for someone who has seen that he has not been living rightly. Then came her penitential labours, for they made her an earthly angel and a heavenly person. But the moment of repentance was a decision accepted immediately, and the rest was its fulfilment.

The Church prays for all: "That we may complete the remaining time of our life in peace and **repentance.**" This prayer was prayed by great God-pleasers when they were in church. This means that repentance, as contrition and the battle with sin, should be an inseparable part of everyone's life. St Theophan the Recluse, that great instructor of the spiritual life, said that every Christian's breath coming out of his chest, so long as he lives, should not simply by an exhalation of air from the lungs, but should be a penitential sigh. Man always feels himself to be a prisoner to sin and calls upon God's mercy in penitential prayer. This kind of repentance should be one's constant companion. It is for this that we pray: that all the time left to us, all the "remaining time of our life," be completed in peace and repentance, so that repentance would be inseparable from us. When man thus bears repentance, he becomes increasingly aware of the greatness of God's mercy and of his own sinfulness.

One of the great ascetics, St. Sisoës the Great – someone who had raised the dead by his prayers – was dying. The monks gathered at his grave, to his deathbed, and it turned out that they were not the only to have come. The Elder's face lit up, and he said: "Here they have come; they have come." The others did not see, but his eyes were already opened to the heavenly world; he saw how other righteous ones had come to greet him, the righteous one. "Here have come the prophets; here have come the monastic saints; here have come the Apostles," he said. His face lit up even more, and he began to speak with someone quietly. Those who had gathered asked him: "Abba, with whom are you speaking?" He said: "The angels have come to take me, but I was asking that they leave me time for repentance." Everyone knew that he was perfect, and said with astonishment: "Abba, you have no need of repentance." The humble Elder replied: "I truly do not know whether I have even begun." But after these humble words, in which the depth of his humility so shone forth, his face shone like the sun, and he said: "Here the Lord is coming and saying: 'Bring Me the vessel chosen from the desert.'" With these words, his soul left his body like a flash of lightning and everyone, filled with awe, quickly dispersed. This is how this humble ascetic looked upon the need for repentance.

May we always have this sincere prayer to God, beloved, that the Lord might help us during this "remaining time of our life" – however long or short His Providence grants us to live – to live our life in "peace and repentance." **AMEN.**



St Mark the Faster

Our Archbishop Vladika Mark's name saint is St Mark the Athenian, known as the Faster. He was born in Athens in the 6th Century and became a monk in the Egyptian desert where he was noted for his extreme asceticism. St Mark knew the Scriptures by heart and wrote many homilies. The texts of nine of his homilies have survived to this present day. It is recorded that he lived into extreme old age, being over a hundred years old when he reposed in the Lord.

"The devil presents minor sins as insignificant in our eyes, because otherwise he would not be able lead us into major ones."

"Peace (spiritual) is the liberation from passions, which is impossible to discover without the counteraction of the Holy Spirit."

"Having fulfilled a commandment, expect temptations; because love toward Christ is tested by difficulties."

"Think nothing and do nothing without a purpose directed to God. For to journey without direction is wasted effort."

"When you suffer some dishonour from men, recognize at once the glory that will be given you by God. Then you will not be saddened or upset by the dishonour; and when you receive the glory you will remain steadfast and innocent."

"The forgiveness of insults is a sign of true love, free from hypocrisy. For thus the Lord also loved this world."

"Understand the words of Holy Scripture by putting them into practice, and do not fill yourself with conceit by elaborating on theoretical ideas."

"Unless a man gives himself entirely to the Cross, in a spirit of humility and self-abasement; unless he casts himself down to be trampled underfoot by all and despised, accepting injustice, contempt and mockery; unless he undergoes all these things with joy for the sake of the Lord, not claiming any kind of human reward whatsoever – glory or honour or earthly pleasures – he cannot become a true Christian."

"...Every tribulation reveals the state of our will."

"A humble man who lives a spiritual life, when he reads the Holy Scriptures, while relate all things to himself and not to others."

"He who does something good and expects a reward is serving not God but his own will."

"Do not aspire to hear about the deceitfulness of strangers, because the features of those deceptions will also be engraved in us."

"It is better to say a well-intentioned prayer for your neighbour than to accuse him of all types of sin."

Notes & Jottings

CATECHUMEN

On Forgiveness Sunday (Cheese-fare), Robert Collins was made a catechumen, with the name Seraphim. May his heavenly patron, St Seraphim of Sarov, ever pray for him and guide him.

DIRECTORY, IKON SALE & PRAYER BOOK

[The 2015 Directory of Orthodox Parishes & Clergy](#) (pb, 60 pages) is now in stock at £4 per copy. Please see our website to view and purchase a selection of [mounted ikons of Christ, the Mother of God and the Saints](#) at reduced prices. Also, the last reprint of the 1960 Jordanville Prayer Book is now o/p. A further print-run is being planned. The last printing had to be redone because the printers made a mistake by printing page 344 twice but no page 343. We can offer these reject copies, with the text of page 343 pasted in, at £5 each. Click [here](#) to buy now.

ST CEDD PILGRIMAGE

On **Bank Holiday Monday 25 May 2015**, the College will be making a Pilgrimage in honour of St Cedd (664 +) to St Peter's Chapel at Bradwell-on-Sea in Essex. A Moleben to the saint will be served at 2pm followed by an opportunity to look around this beautiful and ancient church founded by St Cedd himself. At approximately 3.30pm refreshments will be served at the nearby Othona Community. To download a poster of the event as well as a map of the location of the church, please click [here](#). If you would like to come, it would be very helpful for catering and logistical purposes if you could let us know.

HOLY WEEK 2015

Please see back cover (page 6) for a copy of all our services for **Holy Week 2015** which runs from Monday 6 April to Pascha day on Sunday 12 April.

BOOKCASE

We are indebted to John Sirl for yet another very generous gift; a large pine bookcase, which will be very useful in the study room, which was formerly the breakfast room. This room, and the adjoining room (formerly the pantry), will together house the many box files of archives and vast quantities of serial literature that currently take up too much space in the library.

TELEPHONE NUMBER

Before we started the renovations, the office was upstairs. At the time there were two landlines. The first floor one was used as the office number and advertised as the SGOIS contact line. When the house was built there was an office on the ground floor. This has now been returned to use as a working office. Consequently the office number has been **01986 895176** for the past four years. There are still old pieces of literature around that show the former number, which has now been withdrawn because we no longer needed it. Please do not use it because it has been reallocated and we do not wish to cause that telephone subscriber unnecessary hassle. So, please correct your address book accordingly. The number quoted above is now our only landline.

NAMEDAY

To our Archpastor, Archbishop Mark, who celebrates his nameday on 5/18 March, the Feast of St Mark the Faster, we send congratulations and wish him:

MANY YEARS! EIS POLLA ETI DESPOTA!



**COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF THE IKON OF THE MOTHER OF GOD
JOY OF ALL WHO SORROW**

MARCH 2015

Saturday 28 March

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 1 March

10.10am ~ Hours & Divine Liturgy with Moleben (1. Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy)

Saturday 7 March

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 8 March

10.10am ~ Hours & Divine Liturgy (2. Commemoration of St Gregory Palamas)

Saturday 14 March

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 15 March

10.10am ~ Hours & Divine Liturgy (3. Adoration of the Holy Cross)

Saturday 21 March

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 22 March

10.10am ~ Hours & Divine Liturgy (4. Commemoration of St John Climacus)

Wednesday 25 March

7.30pm ~ Compline with Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete & the Life of St Mary of Egypt

Saturday 28 March

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 29 March

10.10am ~ Hours & Divine Liturgy (5. St Mary of Egypt)



The Collegiate Church of the Ikon of the Mother of God
Joy of All Who Sorrow, Low Road, Mettingham, Suffolk, NR35 1TP
Tel: (01986) 895176 www.mettingham.org.uk

Holy Week Schedule 2015

Saturday 4 April – Lazarus Saturday

7.30pm - Vigil

Sunday 5 April – Palm Sunday

10.30am - Divine Liturgy

Monday 6 April - Great and Holy Monday

7.30pm – Vigil

Tuesday 7 April - Great and Holy Tuesday & The Annunciation of the Theotokos

10.10am - 9th Hour & Vespers Liturgy

Thursday 9 April – Great and Holy Thursday

7.30pm - Matins: The Twelve Gospels Service

Friday 10 April – Great and Holy Friday

9.30am - Royal Hours

4.00pm - Great Vespers with the bringing out of the Shroud (*Epitaphios/plashchanitsa*)

6.00pm - Light Refreshments in the House

7.30pm – Matins: The Burial Service of Christ

Saturday 11 April – Great and Holy Saturday

11.30am – Great Vespers & Readings

11.30pm - Midnight Office and Procession

† Sunday 12 April – Radiant Feast of Pascha †

12 Midnight – Paschal Matins & Divine Liturgy

3.00pm – Paschal Vespers & Easter Party

6.00pm – Paschal Hours & Intercessions

