



“Joy of All Who Sorrow”

No. 72 November 2014



Sincerity in Prayer

A Homily by St. John of Kronstadt on the 50th Anniversary of his glorification by the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia.

Sometimes during a lengthy prayer only a few minutes are really pleasing to God, and constitute true prayer, true service to Him. The chief thing in prayer is the nearness of the heart to God.

Sometimes people call prayer that which is not prayer at all: for instance, a man goes to church, stands there for a time, looks at the ikons or at other people, and says that he has prayed to God; or else he stands before an ikon at home, bows his head, says some words he has learned by heart, without understanding, and without feeling, and says that he has prayed—although with his thoughts and his heart he has not prayed at all, but was elsewhere, with other people and other things, and not with God. Did the Pharisees think that they prayed hypocritically? They did not think so; they considered themselves to be right in their hypocrisy itself. It had become their habit; it had become second nature to them; and they thought they were serving God by their prayer. Do the Christian hypocrites of the present day think that they pray and live hypocritically? They do not think so. They pray daily, perhaps at length; but they pray out of habit with their lips, not with their hearts; without heartfelt contrition, without a firm desire for amendment, and only in order to fulfil the established rule, and *think* they do *God service*, whilst in fact they only incur the wrath

of God. We all sin, more or less, in praying hypocritically and we shall be be greatly censured for it.

Many people pray hypocritically, and hypocritical prayer becomes a habit with them; they do not themselves observe and do not wish to observe, that they pray hypocritically, and not in spirit and in truth, so that if anybody were to accuse them of praying hypocritically they would be angry at such an absurdity, as they would hold it to be.

Men become hypocritical not suddenly but gradually, perhaps, they pray whole-heartedly, but afterwards— prayer with the whole heart is always difficult; we have to force ourselves to it— they begin to pray superficially, with their lips, not from the depths of the soul, for this is easier. Finally, at the increased assaults of the Devil, they pray *only* with their lips, the prayer not reaching the heart at all.

Our heart often sleeps during prayer: the outer man prays but not the inner one. Often during prayer we only flatter with our tongue. How often it happens in life that a man has one thing in his heart and another on his lips, and wears two faces at one and the same time. It is the same during prayer, before God himself who knows the secrets of the heart; in prayer also a man frequently wears two faces, saying one thing and having another in his heart and thoughts. If, which happens still more frequently, a man does not sympathize in his heart with what he is saying, although he understands and thinks about it, then he is throwing the words to the air, and he deceives himself if he believes that he can please God by such a prayer. This is strange and sinful duplicity. It is a bitter fruit and evidence of our fall into sin.

... do not let there be honey on your tongue and ice in your heart.

Outward prayer is often performed at the expense of inward prayer, and inward at the expense of outward. That is to say, if, when I pray with my lips, or read prayers, many of the words do not penetrate the heart, I become double-minded and hypocritical; with my lips I say one thing, and in my heart I feel another. The lips speak the truth, but the heart does not agree with the words of the prayer. But if I pray inwardly and whole-heartedly, then, I concentrate upon the contents and power of the words, rather than upon pronouncing them, in this way gradually accustoming my heart to the truth, and entering into the spirit of the prayer. In this way I accustom myself, little by little, to pray in spirit and truth, in accordance with the words of Him Who is Eternal Truth: *They who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.*

Every insincere prayer removes your heart from God, and sets it in enmity to you yourself, whilst every earnest prayer draws your heart nearer to God, and helps to make it enduringly godly. During prayer do not allow the enemy, acting through the flesh, to conquer you; speak the truth from your heart, and let your tongue utter no falsehood. Think and feel what you say in prayer, and do not let there be honey on your tongue and ice in your heart.

How can we teach ourselves to speak the truth from our heart during prayer? We must bring every word of the prayer down to our heart, lay it to heart, feel its truth in our heart, be convinced of our need of that for which we ask, or of the need of heartfelt gratitude for God's great and innumerable benefits to us.

It seems habitual to our heart to lie, both in prayer, and in our intercourse with other men. The heart is a pillar of falsehood. The Christian must make use of every means to eradicate all falsehood from his heart, and to implant in it pure truth. We must begin with prayer, as with a matter in which truth is indispensable before all else, in accordance with the Lord's own words: *Worship Him in spirit and in truth. Speak the truth from your heart.* When we have learnt to speak truth from our heart during prayer, we shall not allow ourselves to lie in everyday life: sincere, true prayer, having cleansed our heart from falsehood, will also protect falsehood in our relations with others.

It is sometimes necessary to ask a person who prays for himself or for others this question, in order to rouse his slumbering heart and conscience: Are you really in need of that for which you are apparently asking; do you really desire to obtain it? Do you sincerely desire—for instance—amendment and holiness of life for yourself and others?

He who prays must hunger after those blessings—above all, the spiritual ones: the forgiveness of sins, the hallowing, the strengthening in virtue—for which he prays; otherwise it will be a useless waste of words.

Some seem to be praying to the Lord, but are really serving the Devil, who nestles in their hearts, because they pray only with their lips, whilst their hearts are cold, and neither feel nor desire that which the lips ask, and are far from the Lord.

The name of the Lord Himself, that of His immaculate Mother and those of the holy angels and saints, must always be pronounced from a pure heart, with burning faith and love.

And how pleasing to the Lord is this
lispings of our own, coming directly
from a believing, loving and
thankful heart.

It is sometimes well during prayer to say a few words of our own, breathing fervent faith, and love for God. Let us not always converse with him in the words of others, let us not forever remain children in faith and hope; we must show also our own mind, we must *indite a good matter* from our own heart also. Moreover, we grow too accustomed to the words of others, and consequently grow cold in prayer. And how pleasing to the Lord is this lispings of our own, coming directly from a believing, loving and thankful heart.

When you truly pray to God in your own words the soul trembles with joy, with fire, with life, with bliss. You will utter few words, but you will know blessedness such as you would have found from saying the longest and most moving prayers of others, pronounced out of habit, and insincerely.

Forced prayer develops hypocrisy, and renders a man incapable of thoughtful, concentrated activity, and slothful in everything. This should persuade all who pray in this manner to correct themselves. We must pray gladly and energetically, from the whole heart. Likewise, do not pray to God only as you are obliged to, in sorrow or in need, for *God loveth a cheerful giver.*



The "Joy of All Who Sorrow" Ikon & The Four Saints



On Thursday 6 November we celebrate our Patronal Feast for the Ikon of the Mother of God: *Joy of All Who Sorrow*. This feast commemorates the miraculous healing of the Lady Euphemia following a moleben which was served in front of this Ikon on October 24 1688. Through the mercy of God, the Ikon survived the ravages of the revolution and can still be seen and venerated today. For the full story of the Ikon, please see the page on our [website](#).

As can be seen from the above image, the Ikon of the *Joy of All Who Sorrow* is an especially detailed ikon of the Mother of God in which masses of supplicants present their needs to the Mother of God. However, one important detail on the Ikon, namely the identity of the four saints who are depicted at the top, has up till recently been a mystery as the titles above the figures are very difficult to make out. Following some research, we can now reveal the identities of the saints, some of whom came as a surprise. From left to right the saints are: **St Sergius of Radonezh**, **St Theodore the Sykeote**, **St Gregory of Decapolis** and **St Varlaam of Khutyn**. Whilst [St Sergius](#) would be an unsurprising addition to any ikonographic scene, the choice of the other three saints perhaps requires more introduction. As can be seen in the close up image, St Theodore of Sykeote was a bishop and is depicted clearly wearing the omophor. He lived in 6th-7th century Asia Minor and had a remarkably holy childhood, during which he lived with his mother, aunt, grandmother and sister. Despite his mother's protestations he fasted severely from an early age, and he had a special relationship with St George, who appeared to his mother and later used to come at night and take him to a nearby church dedicated to the saint. When St Theodore was grown, he moved into the church of St George permanently, adopting very rigorous ascetic practices, before being forcibly made into the bishop of Anastasiopolis. St Theodore departed to the Lord in AD 613. **St Gregory of Decapolis** was born in the 8th Century in modern-day Jordan. He refused to get married, and instead spent his time wandering the Mediterranean and living the ascetic life. He opposed a new outbreak of iconoclasm in 815AD but, before he was able to do more, he was overtaken by illness and reposed in the following year. Many miracles have been worked by his relics. **St Varlaam** lived in the 12th century in Novgorod, following the death of his parents he dedicated himself to a life of strict asceticism and hard labour. Others gathered around him and in time a church and monastery were constructed. St Varlaam reposed on 6 November 1192. Although it is not entirely clear why Sts Sergius, Theodore and Gregory are specifically included in the ikon – other than the possibility that they were the name saints of the founders – St Varlaam's inclusion related to the fact that the early wooden church built before the present stone building was originally dedicated to the Feast of the Transfiguration and had a side chapel dedicated to St Varlaam. **Most Holy Mother of God, save us!**

Notes & Jottings

GRAVE OF THE FOUNDRRESS

The final design for the grave of the Foundress has been agreed. The base will harmonise with the masonry at the entrance to the graveyard. On the top of the tomb there will be a plaque with the inscription *Pray for the soul of Mary, Foundress of this church*. The tomb will be surmounted by a Russian Cross (60 inches tall), made from York stone. All of this will take time to do but it should be finished before Radonitsa next year.



ARCHIVE ROOM

One of the aspects of the college library will be the gathering of archival material. This will include serial literature (journals, newsletters etc.), miscellaneous printed ephemera, press cuttings, photographs, and documents including letters. In the case of letters and other documents, we are happy to receive the originals, for safekeeping, but we realise that the current owners might not want to part with them. In this instance we would be happy to have copies. If people have documentation of this kind, that relates to the Orthodox Church here in Britain, or indeed anywhere, there is a risk if the only copy is in private hands. There is the danger of loss or accidental destruction (fire or flood) and, in the event of death, the executors and surviving relations might not appreciate the historic value and throw the whole lot onto a bonfire when the house of the deceased person is being cleared. Precious historical material is then lost forever.

We already have numerous box files of archival material that SGOIS has accumulated over nearly half a century. The room earmarked for an archive room is the pantry. The vast amount of crockery and kitchen equipment that was in that room has now been moved into various cupboards and cabinets in the kitchen. Less frequently used items have been moved to the high shelves in the larder. Thus the pantry, with its extensive shelving, is ideal as an archive room. Also it has the advantage of having two doors; one giving access to the former breakfast room and the other opening to the lobby at the bottom of the back stairs, allowing a direct connection to the library, which is on the first floor. The former breakfast room will transform easily into a study room.

BAPTISM

On Saturday 11 October Maxim Sarmulis, the son of Leonid and Jolanta, was baptised and named for St Maximus the Confessor. Maxim was an exceptionally happy baby and smiled throughout the service which made life much easier for his new godparents Aurimas and Arina! May God grant the newly illumined child of God Maxim many years together with his godparents, parents and family through the prayers of our Holy Father Maximus the Confessor!

TWO LETTERS FROM TWO METROPOLITANS

As a rare blessing, the October post brought two letters from two Metropolitans in a matter of days. Both Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) and our own Metropolitan Hilarion (Kapral) have been involved directly or indirectly in some of the research for the College's recent publication [Lifetime in Pilgrimage](#) on the Life of Archimandrite Lazarus (Moore) and sent kind notes thanking for their copies of the booklet. Along with his letter, Metropolitan Kallistos also generously

included photocopies of his correspondence with Fr Lazarus in the 1950's and 1960's which is of considerable biographical importance and gave his blessing for this to be shared with the Fr Lazarus Moore Foundation. Metropolitan Hilarion, who was instrumental in receiving Fr Lazarus back into the Russian Church at the end of his life, eloquently concluded his letter – "Father Lazarus was an important figure in the history of our missionary work among English-speaking people. His many translations of prayers, services and various spiritually profitable articles and lives are for us a most valuable inheritance. May God grant eternal rest to his soul! May God bless you and all the members of the Mettingham parish!"

CALENDARS FOR 2015

The [St Herman Calendar for 2015](#) is now in stock. The retail price is £6.50 per copy. This calendar is a lectionary and is in book form. It gives details of the numerous saints commemorated each day, plus the daily bible readings for the church services and details of days of fasting. The editorial theme is the *Saints of Siberia*.

THE EMPORIUM

The catalogue of SGOIS, *The Emporium*, is currently being printed and will be sent out very shortly. Readers, who receive the e-mail version of this bulletin, will receive their copy of *The Emporium* by e-mail. Details of Christmas cards will be found in this catalogue.

IKON OF SAINT CEDD, Bishop of the East Saxons

We have now received the new ikon of St Cedd, Bishop of the East Saxons, which has been prepared for us by the ikonographer, Efrem Carrasco. It is being printed as a card and will be available within the next couple of weeks. The retail price is 20p per card.

GIFTS

The College received a gift of two books at the beginning of October from our friend John Sirl who lives in Beccles. Hearing of our new ikon of St Cedd, John donated two books published by the Chapel of St Peter at Bradwell where the saint laboured entitled *The Celtic Connection* and *Celtic Heroes of Faith* both by the Anglican Suffragan Bishop of Selby The Most Revd. Martin Wallace.

NAMEDAYS



We send congratulations to all who are celebrating a nameday at this time and wish them:

Many Years!

3 November – **St Hilarion of Palestine** - Metropolitan Hilarion
27 November – **Holy Apostle Philip** – Archpriest Philip Steer



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

NOVEMBER 2014

DAILY AT 6PM: COMPLINE WITH PRAYERS BEFORE THE IKON

(If you would like the name of a friend or loved one to be included in our intercessions list, please contact us)

Wednesday 5 November

7.30pm ~ Vigil

❖ **Thursday 6 November** ❖

10.10am ~ Hours & Festal Liturgy (Joy of All Who Sorrow Ikon)

Saturday 8 November

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 9 November

10.10am ~ Hours & Divine Liturgy (St Nestor of Thessalonica)

Friday 14 November

7.30pm ~ Vigil

❖ **Saturday 15 November** ❖

10.10am – Hours & Requiem Liturgy for the soul of Mary Bond (Founder's Day)

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 16 November

10.10am ~ Hours & Divine Liturgy (Synaxis of Unmercenary Healers)

Saturday 22 November

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 23 November

10.10am Hours & Divine Liturgy (Apostles of the 70: Erastus, Olympus & Herodion)

Saturday 29 November

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 30 November

10.10am Hours & Divine Liturgy (St Gregory the Wonderworker)



*Suma on the White Sea
July 28/August 9, 1889*

There is a certain Father John at Kronstadt, whom I particularly wished to see but who I heard was away. Yesterday morning at Povenetz who should appear on the steamer on his back to St Petersburg but this very Father John! He certainly impressed me very much. He has the most beautiful face you can imagine, and, though there is no cant about him- for he laughs and talks quite unaffectedly like anybody else - yet you feel as if he was something different from anyone you ever met.

Letter from William John Birkbeck (1859 – 1916)

Norfolk man, Russophile, Anglo-Catholic diplomat and scholar who was deeply involved in improving ecclesiastical relations between the Anglican Church and the Russian Orthodox Church on the eve of the Revolution.

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