



“Joy of All Who Sorrow”

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“LABOURING WITH CHRIST”

The address of Saint John the Wonderworker on the occasion of his consecration as
Bishop of Shanghai, 27 May 1934

Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men. (Matt. 4:19)

With these words the Lord called His first Apostles. As a child, little did I think that this same call would some day be directed towards me, although for as long as I can remember it was my desire to serve truth. My parents nurtured me in a striving to stand unwaveringly for the truth, and my soul was captivated by the examples of those who had laid down their lives for its sake, who had fought against kings who persecuted the saving Faith, and on behalf of those kings who showed themselves to be carriers and defenders of piety. In these early years I had a poor conception of the path to be taken. As I grew older I thought of entering military or civil service and thereby to devote myself to serving my country which was at that time a stronghold and guardian of true piety.

I entered a secondary school bearing the name of one of the most illustrious pages in Russia's history: the Petrovsk Poltava Military Academy; but there I felt that I must choose another path. Encouraging this new flow of thought was my contact with our religious studies instructor- Archpriest Sergei Chetverikov- and the rector of the seminary, now Archbishop Varlaam.

The day I finished my secondary schooling coincided with the day when a newly consecrated archbishop took up his position as ruling hierarch in the city where I was to pursue my higher education. This archpastor (now Metropolitan Anthony [Khrapovitsky] of Kiev, (then Archbishop of Kharkov), became and has remained, my spiritual mentor. While studying secular subjects, I became more and more engrossed in the study of that science of sciences, the spiritual life. The church and the monastery where the Archpastor lived held a greater attraction for me than the place where I was pursuing my courses.

The ensuing ruination of our country's governing power convinced me once and for all of the transience of everything earthly and of the weakness of human strength and human capabilities, and I decided to break with the vanities of the temporal world and to dedicate myself exclusively to serving God.

But the call to serve God, which commanded my soul to deny itself and take up its cross and follow after Christ (Matt. 16: 24), carried also another requisite: to become a fisher of men. Before my outward ties with the secular world were severed altogether, a thirst for theological learning led me into a seminary under the protection of that great hierarch, St. Savva, and then onto the path which he indicated.

Today, with the voice of the archpastors of the Church, I am being called to enter into the archpastoral service. I do not presume myself worthy of such a dignity, aware as I am of my sinfulness; but I fear to refuse it, hearing the words which the Lord directed towards Peter who had sinned so grievously, though he later repented: "If thou lovest Me, feed My sheep, feed My lambs . " In explaining this Gospel passage, St. John Chrysostom calls attention to the fact that as a proof of love it was none other than the podvig of pastoral service that the Lord demanded. Why is pastoral service so great in the eyes of the Lord? Because, in the words of the Apostle Paul, pastors are "labourers together with God" (I Cor. 3:9). Christ came to earth to restore in man God's image which had grown defiled, to call people, to unite them as one that with one mouth and one heart they would glorify their Creator.

It is the task of each pastor to pray people to this unity, to renew them and enlighten them. What can be greater than to re-create God's creation! What greater good can one bring to one's neighbour than to prepare him for eternal life! The fulfilment of this task is not easy- one must battle with a man's sin corrupted nature, one often meets with misunderstanding, and sometimes conscious opposition or even hatred on the part of those one loves and cares to help. Great must be the self-sacrifice of a pastor, and great must be his love for his flock. For its sake he must be ready to endure everything, and each lamb must find a place in his heart. He must apply appropriate treatment to each one individually, taking into consideration the particular character and circumstances of each.

If the duties of an ordinary pastor are so difficult and complex, and his responsibility for the salvation of his flock so great, then what can be said about an Archpastor! Truly, the Lord speaks to him when He said aforetime to the prophet Ezekiel: *Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore bear the word of My mouth, and give them warning from Me.* (Ezek.3:19)

An archpastor is responsible not only for all the sheep which God entrusts to him, but also for the pastors. He

is called to account for every sinner whom he neglected to enlighten in time, for each soul that once walked the path of truth but then went astray. He is called upon to feel the pain of his suffering sheep and thereby to heal them, like the Chief Shepherd Christ, "by Whose wounds we are healed" (Is. 53:5). He has no personal life; he must give himself entirely to the work of saving souls and leading them into the Kingdom of Heaven. He must be prepared to endure all manner of vexation, persecution and death itself for the sake of the truth, to drink Christ's cup and to be baptized with His baptism (Matt. 20:23: Mark 10:39). He must concern himself not only with those who come to him, but he must actively seek out and return to the flock the lost sheep, carrying them upon his shoulders. It is his duty to proclaim Christ's teaching to those unfamiliar with it: "*Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15). Penetrated by the knowledge of the Church's universality, he is not to limit his concern to those directly entrusted to his care, but with the eyes of his heart he is to view the entire universal Church of Christ with the desire that all nations be enlightened and grow in the True Faith, for within the Church "there is neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian nor Scythian," but all are equally beloved children of the Heavenly Father.

In his concern for the salvation of men, a pastor must adapt himself to their individual perceptions in order to draw all people to Christ, in imitation of the Apostle Paul, and to be able to say with him: *Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law...To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.* (I Cor. 9:20, 22)

In his concern for the salvation of souls, a pastor must remember that people also have physical needs which cry out for attention. One mustn't preach the Gospel without showing love in action. At the same time, caution must be observed lest solicitude in meeting the physical needs of his neighbour swallow up the pastor's attention altogether and serve to detract from his spiritual concerns. He must bear in mind the Apostle's words: "It is not reasonable that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables" (Acts 6:2). Everything must be directed towards acquiring the Kingdom of God and fulfilling Christ's Gospel. True Christianity does not consist in intellectual abstract deliberations and teachings; rather, it is incarnate in life itself. Christ descended to earth not to instruct people in new forms of knowledge, but to call them to a new life. During our earthly life we prepare ourselves for eternity. The various circumstances and events of temporal life act to influence a man's spiritual life. Those with strong characters are able to surmount the influence of their surroundings, while the weak give in to it. The strong in spirit are tempered by persecutions, while the weak fall. It is therefore necessary, insofar as possible, to create conditions in which as many people as possible can be spiritually formed.

A pastor should not shun contact with society, but his participation must be as a bearer of Christ's law and as a representative of the Church. A priest cannot make himself into a public figure or a politician, forgetting the essential character of his ministry and its goal. Christ's Kingdom is "not of this world" (John 18:36), and Christ did not establish an earthly kingdom. Without becoming a political leader and without becoming embroiled in party conflicts, a pastor can bring a spiritual perspective to bear on life's experiences, thereby giving his flock to know what path to hold and how to act as Christians, not only in their personal life but also in the world. An archpastor must be able to give spiritual advice to everybody: to the hermit monk who is cleansing his mind from vain thoughts; to the king ordering the affairs of government; to the military commander setting off for battle; and to the ordinary citizen. This is especially important for a pastor of the Russian Church, whose personal life is today closely tied to what is happening in the homeland.

Among the Russian people, hardly anyone has remained untouched by those events which so deeply affect the

souls of all who give thought to them. Is it possible to look indifferently at what has happened to the Kremlin which has experienced the fulfilment of the bitter words of the prophet Isaiah: "How is the faithful city become an harlot! It was full of judgment, righteous lodged in it, but now murderers" (Is. 1:21). What believing soul does not shudder in thinking about the widespread desecration and unheard-of persecutions! All the sons of Russia, in one way or another, feel upon themselves the breath of the red beast who wars against the Bride of Christ.

From the first centuries Christians suffered persecutions for the sake of Christ; they never rejoiced in these trials but raised their voices against them. Numerous apologists and martyrs convicted the persecutors in the first centuries, and after them came a great multitude of hierarchs and confessors. In peaceful times the hierarchs and righteous gave attention to propagating the word of God, while in evil times they censured those in power. Rus was established under the immediate influence of her great pastors and her men and women of prayer. We cannot but grieve, seeing the destruction of that great 'house of the Theotokos' as the Russian empire was once called. We cannot but experience pain, when the souls and bodies of our close ones are being tortured, when our pastors and archpastors in the homeland are forced to silence by fear of death. Even outside her borders, we remain sons of Rus. Exiled from our earthly homeland, we continue to be the spiritual flock of the hierarchs Peter, Alexis, Jonah, Philip and Hermogenes. We are still part of the suffering and persecuted Russian Church, now drenched by the blood of the hieromartyrs Vladimir of Kiev, Benjamin of Petrograd, Hermogenes of Tobolsk, Mitrofan of Astrakhan, Andronik of Perm, and a countless host of other new martyrs and hieromartyrs. Their testament is our sacred treasure which we must preserve until such a time as it pleases God to reveal His might and raise the horn of Orthodox Christians. Until then we must remain in spiritual unity with the persecuted and strengthen them with our prayers.

Although absent from them, we kiss their bonds, and we grieve for those who have wavered. We know that even the ancient confessors of the truth sometimes wavered. But we have examples of steadfastness: Saint Theodore the Studite who condemned any departure from the Church's teachings, Saint Maximus the Confessor, Patriarch Hermogenes. We dread to slip from the path they trod, for if human weakness can be used to justify those beneath the yoke of terror, what can we say if we are scared by mere threats? Living in comparative security, we should strengthen ourselves spiritually in order to re-create what has been destroyed, "to turn back the captivity of Zion" if the Lord so allows, or to go ourselves in the steps of those who are suffering for the truth-if it should be necessary. For this reason we must above all preserve among ourselves oneness of mind and unity, presenting a unified Russian Church, and at the same time continue her vital work among other peoples. From the very first centuries of Russia's acceptance of Christianity, she sent forth missionaries to distant parts. First to shine forth were the righteous Kuksha and Leonty of Rostov, afterwards Stefan of Perm, Innocent of Irkutsk, and in our time Macarius, Apostle to the Altai, and Nicholas of Japan. Now the dispersed Russian people have become propagators of the Faith in all corners of the world. The task of the Russian Church Outside Russia is to occupy herself with the work of enlightening as many people as possible from all nations.

It is for this purpose that the Synod of Russian Hierarchs Abroad is sending me to a country from which arises the material sun, but which has need of the illuminating rays of the intellectual Sun of Righteousness.

Acknowledging my weak powers, it is in obedience to the Church authorities and my spiritual mentor that I submit to this choice- not

for the sake of honour and power, but to give myself entirely to the service of the Church. I beseech the Lord God that He help me and strengthen me to actively labour until death for the sake of the truth. In this significant hour of my life, I pray for those who schooled me and edified me with their instructions; I pray for those among whom I have spent until now my years of service to the Church; I pray for the youth whom I

nurtured spiritually, for my future flock, for the universal Church, for the suffering Russian land! I trust in the prayers and protection of the mighty host of heavenly warriors of the Christian race. I likewise ask you, God's hierarchs,...to pray for me and to bestow God's blessing.

CHURCH NOTES AND JOTTINGS

WINGFIELD COLLEGE

A clerical party from Mettingham enjoyed attending the Open Day at Wingfield College on Sunday 17 June, and hearing more from the owner, Peter Bloore, about the history of the Church and the De la Pole family's Chantry College. Peter is also in the process of establishing a *Centre for the Study of Medieval Chantry Colleges* and- with our historical interest in Mettingham College, and how this can be translated into an authentically Orthodox context- we look forward to further opportunities to participate in on-going research and enquiry.

VISITORS TO THE CHURCH

During the evening of Thursday 28 June a party of about twenty members of Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society visited our church. We might not have thought that we would qualify as either *archaeological* or *historical*, but maybe we are making history. In any event, the members of the society were keenly interested in our church life here. This is clear from the email we received on the following day from the Secretary:

“Thank you so much for making us so welcome last evening. Our members were enchanted and could not stop talking about their visit. I will sort out Sue's photos from her camera and drop you in a CD with them on for you to use as you wish. Thank you once again for your kindness,

Terry Weatherley”

IKONS DELIVERED BY HAND

We had forbidden Efrem Carrasco to use the Post Office, or any other company, to deliver the new ikons. Thus we had to wait for the services of a courier. On 28 June, Gabriel Skordilis arrived with the ikon of Our Lady of Mettingham and the ikon of St Botolph. Everyone who has seen this beautiful ikon of Our Lady of Mettingham has been overwhelmed. In the words of the troparion it truly is *Mettingham's joy and Waveney's glory*. Gabriel also brought back the ikon of St John the Wonderworker which had required some attention to the varnish. We are delighted to have Vladika St John back with us for his feast day.

ST BOTOLPH OF IKEN

On Saturday 30 June we went on pilgrimage to Iken and were joined by pilgrims from this area and as far afield as Lincolnshire and Manchester. It was inspiring to see the new ikon in the place where St Botolph himself sang the praises of God. It was good to have Fr Alexander Haig, of St Helen's Church in Colchester, participating in the service with us. In the moleben we sang the newly composed Akathist in honour of St Botolph. This pilgrimage was a very inspiring experience. The churchwarden of Iken, Louise Cooke, who offered us the hospitality of her immaculately kept garden for our picnic, asked if we would like to make it an annual event. This has yet to be decided but we do appreciate the generous welcome we received at Iken and the opportunity it gave us to meet new friends.

ST BOTOLPH AND RUSSIA

As part of our on-going historical research into the Life and veneration of St Botolph we have uncovered some little known details about the commemoration of our Suffolk saint in Medieval Russia. Several sources had indicated that St Botolph was listed in a Prayer to the Holy Trinity thought to have been composed by the great Church writer, St Cyril of Turov. Intrigued by this precious link between Orthodox England and Rus, contact was made with Dr. Ekaterina Rogatchevskaia, Lead East European Curator, of the British Library as well as Dr

C.M. MacRoberts, Lecturer in Russian and Slavonic Philology at Lady Margaret Hall of the University of Oxford, who were both generous in their assistance in tracking down the original Slavonic text of the prayer. We are especially grateful to Dr MacRoberts for going to the extra trouble of finding and photocopying the prayer. Our own Archbishop, Vladyka Mark, has expressed a keen interest in the prayer, and as an expert and former Professor in Slavonic Languages, has kindly agreed to translate the text into English. Whilst we hope to release more historical information about the background of this extraordinary prayer, here are a few contextual words from Vladyka Mark –

“Thank you for sending me the prayer. It is mostly an enumeration of saints. I will render a translation when I have some time. I cannot understand why anyone would ascribe it to St. Cyril of Turov ... the editor states clearly that it is from St. Sazava monastery from the 11th century. This monastery in Bohemia did have close relations with Western tradition, as it was a stronghold of Cyrillo-Methodian missionary work. The accumulation of names of Eastern and Western saints is truly unusual, but can easily be explained by the geographical location and spiritual tradition of St. Sázava monastery.

May God bless you!

Yours in Christ,

Archbishop Mark +”

NEW WEBSITE

As announced in the recent edition of Orthodox News, the website of the *St George Orthodox Information Service* has been completely overhauled with a brand new site designed once again by our friend, Justin Reynolds of the *Lucent Web Design Studio* (www.lucentwebdesign.co.uk). Visitors will now be able to browse and purchase new and second hand stock on-line, as well as download the latest copy of ON and have this delivered quarterly directly to their email account. Justin has also created a small website for the *Mettingham Orthodox Trust* which gives some basic information about the Trust, a portfolio of its assets and the possibility of making donations on-line. The websites are still in the process of being populated with stock, pictures and text but do please take a look at www.mettingham.org.uk or www.sgois.co.uk. We are always grateful for your views and feedback.

NAMEDAYS:

Many Years to all who will be celebrating their name day in July:

2 July - **St John the Wonderworker** - William John Stewart

12 July - **Holy Apostles Peter & Paul** - Fr Paul Elliott, Peter Smith, Peter Jermy

18 July - **St Elizabeth the New Martyr** - Elizabeth Tattum-Smith

24 July - **St Olga** - Olga Jermy

30 July - **St Marina (Margaret) of Antioch** - Nun Margarita, Marina Andrews, Marina Jermy, Marina Lock

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