



“Joy of All Who Sorrow”

No. 108 November 2017



Ss Galacteon and Episteme



There was a rich and distinguished couple named Kletophon and Leukippe, who lived in the Syrian city of Emesa, and for a long time they were childless. They gave much gold to the pagan priests, but still they remained childless. The city of Emesa was governed by a Syrian named Secundus, put there by the Roman Caesars. He was a merciless and zealous persecutor of Christians, and to intimidate them he ordered that the instruments of torture be displayed on the streets. The slightest suspicion of belonging to “the sect of the Galilean” (as thus Christians were called by the pagans), was enough to get a man arrested and handed over for torture. In spite of this, many Christians voluntarily surrendered themselves into the hands of the executioners, in their desire to suffer for Christ.

A certain old man by the name of Onuphrius, concealed his monastic and priestly dignity beneath his beggar’s rags. He walked from house to house in Emesa, begging alms. At the same time, whenever he saw the possibility of turning people away from the pagan error, he preached about Christ. Once, he came to the magnificent house of Leukippe. Accepting alms from her, he sensed that the woman was in sorrow, and he asked what was the cause of this sadness. She told the Elder about her familial misfortune. In consoling her, Onuphrius began to tell her about the one true God, about His omnipotence and mercy, and how He always grants the prayer of those turning to Him with faith. Hope filled the soul of Leukippe. She believed and accepted Holy Baptism. Soon after this it was revealed to her in a dream that she would give birth to a son, who would be a true follower of Christ. At first, Leukippe concealed her delight from her husband, but after the infant was born, she revealed the secret to her husband and also persuaded him to be baptized. They named the baby Galacteon and his parents raised him in the Christian Faith and provided him a fine education. He could make an illustrious career for himself, but Galacteon sought rather an unsullied monastic life in solitude and prayer.

When Galacteon turned twenty-four, his father resolved to marry him off and they found him a bride, a beautiful and illustrious girl by the name of Episteme. The son did not oppose the will of his father, but by the will of God, the wedding was postponed for a time. Visiting his betrothed, Galacteon gradually revealed his faith to her. Eventually, he converted her to Christ and he secretly baptized her himself.

Besides Episteme he baptized also one of her servants, Eutolmius. The newly-illuminated decided on the initiative of Galacteon, to devote themselves to the monastic life. Leaving the city, they hid themselves away on Mount Publion, where there were two monasteries, one for men and the other for women. The new monastics had to take with them all the necessities for physical toil, since the inhabitants of both monasteries were both old and infirm.

For several years, the monastics struggled in work, fasting and prayer. Once, Episteme had a vision in her sleep: she and Galacteon stood in a wondrous palace before a radiant King, and the King bestowed golden crowns on them. This was a prefiguring of their impending martyrdom. The pagans became aware of the existence of the monasteries, and a military detachment was sent to apprehend their inhabitants. But the monks and the nuns succeeded in hiding themselves in the hills. Galacteon, however, had no desire to flee and so he remained in his cell, reading Holy Scripture. When Episteme saw that the soldiers were leading Galacteon away in chains, she began to implore the Abbess to permit her to go also, since she wanted to accept torture for Christ together with her fiancé and teacher. The Abbess tearfully blessed Episteme to do so. The saints endured terrible torments, while supplicating and glorifying Christ. Their hands and legs were cut off, their tongues were cut out, and then they were beheaded. Eutolmius, the former servant of Episteme, and who had become her brother in Christ and fellow ascetic in monastic struggles, secretly buried the bodies of the holy martyrs. He later wrote an account of their virtuous life and their glorious martyrdom, for his contemporaries and for posterity.

St Nikolai Velimirovich has the following to say about the love the saints had for each other:

'Physical love, in comparison to spiritual love, is less than a shadow is to solid substance. Brotherhood and sisterhood of the blood and body is nothing compared to the brotherhood and sisterhood of the spirit. Galacteon's father betrothed him to the maiden Episteme. Galacteon baptised Episteme and, after that, both received the monastic tonsure. There physical love was replaced by spiritual love, a love as strong as death. So great was Galacteon's spiritual love for Episteme, that he never desired to see her with his physical eyes. Neither physical contact nor closeness are necessary for spiritual love. So great was Episteme's spiritual love for Galacteon that when she heard he had been taken for torture she ran after him, begging him not to reject her, but to receive her as a fellow-sufferer, as he was her spiritual father and brother. When the merciless torturers flogged holy Galacteon's holy naked body, holy Episteme wept. However, when the torturers cut off their hands and feet for Christ, both rejoiced and glorified God. So great was the power of our love for our Lord Jesus Christ. And so great was the spiritual love with which they loved each other. Truly., physical love is like a colourful butterfly that quickly passes, but spiritual love is enduring.'

Notes & Jottings

CENTENARY OF THE ELECTION OF PATRIARCH St TIKHON

All the historical accounts of the election of Patriarch Tikhon speak of it as happening on 5 November 1917, which indeed it did. However, this was the date according to the Julian Calendar. This means that the actual centenary will be on Saturday 18 November. Apologies for the confusion.

IKONS CLEANED

Efrem Carrasco has now returned the ikon of St John the Wonderworker which has been cleaned and looks like new again. Also he has cleaned and revarnished the ikon of St Wandregesilius of Fontenelle, which was donated to the church by Mary McCabe in memory of the Foundress.

GIFTS

We are grateful to all who contribute to our life here. The gifts of incense, church wine, food for communal meals etc. Also we thank Jonathan Olanczuk for miscellaneous items, including a green armchair for the drawing room, plus ikons of the Mystical Supper and of the Martyrdom of St Sebastian.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

We have not produced a new Christmas card this year because we still have a stock of all the existing designs. See the website or, alternatively, ask for the illustrated leaflet / order form.

CALENDARS

The 2018 St Herman Calendars, with the theme *Orthodoxy in Philadelphia*, are now available. With the increased publication price (\$12) and the poor exchange rate, the retail price will be £9 plus 15% p&p.

NAMEDAYS

To all who are celebrating a name at this time, we send congratulations and wish you:

MANY YEARS!

November 1 – **St John of Kronstadt** – John Steele

November 3 – **St Hilarion the Great of Gaza** – Metropolitan Hilarion

November 27 – **Holy Apostle Philip** – Archpriest Philip Steer

ALL WELCOME!



PATRONAL FEAST

Collegiate Church of the Ikon of the Mother of God:

JOY OF ALL WHO SORROW

MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER

**10.10am Hours & Festal Divine Liturgy
followed by Procession & Refreshments**

Collegiate Church of the Ikon of the Mother of God: Joy of All Who Sorrow

The White House, Low Road, Mettingham, Suffolk, NR35 1TP

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

NOVEMBER 2017

Saturday 4 November

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 5 November

10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (Holy Apostle James, Brother of the Lord)

Vigil ~ Time TBC

Monday 6 November

10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (Patronal Festival, Joy of All Who Sorrow ikon)

Saturday 11 November

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 12 November

10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (Hieromartyr Zenobius)

Tuesday 14 November

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Wednesday 15 November

10.10am ~ Hours and Requiem Liturgy (Founder's Day)

Saturday 18 November

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 19 November

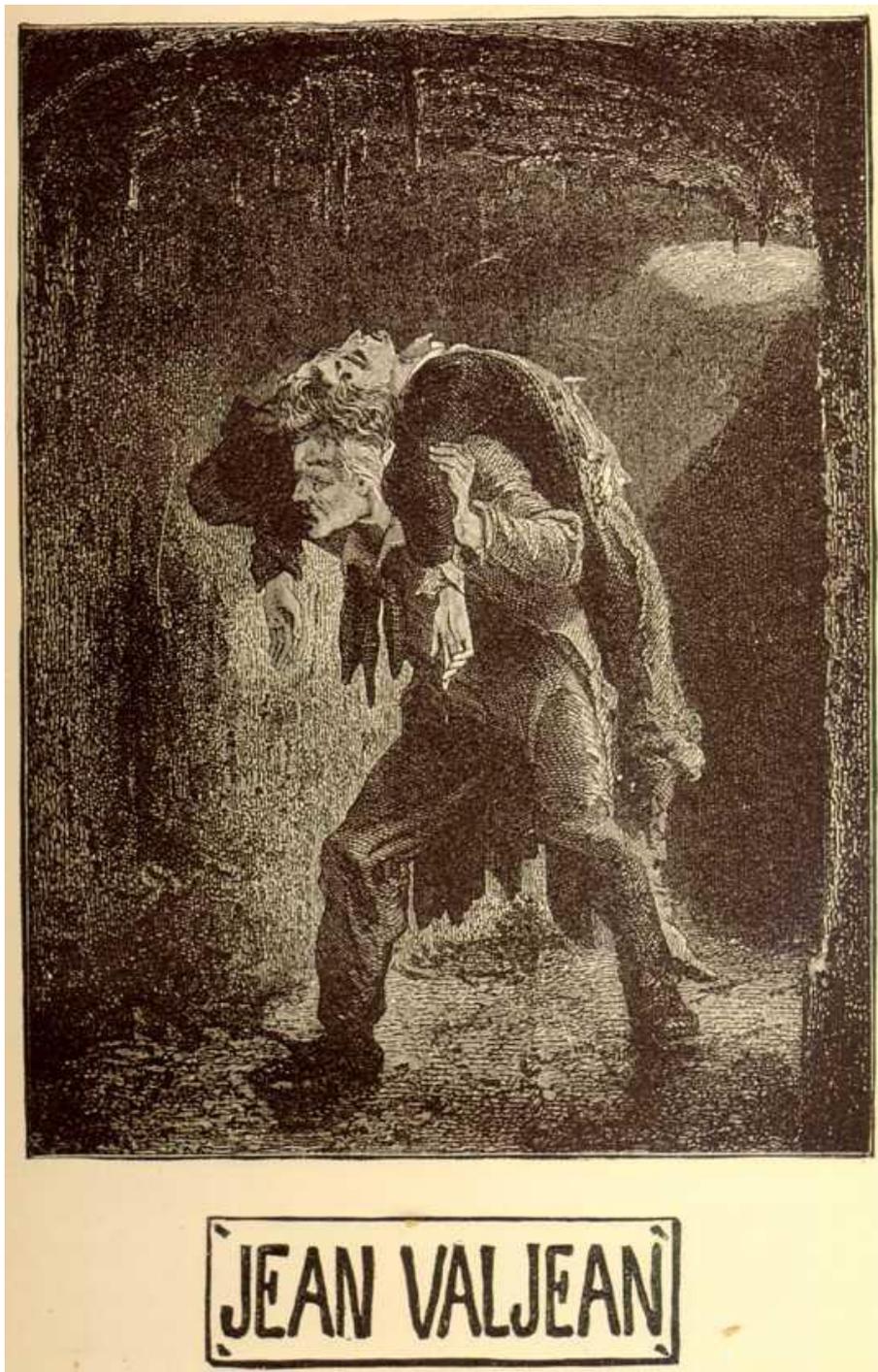
10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (Synaxis of the Unmercenary Healers)

Saturday 25 November

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 26 November

10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (St John the Merciful)



‘What is the mark of love for your neighbour? Not to seek what is for your own benefit, but what is for the benefit of the one loved, both in body and in soul’.

St. Basil

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