

FELLOWSHIP EVENTS

THE JESUS PRAYER

Report on the January 2006 Study Weekend led by Metropolitan Kallistos

The Jesus Prayer holds an increasingly important place in the hearts of Orthodox Christians and so the idea of holding a conference on the prayer with talks by Metropolitan Kallistos was timely – a well chosen topic. The Nottingham venue gave us all a chance to see a growing parish in its home setting and to gaze enviously at the church and all the ancillary rooms this parish has. The parish deserves our thanks for their hospitality.

We began with Vespers and for this service and all the others at the conference we must also give thanks. To those of us who live far from our church and are only able to get to services intermittently, these conferences are invaluable in enabling us to participate in a number of services over a few days, and the chance to see so many books, for sale, as well as in the parish's thriving library.

The first talk by Metropolitan Kallistos gave us a good introduction to the prayer as well as covering some practicalities. As with each of his talks, he began with a text for us to contemplate. This talk began with 'so far you have asked for nothing in my name, now you are to pray in my name'. This is the beginning of the idea of praying in Christ's name. We then moved on to consider St Theophan's injunction to 'stand before God with the mind in the heart and to go on standing before Him unceasingly day and night until the end of life'. This phrase gave us the three-part structure of the remainder of the talk. To stand before God, perhaps not speaking, and to pray with our whole selves and do it unceasingly, so that prayer becomes what we are and not just something we do, is the simple foundation of the Jesus Prayer. This last injunction to pray 'unceasingly' begged the question 'but how?' which led us on to consider how the prayer should be said and how it can be used. Non-Christians often see the Jesus Prayer as a Christian mantra to be used in the same way as other mantras are used in meditation. Metropolitan Kallistos was emphatic that the Jesus Prayer was not a mantra, but a prayer for a particular purpose to a particular person and it must be said with love and faith, not repeated automatically. It can be used in a freestyle way and said frequently, woven into the

fabric of everything we do, but it can also be said systematically in times set aside, using a prayer rope, whether in time with our breathing or not.

The second talk led us first to think about the fact that, in the prayer, Jesus is invoked as the Son of God, pointing to the Trinitarian nature of the prayer, and that it is a prayer of adoration and of penitence, and so it has a completeness even though it is short. We went on to think about four aspects of the prayer: the power of the name, the cry for mercy, the discipline of repetition, and the quest for stillness. We give things power when we name them and we have access to that power, to some extent, when we know the names of things, so that names are important not only in the Bible, but also in folklore, myth and fairy tales. The cry for mercy is the earliest and most basic prayer of the Church. Repetition is essential to the Jesus prayer, but Metropolitan Kallistos emphasised that obsessive over-repetition should be avoided. In the third talk, the fourth aspect of the Jesus Prayer, the quest for stillness, was developed and we thought about how the Desert Fathers used the prayer, and used it as part of the Hesychast tradition. Orthodox prayer is both cataphatic, in that it uses icons and ritual, and apophatic in that it uses prayer without images and thoughts, and the Jesus prayer is an example of apophatic prayer. The fourth talk helped us to see the Jesus Prayer in relation to the sacraments and especially its relation to baptism. Metropolitan Kallistos quoted St Gregory of Sinai's saying, 'Prayer is baptism made manifest', adding that the Jesus prayer helps us to discover the grace of baptism. The fifth talk was a journey into seeing the Jesus prayer more broadly, as a way towards transfiguration and we looked at a number of images of the Transfiguration. In the Transfiguration narrative, the cross and the glory seem to be repeatedly linked. For instance, Peter and John were at the Transfiguration and also at Gethsemane, and just before the Transfiguration Peter confesses Christ as Christ predicts his crucifixion. In the same way, the cross and the Transfiguration in glory are always present in the Jesus Prayer, which is, at the same time, sorrowful and always rejoicing.

There was such a richness of treasures in these few talks that it is hard to summarise them. We were taken from the most pragmatic considerations of dealing with distractions and the problems of praying whilst driving, to seeing the Jesus prayer as in some way giving us small glimpses of the possibility of glorious transfiguration in our own lives, but always with the constant hum of the petition for mercy.

Bede Gerrard

**FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE:
WOMEN AND MEN IN THE CHURCH**

Aylesford, July 2006

The Sunday Sermon

The gospel of Sunday, 7th Sunday after Pentecost, tells us about people who are blind, dumb or sick experiencing the healing presence of God in Jesus Christ. The ill, outcast women and men experience Jesus approaching them, even addressing them, touching them and caring for their souls and bodies. “Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people” (Mt. 9:35). Often we find ourselves in the role of the sick, yearning for the healing of our body and soul.

However, even more often we might find ourselves in the role of Jesus, going through the streets of the city facing the sick, the poor, the outcast. Mother Maria Skobtsova might have had this in mind when she wrote the following lines:

I searched for singers and for prophets
who wait by the ladder to heaven,
see signs of the mysterious end,
sing songs beyond our comprehension.
And I found people who were restless, orphaned, poor,
drunk, despairing, useless,
lost whichever way they went,
homeless, naked, lacking bread.
There are no prophecies. Only life
continuously acts as a prophet.
The end approaches, days grow shorter.
You took a servant’s form.
Hosanna.

Mother Maria spent all her energy and life caring, feeding, healing and teaching the poor and sick, the outcast, and we all know about the life and work of this newly canonized woman, who saved the lives of many, both Christians and Jews, from the terror of the Nazis. I understand her ministry not only within the context of a loving commitment, but rather within her

spirituality, influenced by an eschatology which leads to exactly the opposite of a world-transcendent view. For Mother Maria, an experience of the immanence of God's presence within people, rather than in turning away from the world, is the source of Christian eschatology. Thinking in biblical terms, Mother Maria took the eschatological text of Mathew 25 literally: "I was sick and you visited me, I was hungry and you fed me."

At the International Orthodox Women's Conference in Istanbul in 1997, Orthodox women chose Mother Maria as their role model. "She is a saint of our day, a model for us, one who lived in our century and in a culture and conditions familiar to us." The conditions of her life are familiar to many women from western and eastern Europe: dealing with unhealed and broken relationships, raising children as a single woman, experiencing the double load of being a mother and working, the lack of a ministry as a woman within the church, the fact of being a refugee herself and caring for even poorer refugees. Mother Maria is a woman who worked actively and creatively within the church. Rather than withdrawing into a private spiritual life, it was precisely her spiritual experience that drew her towards the world and humankind. In all her theological reflections and writings she reminds us: "The Orthodox Church is not a solitary standing before God, but sobornost, a community, which binds everyone with the bonds of Christ's love and love for one another." Her motivation was a deep immanent experience of God within every human person. Mother Maria is a role model for us, but each of us has to find her and his own way, walking through the city and facing the poor, finding a way to serve them, to heal them and to teach them.

For me personally, Mother Maria became a deep friend, encouraging and strengthening me through her poems and theological essays, which I often read on my way to work, but even more through the many ups and downs in her life. I work and teach in a Christian college in Vienna, with a wide range of Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim students of many different nationalities. Our school motto is: "Changing the world through education." Both the teachers and the students try to work for peace and justice through learning from each other's different cultural backgrounds, on the base of deep respect for each other's religion, which is not an easy project. When looking into the eyes of my students, often in the middle of a stressful teaching day, I often remember Mother Maria's poem: "I searched for prophets, but I found orphans and the poor."

Mother Maria teaches us: “In the context of spiritual life there is no chance, nor are there fortunate or unfortunate times. Rather there are signs, which we must understand, and paths, which we must follow. And our calling is a great one, since we are called to freedom.”

Let us pray that we shall be able to read the signs of the times today as women and men in the church, when walking through our cities and facing the poor, the sick and the outcast, and have the strength to touch them, to heal them and to teach them the gospel.

Antonia-Michaela Himmel-Agisburg

Lay People as Teachers of the Faith

I want to begin my short talk with two warnings followed by two stories and then to add a few comments of my own that I hope might be relevant to us all to take away and put into practice.

Cautionary advice to teachers in the Letter of James 3:1-2:

My brothers and sisters, not many of you should presume to be teachers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what they say, that is a perfect person, able to keep the whole body in check.

And cautionary advice, from St John of the Cross in *The Dark Night of the Soul*, to those setting out on the spiritual life:

When we begin our spiritual journey we often want God to desire what we want, and become dejected if we have to learn what God wants. We measure God by ourselves and not ourselves by God, which is quite contrary to the Gospel. For our Lord says that those who lose their lives for his sake will gain it, but that those who desire to gain their life will lose it.

It is necessary to realise that, if we are taking to ourselves the right to teach, we have the responsibility to teach what is true and will build up those who listen. Sometimes this means that we need to keep silence. There is no point in teaching against anyone or anything unless we are also building up those who hear. At times, it is better to decline an invitation, rather than to ride our own hobbyhorse to the frustration of those who listen and so fail to take account of the frailty of those who are listening.

My two stories:

In 1979, I travelled to the Soviet Union on an Intourist package that took in Kiev, Cherson, Zaparozhe, Leningrad and Moscow. It was the year before the Moscow Summer Olympics and many tourist venues were being improved for the expected influx of foreign visitors. This meant that, for the tour of the Kiev Lavra, the first monastic community in the Rus, instead of our party seeing the Near Caves, which were being smartened up, the tour took us into the Far Caves. These were almost untouched since the departure of the monastics, except for the stringing of some electric cables and light bulbs along the ceilings. The tour took us underground and past the small chapels with their icon screens. These cramped conditions showed, as the communist guide said, *'The historic conditions in which the peasant monks had to live in contrast to the luxury of the ornate old churches of the privileged'*.

Scattered through the corridors were elderly ladies keeping an eye on the visitors. I stood in front of one of the small icon screens and made a diminutive sign of the cross, hardly moving my hand. One of the warders leapt from her stool, took hold of my hand and moved it across the whole of my torso, saying something in Russian. I asked the Intourist guide what she had said. He looked round to see that no one was in earshot and translated: 'Do not be afraid to show you are a Christian, you make the sign of the cross like this.' After this, the lady kept me at the back of the group, and pointed out the relics of ancient monks in some of the alcove-like cells along the passageway. Telling me their names and instructing me to 'Kiss him!' She, to the danger of her livelihood, was being a teacher of the faith of the Church.

Many years ago, or so it seems, there was a series of television programmes called 'The Long Search', in which the journalist, Ronald Eyres, travelled to exotic and photogenic locations, 'looking for God', as it were. In the Balkans he 'visited the Orthodox Church' and was told the story of a Serbian bishop who, when asked where the Church was, took Ronald Eyres to watch a woman at prayer before her family icons. The location was a wooden cabin and the scene was set up so that we seemingly looked through the window into the shack without the knowledge of the occupant. The bishop said to Gerald, 'When women and men such as her cease daily to do what she is doing, then the Church will cease to exist.' Both she and the woman in the Kiev caves were fulfilling their baptismal vocation to take the Gospel into the world as missionaries for Christ.

So what do I want to say to you? What lessons do these stories teach us? I want to draw on my Western Christian heritage to set before us what I hope is the mind of the Church on teaching and how it should be done.

St Augustine said in a letter to someone who rebuked him for poor grammar and colloquialisms in one of his sermons, ‘It is better for our grammarians to reproach us than for the masses not to understand.’

At a local western diocesan synod in 794, the Synod of Frankfurt, it was declared that ‘no one believes that God should only be worshipped in the three languages: [i.e. Latin, Greek and Hebrew]. God is worshipped, and man’s prayers heard, when his demands are just, in every language.’ Then at the Council of Tours in 813, the preamble to the acts of that synod declares, ‘Let each man take care to translate these homilies, (the deliberations of the Council), clearly into the vulgar tongues, (that is the local languages) so that everyone may more easily understand what is said therein.’ Is there pause for thought here in our churches in Great Britain?

We are always being told that the teaching role of the Church is invested in the Episcopate. This is demonstrated in the fact that a person who preaches at the Divine Liturgy, or in fact at any church service, does so only by permission of the Bishop. It is highlighted in the Greek tradition by the fact that, at their ordination, not all clergy are automatically given permission to preach. Quite rightly, it may be some time before a priest has the prayer of the *Pnevmaticos* said over him and he is then ready to preach, and hear confessions.

Such a state of affairs is right, as what is taught in church needs to be in accord with what is the teaching of the Church. But, it is also right that the laity should listen to what is being said and ask questions if they feel that it is ambiguous or not in accord with the Church’s teaching.

It was after the return of the Bishops from the Council of Florence that the laity, on hearing what had been agreed there, concluded that it was not in accord with Tradition. They praised Mark of Ephesus but called on the signatory bishops to withdraw their consent which they deemed had been wrongly given.

While the Bishop is the teacher of the faithful, it is the Whole Church that is the guardian of the Faith. While it is the Clergy who are the ministers of the Sacraments, it is the Whole Church that gives its consent to the action of the Sacraments. For this reason the Sacraments should always be public occasions. Whilst counsel and advice is rightly given to the penitent in confidence, the absolution and reconciliation of the penitent is properly

done in the sight of the congregation, or at least in the open church building. Similarly, baptisms and marriages must be public and in open church to confirm and exhibit that they are actions of the whole people of God.

All too often in our modern society, the practice of our faith is seen as something that is private and personal, rather than an activity which is a witness to the world. 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.'

At the great Feasts of Christ instead of the '*Holy God*', the Trisagion, there is said a portion from the letter to the Galatians; '*As many of you as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ, Alleluia!*' And what is the vocation of all who have been baptised if it is not a vocation of mission to the world? When I was baptised, and when you were baptised, when I was chrismated, and when you were chrismated, we were ordained into the order of the laity, that order of the royal priesthood of God that gives us permission to enter into the nave of the church from the narthex through the Royal Doors. Yes, those are the Royal Doors - from the narthex into the nave - and not the often misnamed Central or Beautiful Gates from the nave into the sanctuary. (I am perpetually annoyed when those who should know better get things wrong. A few weeks ago I was given, by Bishop Kallistos his second copy of a book on the duties of sub-deacons and servers in the Altar. The ceremonies are described in detail and the wrong teaching is repeated that the Central Gates of the Icon screen are the Royal Doors! If such a simple thing can be got wrong what credence can I, or anyone else, give to the rest of the text?) An object lesson to us all: Get your facts right especially the simple ones. I am irked by preachers who get wrong the mathematical functions of the highest common factor and the lowest common denominator: if you don't know what the terms mean don't use them, because everyone who does know what they mean will judge the remainder of what you say to have the same level of accuracy. (For information, the highest common factor is usually, but not always, a rather low number and conversely the lowest common denominator can be a relatively high number). Also, when talking about faith, relating it by analogy to mathematics is not really helpful: in mathematics one is comparing like with like, whereas in theology there is often a lack of congruity between the ideas being compared. And in any case, theology is about people and God's relationship with us and ours with Him. We are not comparing 'like with like'; for God has made each of us as a unique creation. There are common themes, but not common answers. Each - and all - are

unique in all the world. The teacher can set out general principles but, first and foremost, needs to teach the individual how these principles apply to him- or herself.

But where does all this leave me with the general title of Katerina's and my contribution to this weekend? Lay Persons as Teachers of the Faith. With Katerina ill, it is necessary to look at the particular areas where lay people ought to be teachers. There are the formal positions of Parent, Godparent or Koumbari. These are teaching roles, and the expectation of the Church is that those with someone entrusted to their care should ensure that their spiritual child is nourished in the faith. There are also Sunday school and day school teachers, youth club leaders or organisers of holidays, camps or conferences. All these are important and have in them a formal teaching role.

I recall the priest-monk of the great habit who, whenever he met his godmother, bowed to her and asked her for her blessing. Some people were shocked by this relationship, but it is perfectly correct and it is only an inflated view of the priesthood that sees the priest or bishop as the only ones from whom we can ask a blessing. (My wife and I bless each other when we part, for however short a time, as do many couples.)

There are also times when the teaching is not spoken but is through actions. At the very start of a child's Christian life there appears to be a demarcation between the sexes. The churching of a mother after childbirth and the introduction of the newborn child into the church is a case in point: an unbaptised child, whether a boy or a girl, is not shown the sanctuary. If the child is baptised, quite often a boy child will be taken round the altar table and a girl child will not. There have been notable exceptions to this where the baptising cleric has taken the child, whether male or female, into the sanctuary and said, when challenged, there is no direction in the canons to distinguish between boys and girls.

This appeal to canons is a strange beast. Often a person will quote non-existent canons to justify discrimination on grounds of gender. One that I find particularly troublesome is the restriction on who may enter behind the icon screen. I have heard of a group of perfectly normal women who were in the Canterbury Road church during a violent storm when water started to come through the roof. One of the places it was coming in was through the sanctuary/altar roof. These seemingly normal, intelligent women used brooms and long canes to manoeuvre a plastic bowl into the sanctuary to catch the water. When asked why they had done this, their

reply was that the canons do not allow women into the sanctuary! What the canons say is that no one should enter the sanctuary if they have no legitimate reason for doing so. The sanctuary is special and unless you have something to do there, you keep out. This applies equally to men and women, ordained and lay. A woman who is in the church to lead the reciting of the daily services has a legitimate reason to enter the sanctuary in order to light the lamp in the high place. Or if, as at Oxford, the switch for the spotlight onto the icon screen is in the sanctuary, they should go in to switch on the light and to turn it off. If I arrive early for services, I may enter the sanctuary to light the lamps and prepare the charcoal or water etc., but when I have done this, and if the clergy have not yet arrived to begin the service, I go into the nave to wait for the service to begin. As a man, I have no more right to be in the sanctuary with nothing to do than anyone else. I certainly ought not to treat the sanctuary as a place where I can go to chat, out of range of the women of the parish.

There are many actions done in the church by laity and clergy that give a wrong teaching and should be avoided. When I go to receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist, the Holy Gifts are often given from more than one chalice. I go to the nearest, irrespective of which clergyman is there. There is so great a difference in glory between the gift I am to receive and the cleric who is distributing, that the difference in rank between a Patriarch and a newly ordained deacon pales into insignificance. The reception of the Body and Blood of Christ so out-weighs the personalities involved that to seek Communion at the hands of a specific priest is to belittle the greatness of the sacrament. There is an account of a church where a bishop and a priest often served together at the Divine Liturgy and many people received the Holy Gifts. About twice as many people queued to receive from the bishop as from the priest and even when the priest's queue had ended, people did not go to him. The bishop noticed that this was happening more and more often until one day, when the priest's queue had ended and the priest, after waiting a while to see if anyone would change lines, turned to go into the sanctuary, the bishop also turned and went back into the sanctuary leaving many people still queuing. At the end of the liturgy, the bishop said to the people, 'You come to the chalice to receive the King of Kings not to greet your bishop. Remember that I am no more worthy to give you this gift than anyone else.' The laity by their actions were wrongly teaching the rest of the congregation and failing to recognise the greatness of the gift they were going to receive.

One thing I am saying is that for all of us, whether lay or ordained, whether male or female, there are the same general principles. I will lay these before you and hope that, by your questions, we can learn how to apply them as individuals.

1. I should know what I am talking about.
2. I should read and think about the subject before I try to teach it.
3. I should ensure that, when I teach, my audience knows whether I am speaking on my own authority, or that of the Church, or of someone else.
4. I should ensure that, if I am claiming any sort of authority, I have gone through the proper channels to get it, and have got it.
5. I should ensure that, if I am teaching about faith and practice, my actions and life accord with what I say.
6. I should ensure, if I use analogies, that my audience does not take them as facts. (A preacher in Oxford said in a sermon, 'If Prince Charles were coming to church here next week, you would all make sure you came properly dressed and on time.' He was rebuked the following week by a member of the congregation when Prince Charles did not turn up.) Make sure your audience does not take your analogies and remember them as facts.
7. Last of all, when I have said all I need to say, or I am able to say, I SHOULD STOP.

So I will do just that, now.

Bede Gerrard

FELLOWSHIP STUDY WEEKEND 26-28 January 2007

LIVING THE TRADITION: MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

The Fellowship held its annual Study Weekend at Bristol on: *Living the Tradition: Marriage and Sexuality*. We were guests of the Orthodox Church of the Nativity of the Mother of God, Bristol, holding our meetings in the Bristol Grammar School Sixth Form Centre. There were some 24 enrolled participants, with a few further auditors at most sessions.

The basic question considered at the weekend was the Sacrament of Marriage. How do Scripture and the Fathers understand married love, and how can their teaching be lived out in the twenty-first century? The opening address was given by Bishop (now Metropolitan) Kallistos of Diokleia, who spoke about the theology and symbolism of the marriage service. He pointed out that, in the Office of Blessing for a first marriage, equal emphasis is placed upon both the reciprocal love between husband and wife and the procreation and upbringing of children. Nowhere does the liturgical text imply that one of these aims has priority over the other. Likewise, in the service for a first marriage, it is nowhere stated that marriage was ordained by God with the Fall in view, or that its purpose is mainly to be a remedy against the sinful and disordered impulses of fallen humanity.

The other three speakers were Fr Stephen Plumlee (from Florida, USA), Fr David Gill (Parish Priest in Nottingham), and Dr Frank Johnson (obstetrician and gynaecologist, from Northumberland). All three have professional experience in the field of psychotherapy or psychiatry, and they spoke with great thoroughness about the significance of marriage and its problems from a pastoral, spiritual and medical standpoint. These talks led to a lively and positive exchange of views, and it was generally agreed that there is an urgent need within the Orthodox Church to develop reflection in depth on the challenges and opportunities of the married vocation in contemporary Western society.

On Sunday morning, the participants attended the Divine Liturgy at the nearby Orthodox Church of the Nativity of the Mother of God, where the service is in Slavonic and English. Our warm gratitude is due to Archimandrite Kyril Jenner, the Parish Priest, who undertook all the practical arrangements for the weekend.

ORTHODOX YOUTH FESTIVAL 2007 SOME IMPRESSIONS

(For details of next year's Festival, see page 43)

A more formal report of the Festival will appear in the Winter issue of *Forerunner*.

True friendship is like a rare Indian plant: however hard I tried to describe it, I would be unable to convey a proper understanding of it to someone who had no experience of it. (St. John Chrysostom)

There are times when I still wonder how I came to be at the Festival this year. The last year has been a testing and difficult time on many different levels. In this last year both my church and family life have broken down in a way I could never have imagined possible. Much has been written about the troubles that have beset the Diocese of Sourozh, and those of you who know me will know that, sadly, my husband and I separated last autumn. The reasons behind these two events are human and complex, but the results have been devastating and testing. In the wake of this, much has changed in my life, and I have been confronted with myself and my failings. There have been many choices to make, and I have had the overwhelming sense that in order for me to move forward and find healing things have to change. Most importantly, I have to change.

This is the context in which I applied to come to the Festival. Its theme of 'Friendship' was critical to the questions I had been asking myself. I had not been to such an event for many years, partly because I had young children, and partly out of an ingrained cynicism, a gnawing scepticism that such gatherings could provide meaningful answers to my questions, a distrust of everything new and unfamiliar. This attitude had borne no fruit, and I wanted to change, to open up, to give it a try.

It is very hard to describe the atmosphere of the Festival; it was quite overwhelming and infectious. I was struck firstly by the openness: I don't know quite how else to describe it. Everyone was very, very open. I did not feel at any point that I was trying to join a clique, or that I was a newcomer. Here were Orthodox Christians from all over the place, from a wide range of dioceses and nationalities, and they wanted to be together. The next impression was joy – the participants' faces were bright with joy. This was particularly evident in our services; at the end of evening prayers no

one wanted to leave the church. People stood singing spontaneously in English, Greek, Slavonic, Romanian, with no embarrassment or pretension. This was church as I had never experienced it before. The mix and sharing of languages and customs was natural and uncontrived, and all of it was rooted around the shrine of St Bertram. Singing the troparion to St Bertram gathered us together in an extraordinary way, and I had a fleeting glimpse of what a 'local' Orthodox church really means – that it could never be contrived, that it would need to be born of this exceptionally diverse combination of traditions, this type of openness and joy, and I truly believe, as never before, that one day this will be granted to this island. This impression was heightened by our celebration of the feast of Pentecost which was extraordinarily joyful and vivid. We sang 'We have seen the true Light, we have received the Heavenly Spirit' with such wonder, and knelt together, and prayed 'O Heavenly King' – it was paschal.

Our fellowship was not, however, fully formed, but fledgling; people had real and searching questions regarding the nature of friendship, its parameters, its pitfalls, how to maintain proper friendship. Discussion was approached in a sober and serious way, and was earnest. I was struck by how many of the questions the participants asked the speakers were not technical or academic questions, but looking for ways to apply this understanding in daily life. The workshops in particular were very practical. For me, a point of discussion which made a great impact was the threefold nature of friendship: it is not merely a dialogue between me and you, but a triologue. The relation between me and you is made possible in and through Christ, it is His gift.

Fellowship pervaded the entire programme: we prayed together, ate together, talked together, walked together in the beautiful surroundings, sang and danced together. The social fellowship was just as striking as in church, or rather there was no separation between the two. The bond of communal prayer flowed over and into our play, and many of us sang, played and danced late into the night. There was also a concrete awareness that this Festival was made possible by the generous support of the Fellowship of St John the Baptist. This was important as it grounded and grafted the Festival into a strong and well established body of Orthodox fellowship, and we felt that our friendship was greatly indebted, not only in a material sense, but also to the prayers and foundations laid by the Fellowship. We were looking forward to expressing this at Swanick, and showing some measure of our thankfulness in the youth choir.

I have been at wonderful gatherings where I have made one or two good friendships which have lasted, but I have never experienced fellowship on this scale, where I have found not one or two, but 20 or 30 real friends. I arrived poor, and I left rich. I arrived with a mind struggling with despondency, and left filled with hope. Thanks to God!

Mariamni Yenikeyeff

To begin with, I must say I was very doubtful about going to the Festival. I worried that it would be boring, or that I would feel uncomfortable among people who (I feared) would be obsessed with theological arguments. I wanted to go to the Peak District, but I worried that at the Festival everyone would be interested only in indoor services and activities, so that I would not get a chance to walk and admire the scenery. I also worried about how I would get there – Ilam is several miles from the nearest bus stop! But thank God I am someone who is always afraid of missing out so, when my friend Nina said she was going, I emailed, and once I had registered, I became more and more excited about the trip. Even the weather forecast (heavy showers throughout the whole Bank Holiday) failed to discourage me: I was positive that God would spare those meeting in His name.

To jump to the end of the Festival and give you my impressions: absolutely all my worries and doubts proved to be wrong. To begin with, it did rain in Ilam, but not as heavily as in Oxford! and never when we wanted to go for a walk! The Festival was anything but boring. I met several dozens of truly loving and friendly people, each of whom was a unique individual, with his/her own story of how they had come to Orthodoxy. I usually find it hard to socialise with strangers, and for me the Festival was an opportunity to finally be brave and open my heart to other people. And when you open your heart with God's help, knowing that the others also came to the Festival because they want to be your friends, the process of getting to know each other becomes not easy, for no truly good things are easy, but exciting and in the end hugely rewarding. The Festival gave me an opportunity to learn how to make friends, share my own experience, learn from the experiences of others, and be patient, supportive and sociable. I tend to keep my faith to myself and not share Christ with other people. It is hard to explain this, but sadly it is true, so I was happy to finally 'break the ice' when God gave me courage to hug my brothers and sisters in Christ during the Liturgy, as in the early Christian tradition.

Secondly, the talks, discussions and workshops which were a part of the Festival, were not at all 100% about theological arguments, nor about deciphering difficult parts in the Bible. All that was said was, of course, inspired by and based on the Scripture, and we often quoted the words of Christ and His disciples, but all our talks were about how the word of God enters our personal everyday life. During the Festival, I was consoled to realise that the problems I have in trying to live my Christian faith are shared by other people. So now, when I am back from the Festival and still encountering the same problems, at least I know that at this very moment my brother or sister in Christ is struggling too, and this realisation that we are struggling together gives me strength and saves me from feeling alone.

Thirdly, the village of Ilam is at the heart of Peak District beauty - you don't even have to walk anywhere to see the stunning peaks. The Festival programme included long walks around the area, and my fellow participants were not at all offended when on the last day I escaped from the last part of a talk to go on a solitary climb up my favourite hill. The photos from the Festival prove the beauty of the area, but even they fail to convey the breathtaking feeling when you stand on the top of a hill with the wind blowing into your face and green valleys stretching below for miles and miles in every direction.

Now, the most important part: the Festival gave me an opportunity to meet wonderful people whom I otherwise would never have met, in spite of the fact that some of them live in Oxford, like me! Now I have friends all over the UK and even the world (for there were people from Romania, Australia, the US, Cyprus, etc.), and though I spent only a few days with them, I feel we became very close to each other, for we shared our prayers and innermost thoughts and worries. I know that if I had read an account of the Festival like this, before going there myself, I would have thought it was exaggerated and overenthusiastic, but I can say that the Festival turned out to be an event that it's better to see once for yourself, than to hear about a hundred times from others. I haven't even said here what the Festival really meant to me, for certain things are truly beyond words. You can only feel them in your heart.

Darya Protopova

PILGRIMAGE TO DIVEYEVO

For many years Fr Seraphim and I have felt very close to St Seraphim, and recently what seemed an unobtainable dream suddenly became a reality, for as part of our pilgrimage to Russia we were able to spend two days in Diveyevo. A successful pilgrimage feels like the beginning of a journey, not the end of one, and our experience of St Seraphim and the living tradition he left behind him has given us a fresh impetus for our spiritual lives and a desire to dig deeply into this tradition and learn from it.

Diveyevo is a big village dominated by the large, recently rebuilt churches in the centre. The streets are thronged with pilgrims, the vast majority of whom are Russian; we saw very few foreigners during our stay. There is an intense feeling of a living spiritual tradition, built on memories and traditions painstakingly preserved during the long and difficult period of Soviet oppression. The role of the New Martyrs is incredibly important; some local ones are commemorated in frescoes on the walls of the refectory. It is known that St Seraphim predicted many of the events of the 19th and 20th centuries, including the troubles that beset Diveyevo after his death, the martyrdom of the imperial family and countless others, and his own canonisation. One is left with the certainty that the persecution of the church during the 70 years of Soviet rule was all part of God's plan, and that in some mysterious way God revealed many of these events and their meaning to St Seraphim within the context of eternity.

The focal point of the pilgrimage is to venerate the relics of St Seraphim, miraculously preserved in a Museum of Atheism and just as miraculously found and restored to Diveyevo about 15 years ago. Local people have kept many of his possessions, including his bast shoes, a linen shirt, his large copper cross and chain, his gloves and the mattock he used when he dug the ditch around the monastery known as the "kanavka". All his effects, and the icon of the Mother of God before which he was praying when he died, are there to be venerated.

We attended both a Vigil and a Liturgy in the main church, and were overwhelmed by the powerfully prayerful atmosphere, particularly after each service, when the nuns sang Magnifications to St Seraphim, three of the nuns and the three 'Blessed Ones' (or Holy Fools) of Diveyevo. Many of the people one reads about in the life of St Seraphim, such as Motovilov

and Manturov, are buried there, and we were introduced to some new characters, including the three most famous Holy Fools.

St Seraphim had trouble with difficult people during his lifetime, and he knew that there would be difficulties ahead, and so he entrusted the spiritual direction of Diveyevo to a series of women, now known as the 'Blessed Ones'. We first became aware of their presence when we visited the house of Pasha, opposite the main entrance to the monastery. Pasha was the daughter of a serf, who lived in the forest, praying, for about 30 years before settling at Diveyevo at the age of 90. Her small, simple, wooden house is painted bright blue, and the room in which she lived is preserved more or less as it was when she died in 1915 at the age of 120. One of the first things we noticed in the room was a number of old dolls scattered about on the furniture. Our guide explained that, although these dolls were not the ones that belonged to Pasha, she had similar dolls which she used to play with while talking to her visitors and with which she would reveal the future in a symbolic way. Near the day bed was the low bench before which St Seraphim was kneeling when he died. You can see clearly the blackened wood from the fire which was started by his candle when he died. On the wall was a large portrait of the last Tsar, Nicholas II, and the guide told us that when he and the Tsarina came to Diveyevo in 1903 for the canonisation of St Seraphim, they asked to see Pasha, having heard about her great holiness and wisdom. Pasha was told that they would be coming, and she made her preparations in her own way, having a new carpet unrolled on the floor for the imperial couple to sit on. They spent several hours there, and during that time Pasha told them of the events of 1917. When the Tsarina refused to believe her, she gave her a piece of red cloth, saying, 'Next year when your son is born you will believe me.' The Tsar left very shaken but very impressed with Pasha, saying that of all his subjects she was the only one to treat him as a human being and not as a Tsar. We were also shown Pasha's dresses, including a blue one she wore for feast days, which we were allowed to touch. A mother with a disabled son rubbed the sleeve reverently on her son's face. A photo on the wall showed Pasha with Metropolitan Seraphim Chichigoff who was in the army at the time. She predicted his priesthood by grabbing his sleeve and saying, 'This is not the sleeve of a soldier; this is the sleeve of a priest.' Later, he compiled the Chronicles of St Seraphim, based on memories

about St Seraphim received from people at Diveyevo. He was killed in the 1930s at Butovo, with many other priests, and has now been canonised.

We were also told about several other Holy Fools to whom St Seraphim entrusted the spiritual direction of the monastery. The first, Pelagia, was the daughter of a rich merchant, who was forced to marry a widower at the age of 18. After begging for some years to live as a nun, she was allowed to leave her family, partly because her behaviour had been so very odd. St Seraphim guided her and told her that there would be holy women guiding the monastery. After Pasha, the third 'Blessed One' was called Elena, also the daughter of a serf, orphaned at the age of 13. She lived in the forest, praying, and called herself Elena Ivanovna (daughter of John), saying that in a spiritual sense St John the Baptist was her father.

We were fortunate to join the procession around the *kanavka*, which takes place every evening. St Seraphim said that the Mother of God was the real abbess of Diveyevo, and that it was she who marked out the boundaries of the monastery. He himself began the task of digging the ditch and dyke and the nuns continued it. When our friend, Alison, visited Diveyevo about ten years ago, she helped to dig it out along with many other pilgrims, so that the tradition of praying around the *kanavka* every evening could be revived. A procession of nuns and priests led the way, walking along the path in total silence, each person silently praying the prayer 'Virgin Mother of God rejoice...' It took about 45 minutes to walk right round, and the sky was darkening when we reached the end. There must have been about 1,000 pilgrims walking and praying in silence.

Some of the Russian teachers who accompanied us on the pilgrimage, not used to going to church, must have felt a strong sense of being in a foreign country, like us. But Diveyevo was also a place where we felt at home because it is like a bubble of Orthodoxy and Biblical tradition, in some ways outside secular time, not having changed in essence since the time of St Seraphim, despite the mobile phones and cars in the streets. But in other ways it is well embedded in the 21st century, with pilgrims bringing their contemporary needs and problems to lay at the feet of St Seraphim. We came to understand at Diveyevo that the essential point of a pilgrimage is to step outside of one's daily concerns and habits, and enter into a deeper experience of prayer, which transcends time and place.

Ann Johnson

THE BEGINNINGS OF ORTHODOX KENT

When the Romans abandoned their province of Britannia before the incoming Barbarian tide, there were a few Romano-British Christians, who continued their religious practices unrecorded by history, and left indelible evidence in the archaeological record. With the departure of the Romans, all official contact between Britannia and Rome ceased, and fierce pagans, Angles, Saxons and Jutes, collectively the English (called by Norman historians the Anglo-Saxons) came across the North Sea. They came first as mercenaries, because the Romano-British, after long years of protection by the Roman Army, had become effete and lost the art of warfare. They stayed and gradually took over the country, dividing it into separate kingdoms, of which Kent became the foremost during the reign of King Æthelberht (Ethelbert).

St Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome, and St Augustine: Apostles to the English

The old province was not forgotten, however, and one day it was brought specifically to the forefront of the mind of Bishop Gregory in Rome. He was walking through the slave-market when he was struck by the bright countenances and fair hair of some boys offered for sale, and he asked whence they came. On being told that they were Angles, he uttered the famous pun '*Non Angli sed Angeli*' (not Angles but Angels), and his determination to bring the former province of Britannia back into the fold of Christ was increased. Shortly after that incident, he was elected Pope and, unable to go himself, he cast around for a suitable person to send. He decided on the prior of his former monastery, with whom he had once shared a cell, Augustine (Austin), who was dispatched with 40 monks. They became disheartened on the journey, probably hearing horror-stories of the English spread by peripatetic British monks, and Augustine, who had been made Abbot of the group, returned to ask that this task might be lifted from their shoulders; but the Pope sent him back with a letter to the others, exhorting them to continue without fear. They therefore did so and, as Kent is the part of England closest to mainland Europe, it was to the Kingdom of Kent that they first came. The story of the coming of a new Christian mission to Kent is therefore closely tied in with the story of the beginning of the rest of Orthodox England.

Kent, because of its position, and consequent trade advantages, was the richest of the English kingdoms at this time. The Jutish merchant class was wealthy, sophisticated, and willing to imitate the fashions of their Frankish counterparts, including their religion. We cannot know what correspondence passed between King Ethelbert and folk on the continent, but we are told that it had come to Pope Gregory's ears that the English wished to become Christians. Bertha, the Frankish wife of King Ethelbert, was a Christian, and had secured as part of her marriage settlement the right to continue to practise her religion. It took 35 years of daily walks through the Cweningate (through which one may still pass) in sunshine and rain, wind and snow to St Martin's church with her chaplain, Bishop Liudheard, and 35 years of soft and persuasive words in her husband's ear; but eventually her patience was rewarded by the arrival of St Augustine in AD597. He arrived at Ebbsfleet, not far from where the recently renovated Viking Ship Huginn now marks the earlier landing of Hengist and Horsa, the first English Kings of Kent, in AD449.

King Ethelbert met Abbot Augustine around the site where St Augustine's Cross now stands. The meeting was in the open air, so that no one afterwards could accuse him of being bewitched by the soft words spoken by the emissary. The King knew that his dealings with the new religion had to be seen by all to be fair and just. As they walked up to the meeting place, Abbot Augustine and his 40 monks must have presented an imposing sight, carrying a silver cross and an icon of Christ himself. Speaking through interpreters, the King gave his permission for the mission to go ahead, and we are told that Abbot Augustine and his monks initially took over the only Christian building available in the capital city – St Martin's church, Canterbury. A lodging was found for Abbot Augustine and his monks in the city, until such time as more permanent accommodation could be found for them.

It was not long before the King was converted, and gave to the church the site on which his royal hall was built, where there was a ruined Roman basilica, which Abbot Augustine then rebuilt and re-dedicated to Christ in honour of the precious icon that he had borne with him. Abbot Augustine made a brief visit to Arles, and was ordained Bishop of the English Nation by Ætherius, the Archbishop of that city, returning to be enthroned in the new Cathedral of Christ. Pope Gregory had instructed that he should do this, as the Pope wanted Augustine to be ordained as a bishop

locally, and use whatever local variations he might find in the liturgy that seemed good to him.

Not unnaturally, Pope Gregory had assumed that the situation in England would be similar to what had existed in the former province of Britannia, but when Archbishop Augustine informed him of the real situation he sent back instructions as to how he should proceed. He told him that, rather than condemning outright the various pagan festivals, sacred groves and so forth, he should hallow them by dedicating them to Christian uses, so that the people would see that the religious urge which had made them worship in the pagan manner was not wrong, but simply misguided, and that their worship should now be offered to the one, true God.

Bishop Augustine explained to the king that by Roman law all burials had to take place outside the city walls. He therefore suggested that the king should also donate a suitable area of land for a burial place for the kings and archbishops of Kent. The king was pleased to do this, and a piece of land was found, allegedly the site of the king's pagan temple, for a church dedicated to St Peter and St Paul, which was begun in 602. The church consisted of a central nave, an apsidal chancel to the east, a porch to the west and porticos to the north and south. Porticos were simply adjoining rooms, approached by a doorway, with a subsidiary altar. North porticos were traditionally used as a vestry, and south porticos for the gifts of the people, which at that date were often made in kind. In the case of St Peter and St Paul, there was another north portico to contain the tombs of the archbishops, and one on the south for the tombs of the kings. The church was constructed in stone with bands of Roman brick, in the Roman fashion, and was rendered in a pale pink Roman mortar, *opus signinum*, which was extremely hard. 'Concrete' floors in these churches, made with *opus signinum* still exist today. Unfortunately, Bishop Augustine died before the church of St Peter and St Paul could be finished, and his remains were laid in a temporary grave until the church was ready to receive them. Bishop Laurentius (Laurence or Lawrence), his successor, consecrated it. The first abbot of the new monastery associated with the church was a priest called Peter, who unfortunately drowned whilst crossing the channel on an embassy to Frankland.¹

At this point we must ask what became of Bishop Liudheard and the few Christians who had been left behind when the Romans left. Bishop Liudheard faded out of the written record after Bishop Augustine's arrival, but was buried with his queen. The problem seems to have been largely

political. The native British were subject to the English, and whilst King Ethelbert was quite prepared to accept Christianity from Augustine, who came from far away, politically he could not receive it from the subject people in his own kingdom without losing face. Likewise, the British, who had had their lands taken from them by the invaders, hugged their Christianity to their own hearts and gained some consolation from the thought of what might be the invaders' eternal destinies. Their aloofness from the English was not due to torpor or lack of resources; it was a deliberate policy,² and exacerbated certain other problems with the native church.

The British Christians had continued to worship during the 'Dark Age', when they were cut off from Rome, and had developed some peculiar practices during this time. Bishop Augustine held conferences with British Bishops and elders at a place on the borders of Wessex to try to persuade them to bring their practices in line with the universal church, and to help him in the labour of preaching to the pagans. He naturally met them as an emissary of the Pope, seated on his episcopal chair, but they took this as a sign of pride and haughtiness, and consequently argued with him and refused to accept his authority. This policy on the part of the British churchmen and their church was short-sighted. Instead of joining in the new blooming of Christianity that was to take place in England, they instead condemned themselves to obscurity and their church to oblivion. Bishop Augustine's own mission in Kent proved so successful, however, that Pope Gregory sent him some more labourers, among them Mellitus, Justus, Paulinus and Rufianus, and also a quantity of church furniture, icons, vestments, relics and books. King Ethelbert was not only King of Kent, but also had the title Bretwalda, as he had supremacy over all the English lands south of the Humber. He was therefore able to offer safe-conduct and considerable influence outside the borders of his own jurisdiction. In 604 Mellitus was ordained Bishop of the East Saxons, whose metropolis was London, and whose seat was in the church of St Paul that King Ethelbert caused to be constructed for him. Justus was ordained Bishop of Rochester, in which city was a church that was dedicated to St Andrew the Apostle. After this, Bishop Augustine died, probably later in the year 604, and was buried in the church of St Peter and St Paul at Canterbury. His remains lay there until the Reformation, when they were translated to Chilham, where they were allowed to rest in peace and obscurity for a brief period, but were subsequently destroyed.

Laurentius, who had been ordained Archbishop of Canterbury in St Augustine's lifetime so that the new church should not falter for want of a pastor, threw himself into the work with great energy. The mission spread, and churches of similar construction to that of St Peter were set up at Reculver and Richborough, within the bounds of ruined Roman forts.³ St Cedd⁴ was to build an exactly similar church at Bradwell-on-Sea in Essex as a base for his mission there, probably employing the same masons.

Reculver Church

The church at Reculver survived intact until 1805, when the Vicar's mother, a philistine, railing shrew, bullied him and he bullied his parishioners into demolishing it because of the encroaching sea. They robbed the old church to build another church a mile inland, intending to replace the one they had destroyed, with the acquiescence of an archbishop who lacked the steadfastness of his predecessors. Thus, by the rantings of a single woman, we have lost the last complete example of an early Kentish church! The ruins of it yet survive, untouched by the sea, as its Norman towers provide a landmark for shipping and Trinity House had them preserved by groins and a seawall. The two massive Roman columns that supported the triple arcade of the chancel, and fragments of the cross that once stood before its centre portal, are now kept in the crypt at Christchurch Cathedral, Canterbury. In this instance the cross is much later in date than the church. It is thought, however, that preaching crosses were set up all over the kingdom where an itinerant preacher would come at pre-ordained times. Gradually a shelter would be added for itinerant priests to sing 'Mass' (the Eucharist), and eventually this would lead to the construction of a church in wood, and later in stone. When the stone church was built, the old, and by now much weathered, preaching cross would be incorporated into its structure, and it is believed by some that there are remains of former carved crosses hidden in the fabric of many ancient parish churches throughout Kent (and indeed other parts of England), similar to examples that have survived further north.

Death of St Ethelbert of Kent

King Ethelbert died in 616, and his son Eadbald (Edbald) was neither a Christian nor Bretwalda. The new church therefore lost all the secular power and influence that had sustained her during the early days, and her subsequent dismay was increased by the death of King Sabert of Essex,

who had also been converted to Christianity. His three pagan sons demanded of Bishop Mellitus to receive the white bread that their father had received, and on being refused expelled him from the kingdom. Mellitus accordingly came into Kent to confer with his fellow bishops, Laurentius and Justus, and it was unanimously agreed that it would be better for them to return to their own countries rather than continue without any advantage among pagans who had revolted from the faith. Mellitus and Justus therefore returned to Frankland, and Laurentius also prepared to depart. On the night before he was due to leave, he ordered that his bed should be made up in the church of St Peter and St Paul. Having prayed earnestly about the perilous state of the church, he fell asleep. In the dead of night, St Peter appeared to him, scourged him, and asked him why he was about to leave Christ's sheep in the midst of wolves. Laurentius was so mortified by this experience that he decided to have one last try at changing the situation, and the following morning he went to see King Eadbald. Taking off his upper garment, he showed him the stripes that he had received. The King, astonished, asked who had presumed to give such stripes to so great a man. On hearing the answer, he became so afraid that he abjured the worship of idols, renounced his unlawful marriage, and was baptized, promoting the affairs of the church to the full extent of his power. Mellitus and Justus were instantly recalled and instructed to return to their churches.

Justus went back to Rochester, but Mellitus was not received by the idolatrous Londoners, and King Eadbald, not being Bretwalda, was powerless in the matter. Mellitus accordingly returned, and was responsible for having the church of the Mother of God built on the pattern of the church of St Peter and St Paul, and on the same axis but a little to the east. A third church was also built, supposedly on the site of the former pagan temple, and dedicated to St Pancras. Two of these three churches were destroyed by the Norman invaders in 1070, who replaced them with a larger and more grandiose church. This was also destroyed in the Reformation, however, and now, by the skill of the archaeologists, the foundations of the original churches have been revealed again, so it is possible to see the actual places where these great events took place.

St Eanswythe of Folkestone

King Eadbald had a daughter called Eanswythe. Her father was constantly (but vainly) prevailing upon her to marry, but she refused to do so, and became a nun, founding the first nunnery in England on the cliffs at

Folkestone, where she was renowned for her charity to the poor and her miracles. Among these was the Bayle pond, still to be seen, to which she made water appear to flow uphill. She was revealed as a saint, and the parish church is still dedicated to her. Her relics were hidden at the Reformation and were discovered during a Victorian extension to the chancel. They now repose in a cupboard in the chancel wall. The church at Brenzett is also dedicated to her.⁵

In the winter of 619, Laurentius also died, and was buried close to his predecessor Augustine in the north portico of the church of St Peter and St Paul. Mellitus succeeded him, and although he suffered with gout, was always cheerful and thinking of heavenly things. He in turn died on 24 April 624, and was also laid with his predecessors. Bishop Justus of Rochester succeeded him, consecrating Romanus as Bishop of Rochester in his stead. Archbishop Justus died on 10 November 634, and Honorius succeeded him. Laurentius, Mellitus, Justus and Honorius were also subsequently to be revealed as Saints.

St Ethelbert of Lyminge

King Eadbald also had a sister called Ethelbert, who was sought as a wife by King Eadwin (Edwin) of Northumbria. Eadbald replied that it was not lawful to marry a Christian maid to a pagan. Edwin gave the same guarantees as Eadbald's father had previously given, namely that he would in no wise interfere with her or any of her folk practising her religion, and if he found it was a better one than his own, he would practise it also. Ethelbert was accordingly sent to him and Paulinus, who was ordained bishop, was sent with her. Their best endeavours at persuasion, combined with a letter from the Pope and a vision, convinced Edwin, and Northumbria was spectacularly converted.⁶ King Edwin was slain, however, at the Battle of Heathfield on 12 October 633, and Northumbria was once more overrun by pagans. Bishop Paulinus fled, taking Ethelbert with him, and returned to Kent, where he was given the Bishopric of Rochester, which had become vacant. Ethelburga founded a nunnery at Lyminge, where she had the church of St Mary built, and became the first abbess of it. She died there and her remains were enshrined to the north of the church. When a new church was built there, the shrine was to the south of it, and a pointed arch of two stones in its south wall is said to be the only remains of the shrine. The outline of the original church, which has been excavated and then covered for preservation, is picked out on the ground with stones.

King Earconbert

King Eadbald died in 640, and his son Earconbert succeeded him. Whereas Ethelbert had not compelled anyone to embrace Christianity, having been told that the service of Christ should be voluntary, Earconbert showed less tolerance and commanded that all idols throughout the kingdom should be forsaken and destroyed. Furthermore he also ordered that the fast of Lent should be observed, with punishments for anyone who disobeyed. His daughter Earcongota went to a nunnery at Brie in Frankland. Archbishop Honorius died on 30 September 653, and the see was left vacant for 18 months, but eventually Deusdedit, who was a native of the still pagan kingdom of Sussex, was chosen to fill his place as the sixth archbishop.

A great plague ravaged the country during the summer of 664, afterwards moving to Ireland, and it took the lives of many bishops and clergy. Archbishop Deusdedit died on 14 July 664, and King Earconbert also died on the same day, leaving the kingdom to his son Egbert, who happily survived. Because of the disruption caused by the plague, no new archbishop was appointed for many months. At last, the following year, King Egbert and King Oswy of Northumbria sent to Rome one Wighard, an English priest skilled in ecclesiastical discipline, with the request that he might be ordained archbishop. Unfortunately, he also died soon after arriving in Rome, and the Pope was left with the task of finding an alternative candidate. His first choice was Abbot Hadrian (Adrian), an African well versed in scripture and ecclesiastical discipline, with a sound knowledge of both Greek and Latin. When he approached him, however, Hadrian said that he was unworthy to accept so great a dignity, but if the Pope would give him time, he thought he knew someone who would be perfect for the job.

St Theodore of Tarsus

Theodore of Tarsus was an expert in scripture and also in Greek and Latin, and was at that time living in Rome. He was 66 years old. He was the candidate Abbot Hadrian proposed to the Pope. The Pope consented, but said that Abbot Hadrian should go with him, for though Theodore was eminently suitable for the task, he was of the Greek tradition, and the Pope did not want him to inadvertently change the English way of worship. So, at an age when most of us would think that our life's work was over and we should be retiring, Theodore set out with Hadrian, after waiting for his hair to grow so that he could be tonsured in the Western manner, to take on a

difficult and strenuous job. Theodore arrived at Christchurch on Sunday 27 May 669, and at once began to visit all the kingdoms of the English, correcting faults and teaching the correct rule of life and way of celebrating Easter.⁷ St Bede the Venerable writes, ‘He was the first archbishop whom all the English church obeyed.’ He and Abbot Hadrian founded a school in Canterbury (of which King’s School is the lineal successor) that taught Latin and Greek, scripture, ecclesiastical poetry, astronomy, and arithmetic. The church all over England began to learn sacred music, so that they could chant the services properly. He held regular synods of all the English bishops and established proper boundaries for the sees of bishops, so that folk in every part of the country knew which bishop had spiritual authority over them. He also assisted the growth of parishes. By the time he died in 690 aged 88, the church not only in Kent, but in every kingdom of the English, had moved from its foreign, missionary status to a permanent, settled and, what is more, unified part of English life. To St Augustine goes the honour of introducing Orthodox Christianity to Kent, but to St Theodore goes the honour of consolidating it in such a way that it would support and nourish the whole of England until it was so rudely smashed by the Normans on the field of Sandlake in 1066.⁸

There were many more saints in Kent, particularly at Minster-in-Thamet, where St Mildred’s relics are still revered, and at Minster-in-Sheppey. There are also other remains of English churches, but these all belong to the later story of Orthodox Kent, not to the beginning, so I will leave them to others to tell of.

Further Reading

To all readers who have been interested by this poor and necessarily brief account, I must first of all commend St Bede the Venerable’s *Historia Ecclesiastica*. It is the primary authority on the subject, written in a concise and easy-to-read style, and is readily available in a modern translation. Other important books include R. H. Hodgkin: *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, Vol. I (Oxford), especially the chapter on the conversion. Hodgkin gives a good, concise account of the conversion of the whole of the English people, but he naturally writes from the viewpoint of a Western political historian and this needs to be taken into account. For an Orthodox point of view, the reader is recommended to Fr Andrew Phillips: *Orthodox Christianity and the Old English Church* (Greenprint & Design in association with The English Orthodox Trust).

For further information on the construction of the earliest churches, the authority is H. M. and J. Taylor: *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, 2 vols (CUP). The liturgical development of the English church is covered by Margaret Deanesley: *The Pre-Conquest Church in England* (London, 1961). A reconstructed version of the 'mass' that would have been celebrated by St Augustine is to be found in Raymond Winch: *The Canonical Mass of the English Orthodox* (The Gregorian Club, 1988). This book is now unfortunately unavailable, but I have what I believe to be the last copy and would be glad to answer any questions or send a photocopy of relevant passages to any serious inquirers.

Footnotes

1 Abbot Peter was at first buried in a common grave by the inhabitants of the place where his body was washed ashore, but God caused a light to be seen over the grave every night until the inhabitants realized that the person interred there was a holy man, and having discovered who it was, they translated his remains to the church in Boulogne with due honours. His relics are honoured there to this day.

2 Hodgkin: *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, Vol I, 3rd edn (Oxford, 1952).

3 Those interested in the siting of early Kentish churches are referred to another article: Malcolm Dunstall: 'A Speculation upon the Possible Reasons for the Siting of the Earliest English Churches'; *Wipowinde* No. XXX, leaf xij (Yuletide ad1973).

4 One of four remarkable brothers, Cedd, Cynebil, Celin and Chad (aka Ceadda) who were all priests: two became bishops and are recognized as saints.

5 For further information on St Eanswythe, please see *Orthodox England* Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 7ff.

6 I have not enough space here to recount details that are irrelevant to my title, but the reader is urged to consult St Bede the Venerable, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, book II, ch. XV, for the full story.

7 The British church kept Easter observing literally the precepts of Jewish law, a practice which they alleged came from St John; whereas Orthodox Christians always celebrate it after the Jewish Passover: this often resulted in the Orthodox fasting while the British were celebrating Easter. The whole problem was thrashed out at the Synod of Whitby (664), when the British were brought into line with the universal church; but there were still a few who followed the Irish and Scottish fashion. Ireland

and Scotland remained in schism for several years longer. Of course, at the present time, with the introduction of the Gregorian calendar, the problem has arisen all over again between the Orthodox Church and Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.

8 For more on St Theodore, see Phillips, *Orthodox Christianity and the English Tradition* (pp. 308-317), and also *Orthodox England*, Vol. 5, No. 1.

Eadmund Dunstal

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<p style="text-align: center;">ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN BRITAIN</p>

**THE FUTURE OF THE CAMBRIDGE INSTITUTE FOR
ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN STUDIES (IOCS)**

For the last two years, my wife Christine Mangala and I have attended pretty well every teaching session of the Cambridge Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies – from October 2005, when I was asked by the Board of Directors to serve as Administrator, and then from October 2006, when I was appointed Principal and Administrator. On every occasion, we have come away saying ‘This thing is so good; we cannot just let it die.’ As veterans of over 40 years of teaching at tertiary level, with experience of more lectures, classes, seminars and tutorials than we care to remember, we know what quality teaching is.

It is hardly surprising that both of us feel that our understanding of the Orthodox Christian faith has been vastly – and pleurably – increased. The Institute draws on a wide range of scholars, academics, clergy and laity deeply involved in parish life, both from all over the UK and on occasions from overseas, who teach for us simply for love of the cause – certainly, not for the money! In fact, the Institute began and has been maintained by unmercenary idealism and that has been our greatest strength and also our weakness.

The Institute was founded in Cambridge eight years ago and till now has survived ‘on a wing and a prayer’. We have had the glamour of being

in the situation that the great Cambridge colleges were four or five hundred years ago: a band of poor scholars grouped round a couple of impoverished teachers, sometimes visited by great ones from at home or overseas, but living on handouts and in rented accommodation. Without the support of many individuals who wished they could do more, and a handful of charitable trusts, the Institute would not be here today. Nevertheless, lack of funds has till now forced us to cut our suit to the very limited cloth available and has occasioned instability both in staffing and in administration. We have been plagued by rumours (and sometimes the reality) of impending closure and there has been a feeling abroad that here were well-meaning people who are attempting something of course eminently desirable – but not exactly practical. As late as early July this year, at the dinner to celebrate the most successful Summer School we have had yet, I found myself telling students that I did not know what would happen next, and quoting what has become our family slogan: ‘The Lord will provide – because he’ll *have* to!’

In past publicity for the Institute, I have dared to quote Gamaliel on the Christian faith itself: ‘If their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only be finding yourselves fighting against God’ (Acts 5.38-39). Since early July, the Institute has received from a sponsor who wishes to remain anonymous an immediate donation of £50,000 to meet a projected shortfall in our budget for 2007-8, together with an undertaking to discuss with the Board the funding of a number of projects to advance and develop our work. This generosity has been matched by others – one of whom made an immediate gift and has offered to donate in the future the proceeds of one day’s work a week to furthering our endeavours.

With such encouragement, what will we do? First, we will maintain our position as the only institution teaching the Orthodox faith in English at all academic levels in the whole of Western Europe. We will maintain our association with a university of major international reputation, thus giving Orthodoxy a place and a voice to be heard and giving Orthodox students access to the highest academic qualifications. Our offerings at undergraduate level, the part-time Certificate and Diploma, will be accredited by a new university partner, and if current negotiations prove successful, that partner will be able to offer us from October 2007 advantages we have not had before. Students in our part-time courses will be able to proceed, if they so wish, to degrees of the accrediting university and their work will

be overseen by a university which already has staff and courses established in specifically Orthodox studies. A further and very great advantage of this new association is that it would open to us the prospect of courses through ‘distance learning’ – something for which we receive requests almost daily but which we have not till now been able to offer.

The Institute, then, is off the rocks and headed for open seas. We do not know in detail where we are heading, though a committee of the Board is currently considering future directions. As a pan-Orthodox body, we know we must continue to serve the various churches of this country as an educating and unifying force, especially for those who wish to study their traditional national faith in the language of their adopted country. We know we must continue to reach out, to both the great unchurched of this country and to those lost from the household of Orthodoxy, through our introductory programme, THE WAY – the Orthodox answer to the very successful Alpha course. In a situation where there is as yet no functioning seminary in the UK, we know we have a duty to offer teaching and refreshment to hard-pressed clergy. We intend to look closely at our relations with UK parishes, helping them where possible in their own educational efforts. We are aware of the desire of many eastern Orthodox to have contact with their western brothers and sisters and to study the faith in a western setting, amidst the opportunities and temptations to which their communities at home will be increasingly exposed.

‘We know what we are: it does not yet appear what we shall be.’ But there is undoubtedly an excitement in seeing the horizon expand. We hope we now run a tight little ship – but our capacity to take on hands is expandable. The Members of the Institute elect the Directors, who run the show; but Members ultimately are responsible and they can be proposed for election. We would like a more comprehensive representation of the Orthodox churches among our Members and Directors. So please consider giving us your active cooperation, in the confidence that ‘The Lord will provide – because he’ll *have* to!’ If someone can translate that for me into elegant Greek, I’ll dare to propose it to the Directors as our Institute’s motto.

David Frost
Principal and Administrator

Details of Courses at IOCS

Courses: The Institute offers a Certificate course, part-time over two years, followed by a Diploma course, also part-time over a further two years. The courses are at the level of first and second year undergraduate study.

Staff: Both courses are taught by IOCS staff, including Orthodox clergy and academics from all over the UK and from overseas. A list of teaching personnel is available on the Institute's website (www.iocs.cam.ac.uk).

Venue: Courses are held on the third weekend of the month at the Centre's base in Wesley House, Jesus Lane, Cambridge, beginning with Vespers on Friday, followed by supper and a lecture, and ending late Saturday afternoon. There is time over the weekend for worship and socialising, as well as lectures.

Module System: Each course comprises four modules a year, plus a Summer School, and each module is taught over two successive weekends. Students should preferably follow their course through, but each module is discrete and can be caught up later if this is unavoidable. The modular system also means that students can join at any point in the year.

Assessment: Students are assessed on their course attendance and by one essay of 2,000 words for each module.

Fees: The fee for each Certificate or Diploma module is £160. Tuition fees for the Summer School are £200, including some meals. Discounts are available for students who pay their fees in advance. Full-time students and those in receipt of state benefits may seek a concessionary rate.

Auditors and Visitors: Visitors and those who wish only to hear lectures are welcome as auditors and pay £15 for each session or £70 for the whole weekend.

Accommodation: The office may sometimes be able to arrange overnight stays in Wesley House. Otherwise, students must arrange their own accommodation.

Full details of the Institute's programmes, including a list of courses, can be found on the website at <http://www.iocs.cam.ac.uk/> or enquire by email to: info@iocs.cam.ac.uk or by telephone: 01223 741037.

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MIDLANDS ORTHODOX STUDY CENTRE OF ST THEODORE OF CANTERBURY

The Centre was established in 2002 with the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain to teach Orthodox Theology. Started originally to serve two local parishes, the Centre has developed significantly and from September 2007 all courses will be accredited by the University of Wales Lampeter. The courses offered are intended for a wide variety of people, from those interested in learning more about their faith to those who are, or will be, involved in ministry in the Church. Although most of the students are Orthodox, several are not, and there is an entirely open policy for acceptance on the courses. Students will be admitted on the basis of their ability to pursue the course, demonstrated by meeting the undergraduate entry requirements in the UWL Admissions Policy, or by other means, such as interview and experience.

Those applying for the Diploma Course will already have achieved the Certificate. Most of the teaching takes place on the second Saturday of the month (barring July and August) 10.00am – 5.00pm at the Orthodox Church of the Nativity of the Mother of God, Palfrey, Walsall.

The Certificate course is intended to provide students with a good introduction to the Orthodox Church, its faith and life over a period of two years. There are three modules in which important Church themes are introduced, three modules that cover the history of the Church from its beginning to the present day, three modules on the New Testament, two on the Old Testament, and a module on the canons of the Church. The intention is to provide a good grounding for anyone who might, for instance, need to teach Orthodoxy in schools. The modules are taught in a mixture of lectures, seminars (when an original text is discussed in detail) and private tutorials. Help is given to anyone not used to academic study.

The Diploma course builds on the knowledge gained in the Certificate, with modules on Spirituality, Liturgy, Doctrine and the Fathers. This will help those who may be intending to exercise ministry in the Church.

Our Patron Saint, St Theodore

St Theodore was described by St Bede as ‘a man of learning in both sacred and secular literature’. He was one of the most important Archbishops of Canterbury, active throughout Britain. He established a school in

Canterbury, which ‘attracted a large number of students, into whose minds he poured the waters of wholesome knowledge day by day’. His influence endures to this day in the Midlands, where he founded the dioceses of Worcester and Hereford and installed St Chad as Bishop of Lichfield. He was a Syriac-speaking Greek from Tarsus, who studied in Antioch and Constantinople, and was for many years a monastic in the Syrian monastery in Rome, before becoming archbishop of the multi-ethnic and poly-lingual peoples of seventh-century Britain. It is our joy and privilege that he should be our patron saint.

Centre Staff

The centre has five lecturers on the staff: *Dr Nikolai Lipatov, Dr Mary Cunningham, John Davis, Oeconomos Fr John Nankivell and Oeconomos Fr Stephen Maxfield*. In addition, other lecturers are invited during the academic year and in the past these have included *Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia, Archimandrite Ephrem Lash, and Dr Dimitry Korobeinikov*.

In the academic year 2007-2008 the Centre will offer the Certificate in Higher Education (2 years part-time) and the Diploma in Higher Education (2 years part-time). These courses are taught on a modular system. All modules are compulsory and will include lectures, study of relevant texts, and private tutorials. Each module involves 12 hours teaching and is assessed by a piece or pieces of work totalling 2,000 words for the Certificate and 3,000 for the Diploma. The Certificate course consists of years A and B, and the Diploma consists of years C and D. Only one year is taught for each course per year but these alternate.

Fees

Students for Certificate and Diploma Courses £495 per annum
(this includes all University and Centre fees but not books)

Hearers £375 per annum
(attending lectures and seminars only)

Some bursaries are available in cases of need.

For students unable to attend a day, audio tapes/CDs will be available for paid up students for a small extra fee.

For more information, contact: Mr John Davis, 51 Gungrog Road, Welshpool SY21 7UL. Tel: 01938 554642.

Midlands Institute Link with University of Wales Lampeter

The University of Wales, Lampeter is the oldest university in England and Wales after Oxford and Cambridge, dating back to 1822 (see the item below). Those wishing to advance from the Diploma course at the Midlands Institute to a first degree may do so by distance learning with Lampeter – a further year’s study. However, once we are settled into the relationship with UWL, we hope to be able to offer a further two years leading to a taught degree from the Midlands Orthodox Study Centre.

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ORTHODOX STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WALES, LAMPETER

It has been announced that a new postgraduate programme in Orthodox Studies has been established at the University of Wales, Lampeter. With the blessings of God, the assistance of the University and the support of the Orthodox Church, during the past year a small team of academics, including Dr Andreas Andreopoulos and Dr Augustine Casiday, have managed to found a Master of Theology in Orthodox Studies here, which is offered both at the university and by distance learning, as both a full-time (1-2 years) and a part-time programme (3-5 years). In addition, it is also possible to study for research degrees (Mphil and PhD) in the area of Orthodox theology, under the supervision of our Orthodox scholars, and assisted by over 20 staff members from all theological fields.

It is our hope that the programmes in Orthodox theological studies will contribute in the life of the Orthodox Church in the UK, and will also be nourished and sustained by her. While the existing programmes in Orthodox Studies do not include the kind of training one might expect in a seminary, those who hope to expand their Orthodox theological education will find a lot from which to benefit. For further information visit:

http://www.lamp.ac.uk/trs/Postgraduate/Degrees/MTh_orthodox_studies.htm

or contact: Dr Andreas Andreopoulos, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Wales, Lampeter, Ceredigion SA48 7ED. Email: a.andreopoulos@lamp.ac.uk. Tel: 01570 424 972.