



Orthodox Parish of St. Silouan of Mt Athos Southampton, Diocese of Sourozh, Moscow Patriarchate



Православной Приход Св. Силуана Афонского
Саутхемптон, Сурожская Епархия Московского Патриархата

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PARISH NEWSLETTER

3d Sunday of Great Lent, Tone 3

Sunday, 7th April 2013

Adoration of the Holy Cross.

The Annunciation to the Mother of God.

Luke 1:24-38

24 After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, 25 'This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favourably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people.' 26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.*' 29 But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and

bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' 34 Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?*' 35 The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born* will be holy; he will be called Son of God. 36 And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God.' 38 Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.



Troparion Tone 4

Today is the crown of our salvation and the manifestation of the Mystery that is from all eternity: The Son of God becomes the son of the Virgin, and Gabriel proclaims glad tidings of grace; Wherefore, we also cry out with him, to the Mother of God, "Rejoice, O full of grace, the Lord is with Thee!"



THOUGHTS FOR EACH DAY OF THE YEAR
BY ST. THEOPHAN THE RECLUSE

Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me (Mark 8:34). It is impossible to follow the Lord as a crossbearer without a cross, and everyone who follows Him, unflinching goes with a cross. What is this cross? It is all sorts of inconveniences, burdens and sorrows—weighing heavily both internally and externally—along the path of conscientious fulfilment of the commandments of the Lord, in a life ac-

ording to the spirit of His instructions and demands. Such a cross is so much a part of a Christian that wherever there is a Christian, there is this cross, and where there is no such cross, there is no Christian. Abundant privileges and a life of pleasure do not suit a true Christian. His task is to cleanse and reform himself. He is like a sick person, who needs cauterization, or amputation; how can this be without pain? He wants to tear himself away from the

captivity of a strong enemy; but how can this be without struggle and wounds? He must walk counter to all practices surrounding him; but how can he sustain this without inconvenience and constraint? Rejoice as you feel the cross upon yourself, for it is a sign that you are following the Lord on the path of salvation which leads to heaven. Endure a bit. The end is just around the corner, as well as the crowns!



In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

In the Holy Scriptures we can read, among other things, about how we can acquire wisdom. It is written in one of the Psalms, 'O Lord, teach me to number my days that I may apply my heart unto wisdom.' It means that we should understand that we are not immortal. In practice, we often live as if we could go on forever in the way to which we are accustomed. We are content to occupy ourselves only with worldly cares, with building our lives, our careers, by making money, by enjoying what we can get out of this life. But how everything changes if we learn that we shall die at a particular time. We receive a diagnosis, for example, that tells us that we have only a short time left in this life. Than everything changes. Than we understand, what is important and what is not at all important. This experience, or similar circumstances in our life, can be used by the Divine Providence to urge us to repentance.

Repentance is a process which begins with the awareness of our finitude, with an inner pain of some sort. This inner pain or emptiness is the consequence of our sins. This pain is good, just as physical pain is good because it teaches us to avoid that which is dangerous and harmful to us. It drives us to seek the forgiveness of our sins, the healing of our spiritual sicknesses. So we come to confess our sins before God. At confession we stand before the Cross and the Gospel, we stand at the crossroads of Life and death. We stand faced with the

choice between the path of death and the path of Life, between that broad and easy path, that leads down to hell, and the narrow way, which ascends to Life. There are two confessions in our life that are of critical importance - the first and the last. During this Lent some of you, many of you, perhaps, will come to make your first confession in your whole life, or your first confession as an adult person. This is of enormous importance, because it is the beginning of the path that will lead you away from death towards Life. Indeed, it is only the beginning and do not be under any illusion, as you will still have, as we all do, to struggle, with God's help, with deeply rooted passions. Every journey, however, begins with the first step. The other confession which is of the greatest importance is the last one, of course, before death. We stand there, or perhaps, we are unable to stand, we are lying in a hospital bed, or at home, but already in our souls we feel that we stand before the judgement seat of Christ our Lord. We stand before that meeting with Christ, face-to-face, which awaits us after our physical death. Indeed blessed are we if God grants us the opportunity to make a true confession at that time. We know, however, that it is not always thus, that death can come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night. Therefore it means that any confession that we make during our life may well be our last one. Remembering that, let us, dear brothers and sisters, treat it with all seriousness. Let us not waste our time and the priest's time by talking about trivialities, about how we ate something that wasn't strictly fasting or about our problems with our relatives or neighbours. Let us consider ourselves to be standing before Christ Himself, and let us say to Him what we would say, if we saw Him with our own eyes. In this way, by learning, with God's help, time and again to repent with this seriousness, we will acquire that wisdom which will direct our lives rightly.

By the grace of God we have already made a beginning of this

Great Lent. Great Lent is the journey to Easter, to Pascha. For some of us it is our first Lent, and there are those among us, glory to God, who are preparing for Holy Baptism, or to be received into the Church during this Lent. For others it is the 20th, 30th, or 40th time that we travel this path. It matters not. We are all preparing for Easter, the Pascha of the Lord. We celebrate Pascha truly not by making and eating kulichi and pascha but by our personal participation in the death and resurrection of Christ. This happens indeed sacramentally in the Mystery of Holy Baptism, but it remains for each of us to implement that Mystery in our lives during this holy season. Indeed this journey is an image of our whole lives, because our life, properly understood, is exactly this journey to that eternal Pascha of Christ in His Kingdom. By the Grace of God, unworthy as we are, we are being led by Him from death to Life. It is for us to repent, again and again to turn away from the path of death, to follow after Christ, indeed to be united with Christ, Who according to His own words, is the Way, the Truth and the Life. May the Lord grant us all to understand this and to follow Him in this life so that we may live in Him and with Him eternally in His Kingdom, Amen.

Fr Joseph Skinner

Holy Fathers on Lent

The best Lent.. is to endure all that God sends.

St Anatoly of Optina

Lent sends a prayer to heaven, becoming its' wings.

St Basil the Great

Fasting seems grim, but start - and you will see that it is the light after a night, freedom after bonds, favour after a painful life..

St Theophan the Recluse



FROM WRITINGS OF ST SILOUAN OF MT. ATHOS

On Repentance.

Glory to the Lord, that He gave us repentance, with which we can all — without exception — achieve salvation. Only those who refuse to repent shall not achieve salvation, and in this I see their despair, and I cry out of pity for them.

Any soul which has lost its peace must repent, and the Lord will forgive its sins, and then peace and joy will visit the soul. There need be no witnesses, for the Holy Spirit is the witness of the remission of sins. Here is a sign of forgiveness: if you have come to hate sin, then the Lord has forgiven your sin.

Whoever repents sincerely is prepared to withstand any sorrow: hunger and homelessness, cold and heat, illness and

poverty, humiliation and banishment, lies and slander, for the soul seeks God and does not concern itself with anything worldly, but instead prays with a clear mind. And whoever is tied to lands and wealth can never have a clear mind in God, because deep within his soul there is always a concern over worldly things. If he should not repent completely and not sorrow over his insult to God, then he will die impassioned, never having received the Lord.

Christ prayed for those that crucified Him: "Father, count not this sin against them; they know not what they do." Archdeacon Stefan prayed for those who stoned him so that the Lord would not judge this sin against them. And so we, if we wish to retain grace, must pray for our enemies. If you do not find pity on a sinner who will suffer in flames, then you do not carry the grace of the Holy Spirit, but rather an evil spirit; and while you yet live, you must free yourself from his clutches through repentance.

OVERCOMING ENVY DURING GREAT LENT

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit!

The sin with which man battles for his salvation is revealed in all its essence through the vice called pride. The proud person places only himself at the center of life, relegating all others to the periphery. The proud person's life stance entails numerous dangerous consequences, one of which is the vice of envy.

Reflecting on the meaning of envy, St. Basil the Great put it very aptly: "Envy is pain for the success of one's neighbor." The proud person is unable to come to terms with the fact that someone else is smarter, prettier, wealthier, or more successful. After all, if the proud person considers himself to be the center of the universe, then who can get in the way of him occupying this place? The appearance of anyone who seems more successful or important elicits profound inner pain in the prideful person.

Envy manifests all the absurdity of pride. Contemplating envy, St. Tikhon of Zadonsk spoke these remarkable words: "All the other vices and passions at least provide some sham pleasure, while the envious person sins and suffers." Indeed, if the other vices are accompanied by at least a sham pleasure, envy is painful — and always only painful — and never even falsely pleasurable. If one does not do battle with the feeling of envy, it can become so enslaving that one becomes aggressive and dangerous to others. After all, it was no accident that the cause of the first murder, performed at the dawn of human history by Cain against his brother Abel, was envy. The

envious person becomes aggressive and dangerous to others. And the more carefully he conceals this inner flame of envy in his heart, the more dangerous he becomes.

So how should one do battle with this challenge? How should one do battle with this vice? The same Tikhon of Zadonsk said: "Pride is the mother of envy. Slay the mother and the daughter will perish." In order to overcome the feeling on envy, one must do battle with pride. But inasmuch as pride wholly manifests the very nature of sin, doing battle with vice is very difficult, and one can conquer pride only by the power of God. Therefore prayer, participation in the Mysteries of the Church, continual reflection on one's life, on the movements of one's soul, and on one's thoughts, and a rigorous judgment of oneself can help a person overcome pride.

But there are also two more remarkable means.

The first is the recognition of the fact that the Lord has bestowed unique qualities upon each person and that no two people are absolutely alike. Each person is unique and has his own value before God. No matter how weak, ill, or unfortunate someone may seem, he has value in God's eyes. Recognition of this fact helps one refrain from envy. It is a big world, and each person has his place in it. Understanding everyone's uniqueness and the wisdom of the Divine plan helps us to overcome the feeling on envy.

There is yet another very important means: good deeds. When we perform a good deed for someone, he ceases to be distant from us and becomes a loved

one. We do not envy those for whom we perform good deeds. If there is anyone who doubts this, let him try to perform a good deed for someone whom they envy, and the envy will gradually give way because this person will become a loved one to him.

We should remember that we ourselves very often provoke the feeling of envy in those around us. Sometimes vexing an envious person, provoking him to a feeling of envy, can cause pleasure. For example, when acquiring beautiful new clothes, some people may think first of all about how these clothes will cause their acquaintances, or even their family and loved ones, to become envious. Envy is a dangerous and aggressive vice. If we ourselves do not wish to be stung by envy, then we should not stir up envy in others. Many ills in this world have been committed, and continue to be committed, because of envy.

The time of Great Lent is a time to do battle with the vices: both with pride and with envy. Going to God's church, listening to the marvelous words of prayer and hymnody, turning with fervent prayer to the Lord for help with our spiritual lives, let us ask that He help us uproot from our hearts both pride and envy. By shaking off such vices, we will feel an extraordinary lightness of life and joy in existence. May the Lord help us in this holy and salutary Forty Day Fast gradually but steadily to ascend from strength to strength in our movement towards meeting the Lord and Savior. **Amen.**

Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia

NEWS

Annual General Meeting

On February 3d our Parish held its' **Annual General Meeting**. **Fr Joseph** reflected on the main events of the past year: Vladyka Elissey's visit in January, first parish wedding and, most exceptionally, the blessing of our new handpainted Iconostasis. He praised our Choir for their tremendous effort and noted a steady attendance of 30-40 people to each service (incl. children). **Paula (Church warden)** suggested to introduce an official Parishioners' Register and called for help in setting up the room on Saturdays before services and putting away afterwards. **Elvira, our Treasurer**, presented the following

Financial Report of the Parish Accounts:

Income for 2012 (donations and collections) – **£1,950.10**

Expenses (Rent, Website, Priest travel expenses, church running, others) – **£1,874.18**

Total Income: £75.92

Iconostasis:

Cost - £10,000,
Collected to 31.12.12 - £2,861.64,
Total Owed: -£7,138.36

Looking ahead, the AGM concluded that it is vital to organise a Sunday school for children after services (and possibly a children's choir) and to generate ideas of how to promote our Parish, and make it welcoming to the newcomers.

Sunday school

We are planning to renew our Sunday school lessons, to which all children who come to the services, are welcome. If you have energy, desire to help, love for children and are full of creative ideas, please come forward with your thoughts. Contributions of materials are very welcome too. Please contact Evelina.

SUPPORT OUR PARISH

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The work of the Parish is entirely self-financed. We receive no financial help from the Diocese, the State or any other external source. As such, we are in need of the support of our parishioners and friends to enable the Parish to carry out its mission.

To facilitate this kind of regular giving, we invite you to establish a Banker's Standing

Order, for direct deposit of regular contributions into the parish's account.

Bank: NatWest

Name of organisation: Orthodox Parish Of St Silouan

Account number: 45137943

Branch sort code: 60-20-45

Thank you and God Bless!

April Calendar

April 7th

The Annunciation to the Mother of God

April 8th

Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel.

April 12th

St. John Climacus of Sinai, author of The Ladder (649).

April 14th

St. Mary of Egypt (530).

April 20th

Laudation of the Most Holy Theotokos

April 27th

Lazarus Saturday

April 28th

The Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem — Palm Sunday

April 29th

Start of the Passion Week

Next Service:

April: Wed 17 (6pm Mattins - tbc), Sat 27 (6pm - Vigil), Sun 28 (10.30 - Liturgy), May: Sun 12 (10.30 - Liturgy)

NEW ICONOSTASIS



Dear Brothers and Sisters

We continue to ask for your support in helping us to raise funds to pay for our new beautiful handpainted iconostasis.

The cost of the new icon screen is £10,000, which we still have to pay. As per end of March we managed to raise £4000.

If you wish to contribute, please, send your donations to:

Bank: NatWest

Organisation: Orthodox Parish of St. Silouan

Acc. No: 45159726

Sort code: 60-20-45

Alternatively, you can send a cheque payable to Orthodox Parish of St Silouan (**Icons a/c**) to the Treasurer, **Elvira Patrascu, 10 Monarch Way, West End, Southampton, SO30 3JQ.**

Holy Father Silouan, pray to God for us!

The Parish Council

Contributors

We invite our parishioners to contribute material to this Newsletter. Your ideas, news, announcements, writings could be interesting to reader. Any requests for prayers are very welcome. Please send your contributions to Evelina benevelina@mac.com

Texts for this edition were taken from www.pravoslavie.ru, <http://silouan.narod.ru/indexe.html>, <http://oca.org/> and other sites.