

THE NARTHEX

July-August 2019

'And the disciples were first called
Christians in Antioch' (Acts 11:26)

The Orthodox Church of St Dunstan of Canterbury, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH14 9JG

The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland. Archbishop: Metropolitan Silouan

The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East. Patriarch: His Beatitude, John X

Parish Priest: Fr. Chrysostom Tel. 01202-602628 e-mail: fr.chrysostom@gmx.com

Asst Priest: Fr Filip Tel. 01308-868543 e-mail: flommaert@gmail.com

Asst Priest: Fr Dc Alexander Tel. 07765417610 e-mail: fr.Alexander@gmx.com

Subdeacon David Tel. 01209-217499 Reader Aristoboulos Reader Michael

Parish web site: www.saint-dunstan.org Archdiocesan web site: www.antiochian-orthodox.co.uk



Good Housekeeping

The word, *Economy*, comes from the Greek, *oikos*, meaning 'house' and *nomos*, meaning 'law'. The law of the house, economy, is unavoidable; it is a fact of life. Simply put, every household, industry, institution and state has to manage its budget. And this applies, no less, to our parish in terms of our physical presence.

We own a wonderful building which we are in the process of restoring. We are clearly acting to preserve an exceptional piece of architectural heritage. We knowingly took on that task when we became the legal owners of the building in 2011 and, with the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund, we hope soon to fulfil that obligation. To this end we have a special bank account which is able to receive grants and donations, in order to complete the needed repairs.

However, alongside this noble endeavour, our charitable foundation (The Bournemouth Poole Orthodox Christian Foundation) has other aims, the most important being the promotion of Orthodox Christianity. That is the work of mission and ministry which is part of the everyday life of any Orthodox parish. And the fact of life, once again in this world, is the 'law of the house' or, if you prefer, the economy. As well as the **Restoration Account**, dedicated to the renovation of the building, we also have two others accounts with our bankers. One of these, the **Parish Account**, is funded by donations and offerings made during services, and profits from the sale of items such as candles, books and cards etc. This account in turn pays for supplies needed for the liturgy and other services. It also contributes monthly towards the Metropolitan's salary and anything else that helps with our mission and the expenses of the clergy. The third is called the **Operational Account** and receives money from the church hall rents that we charge and from regular direct giving by members of our congregation and our supporters. This money is used for the general maintenance and upkeep in the church and hall; it covers such things as minor repairs, gas, electricity, supplies for

the hall, cleaning etc, as well as larger costs such as the insurance of the building (a considerable sum).

Generally, the Parish Account is well supplied but, as this is supplied by variable donations (depending on who is in church on any given occasion) the balance of the account goes up and down. Indeed, the amount held in the bank has often been very healthy and we have sometimes had to use this account to help fund the Operational Account, when for example, a sudden emergency repair has needed to be done. In fact, because of the continuous demands on the Operational Account, it is the one we have had to watch carefully in terms of our 'economy', that is, housekeeping. Overall, our accountant found that in our last financial year (Dec 2017 - Dec 2018) donations from all sources had fallen by about £10,000. (Copies of the accounts presented at the Parish Annual General Meeting are available in the narthex, at the back of the church.) To remedy this we need to encourage more people to donate regularly, not just by increasing occasional offerings whilst at church, but to pledge the giving of a regular amount, whether weekly or monthly. There are many ways now of donating through arrangements with one's own bank. The important thing is that our giving is prayerful, regular, generous, and yet proportional to our income. In this way the parish will be able to economise better, knowing what will definitely be coming in each month. One-off donations are, of course, always a welcome bonus, but it sets our housekeeping on a firmer foundation if our donations are not dependant on when we just happen to turn up for a service.

To this end, after the summer we hope to launch a teaching programme on proportional giving, as used very successfully at St Aidan's Parish, Manchester. We are also due to hold elections to the Parish Committee, three years having now passed since the last elections. More news on this will follow, but there must be among us those who might, for the first time, consider putting themselves forward now for election. (You will need two supporters: a 'proposer' and a 'seconder'.)

Any organisation has identifying members who form a series of concentric circles in terms of commitment and participation: churches are no different in this. There are those in the central circle who are fully committed and are able to undertake the running of the 'economy'; there are those who participate regularly and are content to let others organise and run the affairs; and there are those in the outer circles who share in the activities from time to time as they feel inclined. This is not to complain or criticise necessarily; it was ever thus in all organisations. Allow me to remind you of the story of the farmyard hen who, talking to the pig, was so proud of being able to donate eggs to the farmer's daily breakfast of bacon and eggs. To this the pig snorted and replied, "True, you do make a contribution, but for me it would be total commitment."

We cannot, of course, simply compare the way we are able to support our local parish financially with our actual witness and commitment to Christ. However, our parish and our mission does not thrive on fresh air and good intentions: we do have an 'economy' to manage if our work is to continue effectively.

We need to bear in mind also that our mission is unlikely to be restricted to Poole and Bournemouth. For various reasons we shall be taking on further responsibilities. We have already, for example, taken over care of the liturgies served at Salisbury on behalf of the Thyateira Archdiocese. With the expansion of the number of priests in the parish, we now need to rethink how they are deployed. In the early autumn there will be a Mission and Ministry Day Conference for all the ministerial and liturgical staff in the parish, to plan our future work. That day there will be a Liturgy at 10.00am and Vespers at 5.00pm to which, of course, all are, invited.

Fr Chrysostom

Martyrs not Victims

'For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.' [Lk.9:26]

It has become common in western societies for special interest groups and self-conscious minorities to see themselves as the oppressed victims of the amorphous majority. Similarly, there are those who claim a deep sense of grievance over current situations that came about through long-past, historical events. It is, in fact, very easy to identify a sense of oppression and to summon up feelings of grievance. These complaints, of course, may or may not be authentic and worthy of our concern, but any lack of sympathy with the cherished cause will now bring forth immediate disapprobation on social media, labelling such temerity as 'phobic', thus consigning anyone who disagrees with these complaints as being himself the victim of some form of mental pathology. These dark mental fears, the thinking goes, must therefore lurk in the oppressors: the *homophobic*, the *transphobic*, the *Islamophobic* etc. As for the climate change deniers, well, obviously, they are in a state of psychological denial, aren't they!

Well, in fact, moral disapproval, reasoned scientific skepticism, and taking a different view of history, are not mental health conditions. Ironically, If anyone in this current world can claim victimhood it must certainly be our fellow Christians, as recent news reports have made perfectly clear, whether in this country or abroad. However, I wish to make an impassioned plea, here, that we studiously avoid this modern trend towards claiming victimhood. Let us be very clear that there are indeed areas of life where we are in direct conflict with the post modern world and its values. What Christ calls us to do for him is to witness to the Truth, that is, to Christ Himself. The original New Testament Greek word for witness is *martyros*, not in the modern, mawkish sense of a victim, but rather, one who stands up and suffers for the Truth. In other words, bearing witness, martyrdom, will bring inconvenience, social ostracism, attack, suffering, perhaps even death. But remember, at Baptism we were enrolled as warriors of Christ.

There is, let us agree, no such thing as *Christianophobia*; we are not victims but confessors of the faith and, if need be, martyrs. To put it plainly, there are no *Christianophobes*, only Antichrist.

'This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.

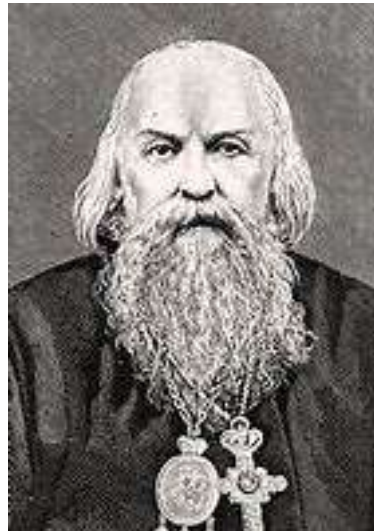
[2 Tim.2:11-13]

Fr Chrysostom

Attention in Prayer

Attentiveness and compunction are the gift of the Holy Spirit. Only the Spirit can stem the tides of the mind, which flow every which way, said St John of the Ladder. Another venerable father (St Seraphim of Sarov) said, 'When compunction is with us, then God is with us.'

He who has acquired constant attentiveness and compunction in his prayers has reached the state of blessedness that the gospels call 'poverty of spirit and mourning.' He has already torn the chains of many of his passions asunder, already smelled the sweet fragrance of spiritual freedom, and already bears within himself the promise of salvation. Do not leave the narrowness of this true path of prayer, and you will attain the blessed peace of the mystical Sabbath - for on the Sabbath, no earthly work is done and all labours and battles cease. In this blessed dispassion, away from all distraction, the soul stands before God in pure prayer and receives His calm through faith in His endless goodness, through faithfulness to His holy will...



St Ignatius Brianchaninov

...Bring to God quiet and humble prayers, not fiery and passionate ones. When you will become a mystical priest serving at the altar of prayer, then you will be able to enter God's sanctuary, and from there you will fill the center of your prayer with divine fire. Impure fire - the blind, fleshly warmth of the blood - is forbidden as an offering to the all-holy God...

...When you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to the Father who is in the secret place.' (Matt.6:6) Whether you are in company or are alone try to constantly descend into your inner spiritual cell, closing the doors of your feelings and tongue, in order to pray secretly with your mind and heart.

On Prayer from *The Field*
by St Ignatius Brianchaninov

Transl. N. Kotar. Holy Trinity Publications
Jordanville New York 2016

SERVICES

Vespers is normally served on Saturdays at 5.00pm and on Wednesdays at 6.00pm. Fr. Chrysostom is available for Confession afterwards or by appointment. *Orthros* is served before the Divine Liturgy on Sundays at 8.45am

July

Sun 7th 3rd after Pentecost All Saints of Antioch Divine Liturgy 10.30am

Sun 14th 4th after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 10.30am

Sun 21st 5th after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 10.30am

Sun 28th 6th after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 10.30am

August

Thurs 1st Beginning of the Dormition Fast

Sun 4th 7th after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 10.30am



Tues 6th The Holy Transfiguration of Our Lord Divine Liturgy 11.00am

Sun 11th 8th after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 10.30am



Thurs 15th The Dormition of the Theotokos Divine Liturgy 11.00am

Sun 18th 9th after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 10.30am

Sun 25th 10th after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 10.30am