FEED MY LAMBS TEND MY SHEEP
FEED MY SHEEP
The Bishop in the Church

reminiscences
reflections
ruminations

Archbishop Seraphim (Storheim), with others

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Contents

	Introductory words	1
	PART A	6
1.	Incarnational ecclesiology	6
2.	Arch-pastors who are influencing me personally	11
	PART B	72
1.	Preamble about what it is to be a bishop	72
2.	Meanings of words, and some historical perspectives	81
3.	The bishop and Tradition	92
4.	Serving as a bishop is a fearful responsibility	104
5.	The bishop as a shepherd	126
6.	The bishop as a father, and other considerations	142
7.	The bishop as a servant	160
8.	The bishop as a builder	175
9.	The bishop as a teacher	183
10.	The bishop as an example of repentance	193
11.	The bishop as an example of forgiveness	205
12.	The bishop as an example of Christian living and leadership	226
13.	The bishop's relationship with civil authorities	238
14.	The bishop as an example in prayer and intercession	246
15.	The bishop as an example in prayer and spiritual struggle	257
16.	The bishop re-presents Christ	281
17.	The bishop re-presents the Church	298
	PART C	324
	Preamble	324
1.	Saint Nicholas of Myra	327
2.	"Homily on the Acts 1", by Saint John Chrysostom	329
3.	"An Injunction to Every Priest", by Saint Basil the Great	331
4.	"Archimandrite Sophrony's Prayer"	333
5.	"55 Maxims for Christian Living", by Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko	334
6.	Four Creeds	336
7.	The vesting of the bishop before the Divine Liturgy	343
8.	Rhythm of prayer	352
9.	Three Psalms	354
10.	Saint Aristides the Philosopher	356
11.	Supporting those who lead the flock	359
12.	Concluding words	361
	Bibliographies	365, 373
	Indices	377, 383

"The bishop is in the Church and the Church is in the bishop".
Saint Cyprian of Carthage ("Letter 68, to Florentius Pupianus")

The Three Holy Hierarchs :
Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Theologian

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reminiscences ✳ reflections ✳ ruminations

✠

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

✠

Introductory words

At first, I had no intention of writing anything at all about what it is to do the work of being a bishop, or what it is to live the life of a bishop. However, something recently began to demand to be said. For many, many years, Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas of blessed memory had repeatedly insisted that I write. I was disobedient, I admit. However, it seemed that, because of lack of time (and "too many irons in the fire"), all that I could manage to produce until now were reports to the metropolitan and to some other authorities about activities, meetings and travels, and some comments to the diocese about pastoral matters. It was certainly my responsibility to try to feed the rational sheep through some writings, and I tried to do that. However, I did not feel that it was for me to write more substantially, since there are many well-educated and well-informed persons writing excellently, and in quantity. It also seemed that this could be duplicating the works of others.

Nevertheless, some time after the repose of Archbishop Dmitri (†2011), it became apparent to me in my heart that it was indeed necessary to write on this subject, without more delays. I felt that the obedience insisted upon by Archbishop Dmitri had to be fulfilled. The first words began to arrive very soon after that. The nature of the first attempts at writing was rather formal and factual, much as a report would be written. The result was what amounted to an extended essay which would have been useful for occupying a filing-cabinet. Those who saw what I had begun with, persuaded me to reconsider the style so that the writing could become more accessible to readers, and could enable people in general better to understand bishops : their purpose, their service, their history and their function. The whole of this present writing is not in the manner that has been characteristic of me until now. More and more words began to arrive. This process of the arriving of words and thoughts was soon greatly assisted and clarified by the questions that were asked by the several perceptive editors. They were perplexed by the many assumptions I had made about what is understandable to most people. I had assumed, for instance, that anyone who would read this might have had the same exposure to the Holy Scriptures in childhood that I had. I do, nevertheless, ask the forgiveness of all who read this. It ought to be understood that although this writing is about what I perceive to be the true nature of the episcopate, I make no claim to have been able even yet to live up to the responsibilities and standards that this service requires of me and of others. The writing is,

rather, about what I understand that the Lord is asking of me and of us all. I would like to be able to say, along with the Martyr Saint Ignatius of Antioch :

> Now I begin to be a disciple, and I speak to you as fellow-disciples with me ("Letter to the Ephesians", 3).

Saint Ignatius of Antioch, the God-bearer, was a disciple of the Apostle and Evangelist John, and he knew others of the apostles. He is known as a martyr because he was put to death for the sake of Christ in Rome, in about 107-108 (or after 113, according to The Synaxarion).

I stress that this writing is the beginning of the fulfilling of my obedience from Archbishop Dmitri (albeit that I begin after his repose). It seems appropriate, therefore, that this consideration and reflection begin with words about particular bishops from different times and places. These are bishops whom I have met personally, whose personal witness has directly affected me, and also bishops I have read about, whose lives have affected me. This will conclude with our newly-departed Father Archbishop Dmitri. Following this personal section, I will continue with a consideration of what I believe it means to be a bishop, and how it seems to me that a bishop must live (in the context always of Christ and the Gospel). This consideration will derive from the Scriptures and Tradition, and also from practical and personal experience. This reflection does not intend to provide any solutions to any problems in Church life and practice. This writing is intended only to contribute to a consideration of how we bishops (I first of all), and by extension every one of us faithful Christians, may better serve the Lord during these difficult times. I met these persons (including those I only read about) in the normal course of my life and obediences. My mentioning the following names of bishops (some of them prominent), is not done in the manner of "name-dropping". It is simply sharing what I experienced in personal encounters given by God.

It seems to me that people tend to consider that bishops are much like "Mr Bean", the BBC television character who simply seems to fall out of the sky and land on his face under a spot-light at the beginning of each episode. However, no bishop has ever come into being in this way ; our Saviour Himself did not come to us in this way. We all have a history, a background, a preparation. The first chapter of the Gospel of Matthew makes this clear about our Saviour. Therefore, I have come to understand that it is necessary to share with the reader some personal history, much as I dislike talking about myself. However, it is not only about me. I am who I am because of all who have been and gone before me, those who raised me, those whom I have known and loved (and this includes the present time). This will include references to some bishops and others who had and do have quite a strong influence on me. This writing has a living context, and since it has clearly developed as a pastorally supportive work, there has had to be an explanation of this living context.

As for me specifically, I do feel some similarity with "Mr Bean" in my personal disposition ; but then, women will usually say that men are boys in large bodies. Nevertheless and more seriously, I hasten to comment that in the course of my own life, whenever I have directly sought a path on my own, determined by my own logic (or the logic of family or friends), it has never prospered. This has been the case from my earliest times, when I studied music, Latin and philosophy in university days in Edmonton. Indeed, because of too much use

of my own logic, for many years I tried to avoid the path that would lead me to become a pastor, despite the urging to do so of older people I knew. I had indeed been introduced to our Saviour's love, and experienced this love, but I did not really know how to listen to my heart in this love. At that time, I thought that a person had to be extra-holy to serve in this way, and I had no illusions about my being holy enough. Indeed, I had a high regard for and I held in esteem the clergy I had known since infancy. Then also, some relatives pressed me to do something "practical". Regardless, it was only choices in education and otherwise which would take me in this pastoral-service direction that did prosper and bear any fruit. I came to understand that this was reflecting divine Providence. I also came to understand through this what "blessing" means.

From the beginning of my service, and in the subsequent years, I have sought to do everything on the basis of obedience, not of personal choice. I was not always so conscious of this as now, but it has been the case nevertheless. I can now more clearly perceive the movement from being a Lutheran to being an Anglican at the age of twenty to have been an organic and natural development and fulfilment which was led by our Lord. It is likewise how I perceive that this same Providential direction urged me to move finally to my true home in Orthodoxy ten years later. It was not out of reaction so much as it was out of fulfilment. It was also a matter of my finally being ready, and its being the right time and age for me. I thank my open-hearted parents for preparing the way. I was not an easy child to raise, and they sent me to a Franciscan kindergarten. The Sisters of the Atonement, who also operated an orphanage, had a reputation for working well with children. This experience affected me positively for the rest of my days. The love that I was shown by the nuns, and which I accepted and understood, confirmed the love that was shown by Christian educators in other environments both then, and throughout the following years. The experience opened my heart to be ready to see the Lord present and active. The foundation my parents provided me and my siblings helped us all to be concerned about knowing our loving Lord, knowing that He is always the same towards us, and knowing that He is the Truth. We all yearned to live in an environment that would nurture and foster this relationship with the Truth, with Christ.

With this formation, I have not sought any position, move, transfer, advancement or responsibility, but have rather accepted what has been given to me by those in authority over me. In so doing, I can see that the all-merciful Lord has enabled me to do what was necessary to do, and this also under the protection of the Mother of God. It is only with such protection that I could have managed to undertake (and to survive) the extra-large academic load given to me in the first year of study at Saint Vladimir's Seminary upon my conversion to Orthodoxy. Providential support can be seen in that it was possible to be given personal, private, mentored guidance by one of my teachers. Besides teaching me formally, Father Thomas Hopko also helped me (and others) learn how to serve as a priest liturgically and pastorally. This was certainly not included in the formal syllabus. He did it out of love. Because of that, I was able to serve "acceptably" in a nursing-home chapel in the presence of the retired Metropolitan Ireney (Bekish) (†1981), Archbishop Nikon (de Grève) (†1983), and the Archpriest Prokopy Powers. The subsequent years before receiving the Master of Theology degree there were also accompanied by extra and unusual responsibilities, not simply what one expects of an academic

atmosphere. For instance, there was almost a year spent in Finland during this time, at New Valamo Monastery, where I had a taste of monastic life in the brotherhood from which Saint Herman (†1836) came. Having been made aware of the action of Providence in my life, I have always been glad when someone better qualified has been ready and willing to take my place. My concern is and has been to keep looking for what is God's will, and for what is for the good of the Church. It does not matter that I be noticed or thanked in any way. I actually do not care about position or advantage or power. This is a fundamental lesson that the Lord was teaching me from my youth : obedience is best, life-giving and golden. Indeed, most things that I have been sent or given to do (even until now) are things for which there is or was simply no-one else available at the time. This includes the responsibility of being a bishop. I know that I am an unprofitable servant, but I wish to do what I can for and with the Lord in accordance with what He is blessing me to do. I have found that the way of self-determination that is promoted in society is for me deadly. In other words, my life-experience has taught me not to accept careerism in any way, but only to accept God's call and direction — what we used to call vocation.

In other words, for me specifically, there have been several significant moments in my life when there were two clear choices to be made. One would appear to be very logical and prudent, even virtuous. The other would appear risky, but perhaps also what could be right. Something like this occurred, for instance, at the time I finally was wakened up to the need to enter the Orthodox Church. Very rarely have I felt in my heart such a word in phrasing such I heard then : "If you do stay where you are and do what you are asked to do, I will bless it ; but you really ought to move to Orthodoxy : this is the better way". Much oftener, when there are two apparently good alternatives, one of which must be chosen, it is in standing before the Lord and asking Him what is His will that the answer will come. It usually comes in sensing greater peace regarding the one as compared to the other. That is where God's will is to be expected, and His blessing. So this asking the Lord and watching for peace is what I usually recommend to those who may ask me how to discern between alternatives in accordance with God's will. Here is the calling, the vocation. Phenomena such as fear, confusion, disturbance, or division are always to be avoided. Such things are always not from the Lord. On the contrary, when something is from the Lord, there will also be present a sense of peace, energy, joy and the like, which are indicators of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit. It would not hurt any of us to repeat as often as possible and as consciously aware as possible the *tropar* to the Holy Spirit : "O Heavenly King [...]".

It should be immediately obvious to the reader that I am writing with the expectation that the bishop will be serving a diocese of "manageable" size. Because of the nature of the living and personal relationships between the shepherd and the flock, no diocese ought to be very large either in numbers or in geography. However, the fact is that both large numbers and large territories do exist, and always seem to have existed. Nevertheless, with God's help, bishops have truly managed to maintain as much as possible a living and personal connexion with the people of their dioceses. I have seen hierarchs truly be loving pastors in a diocese of three hundred parishes or more. I have seen hierarchs manage to be truly loving pastors in a diocese that may stretch out over several thousand kilometres of territory. As our Saviour said :

'The things which are impossible with men are possible with God' (Luke 18:27 ; see pp. 13, 363).

It is crucial that we never forget these words. James Hudson Taylor (†1905), a British Protestant missionary to China (and founder of the Inland Mission) put these very words into the context of his own experience. He wrote, "I have found that there are three stages in every great work of God : first, it is impossible, then it is difficult, then it is done" (A Passion for the Impossible : The Continuing Story of the Mission Hudson Taylor Began, p. 5).

For the sake of what I hope is the reader's convenience, the text of this book has been developed in a non-scholarly format, so that it may be read in smaller portions at a time, if desired. Citations and their references have been included within the body of the text. There are no foot-notes. Texts cited from the Scriptures are in italics and often indented. Most foreign words are in italics. Other citations are in smaller type and usually indented. Works that are underlined in the book include : books, anthologies, periodicals and journals ; titles of short articles, treatises, chapters and short poems are in quotation marks. I regret and apologise that I could write this only in the first person.

This writing is simply a pastoral reflection. It is not a theological treatise, nor a formal declaration. It is not an academic nor a systematic study. It is a reflection on my personal experience in the context of life in the Church, and of very many personal encounters with real Christians alive in Christ. I pray that these considerations might be of some use to someone, as the Lord may bless.

PART A

1

Incarnational ecclesiology

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth (John 1:14).

It is necessary always to keep in mind-and-heart the truth and the reality of the Incarnation of the Word of God, the taking flesh by the Logos. Together with this are included these facts about our Saviour : His bodily Resurrection after the Passion and Death, His Ascension, and His sending of the Holy Spirit (see Luke 24:49). All these are at the foundation of our Orthodox life and self-awareness. The Incarnation, therefore, is an historical event, not an abstraction. Real, flesh-and-blood human beings are involved in this event. All the ecumenical councils, and especially the seventh (2 Nicæa, 787), were concerned in some manner with the correct implications of this Incarnation. In those days, as now, there were philosophical systems that distorted the whole truth about the Incarnation in order to try to make it more palatable to human logic. Instead, these systems distorted the reality of the truth about the Truth ; and so it is that in our ecclesiology, we do not regard as a mere principle or abstraction the fact that the bishop is the re-presentation of Christ in the diocese. It is the responsibility of each bishop to reveal in many ways that Jesus Christ is the absolute Truth (not one of many so-called "truths"). He does so by helping to make Christ present to the people in his life and in his service. This responsibility is a very active, living and dynamic responsibility. It is not static.

We live in a time when people measure each other by what they do. Our first question is often "What do you do ?" Rather, our real question must be to one another : "Who are you ?" (and this in the deeper sense of the meaning of "who"). Asking the question in this manner applies to a bishop as much as to us all. The arch-pastor must always be concerned about asking his rational sheep (not necessarily verbally) : "Who are you ?" The sheep must likewise ask the arch-pastor (not necessarily verbally) : "Who are you ?" We all must be able to give the answer in Christ to the question : "Who am I ?"

At the beginning of this consideration, it seems appropriate to try to explain the re-presentation of Christ in the diocese. Throughout the present consideration of the bishop and the episcopate, there will be frequent use of metaphors. However, in this case, "symbol" seems to be the best way to express the word "re-presentation". "Symbol" comes from the Greek word σύμβολον, *symbolon*, which means "throw together". This meaning is quite different from what we are accustomed to nowadays regarding the meaning of "symbol". Regardless, "symbol" means that one thing really is another thing (or at least approximately so). For instance, using the proper meanings of words, the bread and wine of the Eucharist become the Body and Blood of Christ ("Eucharist" is from the Greek εὐχαριστῶ, *eucharistō*, which means "to thank" or "thanksgiving"). Although the bread and wine do not lose their essential appearance, they nevertheless do, really, become the Body and Blood of Christ. This is an application of the word

"symbol". An icon is made of wood and of paint, and never loses these characteristics. Nevertheless, the icon makes a direct contact with the person and/or event presented, and it is thus truly a "symbol" which carries liturgical meaning and spiritual depth. The reality and the re-presentation are as one. This is how icons can be "windows to heaven".

A bishop re-presents Christ in the diocese during liturgical services in particular. Again, he never loses his own personal characteristics, but as a "symbol", the Person of Christ and the bishop are, as it were, "thrown together". Whenever he serves liturgically, he truly brings Christ Himself to His own flock. Christ is the one, true High-priest. The bishop as a high-priest (or his representative, the priest) brings Christ Himself to His own flock every time he serves any mystery (sacrament), but particularly the Divine Liturgy. The whole diocese passes through the hands of the bishop as he makes the Eucharistic Offering. Through the hands of a high-priest,

> "we offer all our life to God, and God is pleased with our offering and returns the gifts back to us, accompanied by His life, the Holy Spirit. [...] An exchange of lives takes place in the Divine Liturgy. Man offers his limited and transient life to God, and God, in return, grants him His limitless and eternal life" (The Enlargement of the Heart, p. 104).

It is the high-priest or priest who will feed the flock from the Chalice with Christ's Body and Blood. The prayers of the Divine Liturgy remind us, however, that it is in fact Christ Himself who, through these priests, is feeding us, His sheep. This is especially emphasised in the words of the prayer to Christ that is said by the high-priests and priests just before the time for receiving Holy Communion :

> O Lord Jesus Christ our God, who sit on high with the Father, and are here invisibly present with us : give heed, out of Your holy dwelling-place, from the throne of Your glorious Kingdom, and come to sanctify us ; and by Your mighty Hand, impart unto us Your most pure Body and precious Blood, and through us, to all the people.

The high-priest or priest will remain who he is, but in fact it is Christ who is acting through him. When the Archpriest Michael Oleksa refers to this subject in his book, he refers (as very many seem to do when writing about this) to the words of the Bishop-Martyr Ignatius, the God-bearer (see Orthodox Alaska, pp. 46-47). The proximity in time of this holy bishop to the apostles themselves, and his harmony with their teaching is a main reason for this. Another treatment in depth of some of this subject can be found in La crise du symbolisme réligieux by Jean Borella.

One of the most important facts concerning the Incarnation of Christ is that God is Love (1 John 4:7-21). At the Incarnation, the Son of God, who is the Word, who is Love, took flesh. This Love became a human being. This Love came to embrace our suffering. This Love came to reunite us to Himself — us, the prideful sinners, the wayward, the rebellious, the self-centred. He acts completely and consistently in this love. In the same manner, it is for the bishop, revealing in his own life the Christian way of life in Christ who is the Way, to incarnate, to enflesh this same divine love. Being a bishop is not nearly so much about what he does in the context of his life and service in the diocese entrusted to him, as it is about who he, himself, is as he seeks God's will. He is not to be measured by tangibles alone. The tangibles are the product of the love, the expression of the love. Indeed, I remember well a lesson learned as a youth from a priest. When I was about twenty years of age, this priest showed us what the Apostle Paul

teaches us in 1 Corinthians 13 : I can be clever beyond all others, intellectual beyond all others, active in good deeds beyond all others ; but if I lack true love in Christ, it is all as nothing. Indeed, when it comes to serving the Divine Liturgy, this priest insisted that this love in and of Christ was the most weighty underlying principle in serving the Liturgy properly. This love is the first principle and priority from which all else flows. If any service is offered, and if those making the offering are concerned mostly about the externals, without having the prerequisite love, then it is at best empty, at worst blasphemous.

Thus, to the best of his ability, the bishop makes visible to all peoples (and especially to the flock in his care), the one Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. This is, again, no mere abstraction. It is simply a fact. When the bishop serves liturgically, this is so. When he acts sacramentally, this is so, since Christ is present and active in every sacrament. When he leads and administers the flock, still this is so, because everything is about and referred to Christ. Making Christ visible has to be, as far as possible, active in the whole of the bishop's own life. This is the meaning of the words of the Apostle to his disciples Timothy and Titus (see pp. 172-173). In a related manner, when he serves, the bishop is also referring us all to the Mother of God, who herself reveals the Church.

Throughout the world, wherever Orthodox people are, the question : "Where are and what are the indications of the blessing ?" is always an undercurrent in the hearts and minds of the believing people. The Apostle writes :

> *For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men* (1 Corinthians 1:22-25).

The faithful people (including the bishops) are always looking towards the Lord, looking for the signs of His blessing, not mere miracles or worldly wisdom. In other words, we are all looking for tangible indications of His love for us. Such indications, as the Apostle said, may well appear to be foolish or illogical according to the measure of those who do not know Christ. However, we always have the attitude expressed in one of the psalms of the Canticles of the Stairs :

> *Behold, as the eyes of bond-servants are unto the hands of their masters, as the eyes of a maid-servant are unto the hands of her mistress, so our eyes are towards the Lord our God, until He have compassion on us* (Psalm 122:2-3).

"Looking", here, means that we are paying attention with concentration, with spiritual attention (which is our response, too, to the deacon's liturgical exclamation "Let us attend"). Of course, as we pray these words, we understand that we are looking towards the Lord in everything and always. Of course, we are looking for all indications of blessing from Him during our times of worship. We are looking for this during our times of prayer. We are looking for this while we pray before our icons. We are looking for this while we are working. We are looking for this while we are resting. We are looking for this in our family life. We are looking for this when we are venerating relics (a word which comes from the Latin for "what is remaining"). We are

looking for this when we visit monastic communities. We are looking for this in a word from a spiritual father/mother. Indeed, we are looking everywhere and every day and on all occasions for the Lord's blessing. We are looking for the blessing as an indication that we are walking on the right path, in accordance with God's will. We are looking for this blessing because we know that He loves us, and we know that we love Him. We are looking for this blessing because it renews our commitment.

We all, because we are created spirit-and-body together (some say spirit-soul-and-body), need tangible demonstrations and reassurances of love. This is particularly the case between human beings who love each other. There are many poems written about love, and there are many words written about love ; there is much art produced about love, and there is much music composed about love. However, those who say they love must give tangible and concrete indications of this love to the loved one. Words are never enough. So it is with us and the Lord. Throughout the days of our lives, He is showing us substantial signs of His love — sometimes in unexpected ways. He rescues us from danger, even though some are martyrs. He guides us in our daily choices. He heals our diseases, even though people continue to die. Saint Lazarus the Four-Days-Dead did die the second time, as a missionary bishop in Cyprus. Our Lord helps us in our testing times, even through His silence. He sends unexpected people to help us or to encourage us or to rescue us. He surprises us with joy when we are feeling lonely, abandoned, or sad. We all, regardless of our rank or responsibility, are looking to the Lord, as we just saw in Psalm 122:2-3. The following extract from the writings of Saint Clement, Bishop of Rome († *ca.* 101), shows what attitude we have about seeking God's blessing, in harmony with our spiritual ancestors :

> Therefore, let us cling to His blessing, and see what are the paths of the blessing. Let us unroll [the scroll of] the things that have taken place from the beginning. For what reason was our father Abraham blessed ? Did he not through faith do righteousness and truth ? With confidence because he knew the future, Isaac cheerfully let himself be led to the altar. With humility Jacob departed from his land because of his brother, and he went to Laban and served him ; and the sceptre of the twelve tribes of Israel was given to him [1 Moses (Genesis) 28-30] ("First Letter to the Corinthians", 31).

We know that the Lord blesses, because we know that He loves us. We, however, like children, very often have a self-centred attitude about this blessing, and we are very often looking for this blessing only when it concerns ourselves. In order that we truly perceive the work of the Lord's loving blessing, it is for us to be looking for, and be ready to recognise the signs of the Lord's blessing on those round about us. Indeed, very often it is through the Lord's blessing of others that this blessing comes also to us. It is greatly important that we be ready and able to rejoice in the Lord for His blessings on others, and to give thanks to Him for His loving-kindness towards others.

The faithful people most particularly recognise the presence of the bishop as a source of blessing, precisely because he is re-presenting Christ in the diocese. It may not be consciously or correctly understood in a theological manner, but it is sensed in the heart. For such a reason the people do turn readily to the bishop. They look for the blessing from the Lord to come through the bishop to them. They are looking for signs and indications of the love of Christ through this

man. This active seeking helps us all to keep constantly aware of the Lord's presence, activity and love amongst us. How this sense of knowing about Christ's presence and blessing in the bishop occurs, and how this develops in our life is not so much for us to explain, as it is for us to wait, and to see what the Lord is giving (and this often over a period of time). Saint Ignatius of Antioch, the God-bearer, writes :

> We ought to receive everyone whom the Master of the house sends to be head of His household as if he were the Sender Himself [see Matthew 21:33-44]. Therefore, it is obvious that we are to look upon the bishop as the Lord Himself ("Letter to the Ephesians", 6).

When there is a search for a suitable candidate for the Holy Episcopate, the temptation is to look at the exterior qualifications, to see what is on the surface, visible and apparently impressive. The interior of the man who could become a bishop is far more important (see 1 Corinthians 13). In The Synaxarion (the book of the lives of saints that is read at services) for 12 August, we encounter a search for a candidate to be the Bishop of Comana near Neocæsarea, Cappadocia. Saint Gregory the Wonder-worker († *ca.* 275) was called to preside over the process. As can sometimes happen, a person mockingly proposed the local charcoal-burner Alexander as a candidate. However, Saint Gregory presumed that the appearance of this name might be from the Providence of God, so he asked for Alexander to be brought into the assembly. He appeared, dirty, black and covered in rags, and the response was laughter. However, Saint Gregory could discern that under this façade, in his great humility, Alexander was cloaking a deep wisdom. When Saint Gregory interviewed him privately, Alexander revealed that he had been a well-known and acclaimed Greek philosopher. However, once he had read the Holy Scriptures, he had laid everything aside and had taken this lowly position. Saint Gregory directed that he be bathed and properly attired. Then, before the whole assembly, he questioned him about the Holy Scriptures. All present were greatly amazed at the wisdom and understanding in his answers. With one voice, and unanimously, they chose him to be their bishop. Because of his holiness, wisdom and goodness, he received the love and affection of the flock. Saint Alexander finished the course of his life as a martyr in about 275 under the Emperor Aurelian.

Thus, we can understand that this responsibility to reveal Christ is a very great responsibility that each bishop bears. Bearing this responsibility, the bishop must remember to attend to his own heart and soul. He must keep his priorities properly ordered, so that he has enough time to be in communication and communion with the Lord. If he ever falls into the trap of doing things out of his own personal resources, forgetting to ask the Lord for every sort of help, he will very quickly dry up and sicken spiritually, if not physically. The bishop has to be able to develop the awareness of the constant presence of the Lord in everything that he is doing. He has to be constantly listening with his heart in order to know what the Lord is blessing, so that he can bless in harmony with the Lord. It is, therefore, truly fitting and right that we pray for the bishops, not only liturgically, but in our daily personal and private prayers. Our prayers serve to protect and strengthen our bishops. Our own compassion for our bishops can mature as we do this.

2

Arch-pastors who are influencing me personally

> *Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct* (Hebrews 13:7).

This exhortation (using a different translation : "*Remember your former leaders*") was used by the then Protodeacon Andrey Somow (later an Archpriest and now reposed) in the summer 1992 issue of the Canadian Orthodox Messenger, as he wrote about the late Bishop Ioasaph of Edmonton. These are significant words for us all to remember. Whether I was conscious of it or not, since childhood this exhortation has particularly influenced me throughout my life. And then I both heard and read the following words from Father Alexander Schmemann (†1983) :

> To love is to remember. And to remember with love is truly to understand that which one loves and remembers, to appropriate it as God's gift (Orthodox America 1794-1976, p. 11).

I know that Father Alexander lived by these words, primarily because of how he spoke when he lectured, and how he reflected on various persons in conversations. I know from my own experience of him that the Protopresbyter John Meyendorff also lived his life with this disposition, in accordance with his own particular gifts and personality. Our way as Christians is the way of selfless love in Christ, and this way does include the joyful and grateful remembering of those who have gone before us.

We who live in North America are not lacking examples of bishops who have lived out their lives in a positive, Christ-loving, and Christ-imitating context. Our too-frequent difficulty is that we have a hard time recognising such arch-pastors (whether they are still in this life, or whether they have departed in repose). This is usually because we are busy and distracted in our daily life. It is also because we have seldom had our attention called to the benefit that can come from prayerfully looking for, finding and emulating such good leaders. If we were daily praying for our bishops (and indeed for each other), we would more likely be able to recognise holiness both in the bishops and in their service. We would be able also to recognise holiness in each other, and the Lord's activity in the life of service of us all.

I will now present a few bishops (a small sample from amongst many more), who are significant persons to me. These persons show me how a Christian ought to live. The following arch-pastors that I am setting before the reader are mainly amongst those of the last century or so. Almost all of them have either served in or visited in North America. Some information given here about some of them is taken from internet sites for the sake of accuracy. In every case, the bishop has had an impact on me personally, and I will try to explain this influence as I write. It is my hope that in getting to know them, and how I understand them, the reader might better comprehend the foundation and back-ground of Part B, and how I could have formed such opinions about the episcopate.

It was long ago that I first encountered persons who knew the writings about the desert fathers. Then, when visiting Egypt, I really came to understand how it was that those persons

had, through reading and prayer, become friends with these early fathers. This lesson greatly affected me. It has very much demonstrated how the Lord's love is active and fruitful amongst us, both in the early days of our Church, and also now. Indeed, this lesson had unexpected aspects. In this context, I was to learn that repentance is a fundamental element in the way of life of each Christian (it will be discussed in detail later). Both the Forerunner and our Saviour exhorted us about it directly and clearly, as did the apostles and all the holy persons who have followed them. It was through this encounter and this lesson that I came to understand that a distortion regarding how we speak about holiness has come into the English language. The word "saint" comes to us from the French, a word spelt exactly the same in both French and English. In both languages, "saint" simply means "holy". In French, "saint" comes from the Latin word *sanctus*, which translates the Greek word ἅγιος, *hagios*. In most languages there is only one word in use to describe the concept of "holy". However, the distortion to which I refer in English has to do with our having come in recent times to use in different ways the words "holy", and "saint", which both mean the same thing (see p. 306). English has the additional, Greek-founded word, "holy", which came to us through the German word *heilig* (or *heilige*). Now, in English, we effectively limit the use of the word "saint" to those persons who have been officially declared to be of this category : officially recognised holy persons. French-sourced words imply higher respect in English for some possibly Plantagenet reason. The result of this is that the great majority of people now consider a "saint" to be a "professional Christian" who has climbed the hard ladder to recognition (or been helped to do so). Some people will think that the good and notable person was just born that way. Some will consider such an outstanding person to be some sort of specially gifted, even super-human person. The essential element of repentance in becoming and being holy has disappeared from our popular consciousness.

This problem of misunderstanding holiness and repentance is not limited to the problems of English language usage. This problem reflects a much wider misunderstanding throughout many western cultures. Because of these distortions in understanding, the popular meaning of "saint" has been changed and expanded so widely that it is now applied to famous persons, well-known positive examples of various religions and politics, such as Mahatma Gandhi, Che Guevara, Martin Luther King Jr, Nelson Mandela, Abraham Lincoln and others. On the contrary, for us Orthodox Christians, a saint is simply and plainly a holy person. This exhortation : "'*you shall be holy; for I, the Lord your God, am holy*'" (3 Moses [Leviticus] 11:44), tells us why, from the time of our creation as a race, we have been and are, each one, expected by the Lord to become holy. He expects us and wants us to be like Him. Holiness, sanctity, is for every person, not only for a few "specialists". There are, to be sure, many outstanding holy persons amongst us and in our history (persons officially commemorated on our calendars). They show us by their lives that holiness is not something exceptional for Christians. Rather, being holy should be considered to be what is normal for every Christian. The holy way of life, which truly is the normal way of life, is therefore full of the love of Jesus Christ, full of Grace, full of love for the neighbour, full of love for all God's creation. For the Lord, and for us, "normal" does not at all mean "average". Rather, it means that this is what we were created to be in the first place.

When we open our hearts to this fruitful love, and allow the Lord to reveal to us who of these holy persons in particular is blessed to become our friend, we open the doors of our hearts

to co-operate with his or her prayerful support for us. We each can have many such personal relationships with the saints. I write "who of these holy persons" because although we have universal and all-inclusive love amongst us in Christ, there are some particular holy persons who are given the specific responsibility to be nearer to us, to pray for us personally, and to support us more particularly than others. The Lord Himself knows us all. It is He that knows why the spiritual relationship between me and a specific saint is most fruitful in living the life in Christ. Although physically departed from us, these persons still love us, as do our departed relatives. They still care for us in Christ, and they are ready to help us to follow Him in this same love. There is evidence that in this love, these holy persons even yearn to be asked to help us to follow Him, that we might receive the out-pouring of His love.

I am introducing both this subject and these persons at the beginning, because these bishops all contributed to what sort of person I have in Christ been becoming. They have also contributed greatly to my understanding of how pastoral leadership in the Orthodox Church is to be exercised. One such exercise of leadership is found in how what seems to be impossible is addressed by each of these persons. I grew up often hearing a proverb that was already current in the sixteenth century : "You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear". True as this proverb may be, it is nevertheless evident to me that these bishops, in their exercise of true Christ-like leadership, proved the exception to this proverb. In Christ, they did manage to do what seems to be impossible, because the Lord Himself can and often does make a silk purse from a sow's ear. That is, anyway, the essence of the meaning and practice of repentance, which means transfiguring the person. The following two passages — words from our Lord, and words from the Archangel — are referring to two very different situations. However, they emphasise that the Lord can and does accomplish what we cannot ourselves do or understand :

'*With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible*' (Matthew 19:26).

'*For with God nothing will be impossible*' (Luke 1:37).

Saint Tikhon, Bishop of Amathus, Cyprus (†425) revealed the truth of this in his life and service :

> Saint Tikhon was ordained bishop of Amathus by Saint Epiphanius (12 May) and from that time, shone forth as a lamp on the candelabrum of the Church, convincing some of the truth of the Gospel by his irrefutable arguments and leading others to the Faith by his striking miracles. He would cast out demons, heal the sick in body and spirit; and, in brief, make the impossible possible through the Grace of God acting in him (The Synaxarion, 16 June).

The arch-pastors I will introduce now greatly contributed to my personal formation. It could be said that they became my friends and intercessors as well. In each case, whether the person is officially declared holy, or not, I myself consider that person holy, a friend of sorts, and one who would pray for me to the Lord so that I could serve Him with the same love. I depend on them to support me even now, so that I might in some way serve the Lord in a manner that pleases Him. And now, I introduce some of my friends.

✠

— *Metropolitan Saint Innocent of Moscow*

By the Lord are the foot-steps of a Man directed (Psalm 36:23).

Metropolitan Saint Innocent (Veniaminov) of Moscow is the first of the arch-pastors I am presenting. Indeed, he was the first Orthodox bishop actually to serve in North America. Saint Innocent was not the first Orthodox bishop I encountered in my life, but he was rather the first I met through reading. Nevertheless, with and through this blessed reading (as in reading about certain other saints), there grew in me a personal sympathy and encounter with the man himself.

In 1797, Ivan Popov was born into the family of Euseby Popov, a sexton and reader in the village of Anginskoye (Verkholensk District) in the Irkutsk diocese, Siberia, Russia. When Ivan (John) was six, his father died, so his uncle, Deacon Dmitry Popov adopted and raised him. It was from him that he learned carpentry. By the age of seven, he was reading in church, and by ten he was a student in the Irkutsk Seminary. It was there that he began to be called "Veniaminov", after the beloved Bishop Benjamin of Irkutsk, who had just reposed. The future metropolitan early longed to serve as a missionary, following the example of Saint Innocent of Irkutsk. He was married, and ordained to the Holy Diaconate at the age of twenty. At twenty-four, he was ordained to the Holy Priesthood, and he then served the Irkutsk parish of the Annunciation for two years. The Lord called an ordinary person, the parish priest John Veniaminov with his family, to do an extraordinary work. The call was at first not clearly heard (much as was the case with the Prophet Samuel), but rather it was at first resisted. He had, after all, a comfortable life. Nevertheless, the Lord, who knows our hearts, knew also how to speak to this priest in Irkutsk ; and after a short time, his heart both heard clearly God's call, and burned with the desire to be obedient and to serve. God blessed this desire, and he was sent to Kamchatka and Alaska. And serve he did, with all his heart, out of love for the Lord. It took him over a year to make the journey to Unalaska, along with his aged mother, his wife, his brother, and his infant son. They travelled on rivers and through marshes, and over high hills by barge, by horse-back, and then by ship.

As a missionary priest, he and his family lived in very difficult circumstances, in very remote places for many years for the sake of bringing people into loving communion with Jesus Christ. He and his family were as one and of one mind in this effort and love, and their labours were blessed by God. Together they built on the foundations recently-laid by the original missionaries of 1794 (and especially Saint Herman, who at that time was still living on Spruce Island), and these foundations were greatly stabilised and expanded. Their first dwelling was an earthen hut, after which the priest John immediately built a church. For this, he had to educate the local Aleuts in construction techniques. This process also helped him begin his work of learning the local languages, and to begin his work of the translation of the Gospel and liturgical texts :

> The illumination of the people meant practical, loving interaction : studying their customs and traditions, their world perspective and their dialects (later prepared and published as true scholarly works), the building of schools—even vaccinations—and preaching the Word of God at every opportunity. He also opened Alaska's first meteorological station (Canadian Orthodox Messenger, Spring 2000, p. 5).

After the repose of his wife (which happened at the same time that he was absent in Russia finding resources for the missionary work), after much persuasion, he accepted in that same year to be tonsured as a monk on 29 November 1840, and he was given the name Innocent in honour of the Holy Bishop Innocent of Irkutsk. He was then elevated to the dignity of archimandrite. On 15 December 1840, Archimandrite Innocent (Veniaminov) was ordained to the Holy Episcopate, to become the Bishop of Kamchatka and the Kuril Islands in Russia, and the Aleutian Islands in Russian America. It is note-worthy that at the time of his episcopal ordination, Saint Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, is reported to have commented : "There is something apostle-like in that man". His see was located in Novoarkhangelsk (New Archangel, later called Sitka), to which he returned in September, 1841. When all this happened, his six children were given school scholarships so that they could continue and complete in Russia their education begun in Alaska. With his children cared for, Bishop Innocent confirmed the prophetic comment of Metropolitan Philaret as he continued, at the expense of his health, his loving service to the Alaskan and Siberian peoples. The future Saint Innocent was truly expressing a fatherly love amongst the flock entrusted to him. It was this characteristic that enabled the conversion to Christ of some of the Tklinkit people (a people related to the Haida people of the Queen Charlotte Islands, also called Haida Gwai). Let us remember that both as priest and as bishop in his missionary days in the north Pacific, Bishop Innocent would usually travel by small boats like canoes and kayaks amongst the Aleutian, Fox and Pribilov Islands. He voyaged in such boats on the high seas to visit the people of the flock entrusted to his care, often in bitter weather. On one such occasion in 1842, he was near to death in a terrible storm at sea, but the storm miraculously abated when he asked the recently-reposed Saint Herman to pray for him and to help him. When he was required to go to Saint Petersburg, the voyage could take seven months in each direction. In 1852, the Yakut district was made part of the Kamchatka Diocese, and in September, 1853, Archbishop Innocent took up permanent residence in the town of Yakutsk. Because of this strategically vulnerable placement, once, when he was serving this flock, he was nearly captured by the English during the Crimean War. Characteristically, the holy bishop made frequent and arduous trips throughout his enlarged diocese. There were few roads, plenty of muskeg, and plenty of mosquitoes. In winter, it was the deep cold, the wind and the snow. In 1862, he transferred his residence to Blagoveshchensk (Annunciation) on the Amur River, very near to China.

One major way in which he expressed his love was using his God-given gift to translate the Scriptures and liturgical services into the languages of the Aboriginal (indigenous) peoples, and especially the Yakut (Sakha) language. He devoted much energy to this, since he wanted to feed the sheep he had been given with food that they could perceive and receive. This foundation was to be built upon later by others. The Lord continued to multiply his offering and the fruit of his labours. Bishop Innocent became the Metropolitan of Moscow in 1867 (although he was completely unaware of it at the time). He could not be enthroned until he was notified, and was able to travel back through Siberia in 1868. He continued his missionary and translation work unabated, now founding missionary societies to increase the funding possibilities for the many missionary projects that were developing. He had left a properly organised diocese that included 36 parishes and nearly 12,000 communicants. The territory stretched as far south as Fort Ross in California. There was also a theological school in Sitka which taught theology, local languages, Slavonic, Russian, Latin, and medicine to 23 students. His deep love for Christ was and is reflected in his deep love for the Church, for the flock of Christ. I cannot neglect to mention his co-worker, the priest Saint Jakob Netsvetov (†1864), who expanded the pastoral and

translation work of Saint Innocent amongst the indigenous peoples. The missionary work they established reached far inland as well, and it included many Inland Tklinkit families who lived in the region of Teslin, Yukon. They walked over the mountains to Juneau every Pascha. In Russia itself, this love bore fruit in the same way it did in the Aleutian Islands, Kamchatka, and Alaska, being multiplied by the Lord.

Bishop Innocent built Temples to the Lord, and even different sorts of furniture. Some of these remain with us to this day. The historic Bishop's Residence in Sitka is an example. The current cathedral in Sitka is a replica of the Temple built by Saint Innocent, but which burnt in 1966. Many items in it are nevertheless from Saint Innocent's time, and some were built by him. Amongst many other gifts, God had given him a gift of preaching and teaching, and the bishop confirmed the words with which he nourished the peoples through the works of his life. Unity in the Christian life is always of great importance, with the living relationship with Christ being applied in daily action. Another way in which this is often expressed is that "Orthodoxy" must be united with "Orthopraxy" (that is, the right praise and teaching must also be the right practice). This means that the Christian bishop (as with every Christian) must, as much as possible, let his "yes" be "yes" and his "no" be "no", as our Saviour says to us (see Matthew 5:37). By this I mean that his whole life must be a unity, as our Saviour's exhortation implies.

The following words are from an address by Saint Innocent to the clergy :

> 'Woe to him who is called and ordained to propagate the Word, and does not do so! When explaining the objects of faith it is important to speak circumspectly, clearly, distinctly, and in as few words as possible, or your sermon will have little success. [...] You must convey to your listeners the essential message of Christ's teaching: that we repent, believe in Him and nourish a selfless and pure love for Him and all mankind. [...] If you are to win your listeners' hearts you must speak from your heart, for it is the strength of our heart's feeling that moves us to speak. So only one who is filled to overflowing with faith and love will be able to speak with a wisdom which his listeners' hearts will be unable to resist' (Canadian Orthodox Messenger, Spring 2000, p. 5).

Also cited in this article are the practical words from his own 1833 publication (first written in Aleut) :

> Get going, somehow or other to the Kingdom of Heaven, and then you will gradually be getting nearer to it [...] just as when a person who is going somewhere takes a step forward, he gets nearer his destination (Indication of the Way into the Kingdom of Heaven).

This seems to be how Vladyka Innocent approached his whole life and all its challenges. "*Vladyka*", by the way, is a Slavic term that recognises a person of high position, but which has an affectionate ending. It is a translation of the Greek *Despota*, but it is a much friendlier, and more approachable sort of expression. For instance, in Bulgaria a bishop is often referred to as *Dedo Vladyka*, meaning Grandpa Vladyka. The Serbs use *Deda* and *Deka*, endearing forms of "grandfather". The English language does not yet have such a warm and even affectionate equivalent, although eventually it may be found.

What the bishop does in church is to be seamlessly continued in the rest of his life. In just this manner, Bishop Innocent used all the gifts the Lord gave him, all of one piece, to glorify the Lord, and to feed, lead and help the flock given to him. This was so in Alaska, in Siberia, and in Saint Petersburg. Because of his love for Christ and for the peoples of the flock entrusted to him,

through his translations he gave to many peoples access to the truth of Christ the Truth. He established a single Orthodox diocese in North America, which ministered to the needs of all, whatever their language or nationality. What Bishop Innocent did in Alaska prepared the way for what would be done by his successors in the rest of North America. He could not know at the time that the missionary societies that he encouraged and blessed when he became the Metropolitan of Moscow would enable the continuation of the work that he had begun in North America. Many of the oldest Temples in the Archdiocese of Canada have in them some items furnished in the earliest days of the twentieth century as gifts from a Russian missionary society, and also from persons of the imperial family, who sometimes made contributions to the societies. This, however, was not the main focus of the work of Saint Innocent and of the other missionaries. The main focus was that they brought with them in themselves the encounter with Love, with Jesus Christ. They introduced the people to their beloved Saviour. By embracing and putting on Christ, the peoples of Alaska and Siberia co-operated with Christ in baptising their cultures in order to bring them to full expression of the goodness in them. Thus, formerly warring peoples came to live in peace. This peace was not the mere absence of war, but rather the fruit of seeing one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. None of us knows the far-reaching effects of the things we do as an offering of love to the Lord. His successors in North America would not have been able to accomplish what they did, had he not done all this work, laid such a solid foundation, and left indications of the right path to follow. God's Providence was at work.

Until the time of the communist revolution in Russia, with a single administration and a single ruling bishop, the Russian Mission in North America (as it would later be called), cared for the needs of all in many languages. This work was funded by missionary societies in Russia. In establishing the mission in this manner, the unity of the Church, the unity of Christ, was quite visible. North America was, furthermore, not the only beneficiary of these missionary societies. There were many other places in the world where Orthodox Christianity was being fostered through their support. Of course, it is our responsibility in every way to work towards recovering this attitude of loving, open-hearted, Christ-imitating, unifying service. The Church has always been like this, visibly one. Regardless, our present ecclesiastical life in North America has lost this canonical unity. Much prayer and much hard work in Christ are required in order to return to it. Prayer and work are not options. This is the responsibility of us all, standing before the Face of Christ.

It is very important that we all keep in mind the example and the words of this, our first North American bishop. We must keep in mind the unity of his whole life of service, including his present, heavenly, prayerful care for us all, and not simply his words and deeds when he was amongst us physically. At the time of his enthronement, when he took up the burden of being Metropolitan of Moscow in 1868, he spoke these words about himself :

> 'Who am I that I dare to take up the work and the authority of my predecessors? A student of distant times, of a remote country, who has spent more than half a lifetime on the frontiers; one who is only a common worker in Christ's vineyard, a teacher of children and those who are firm in the faith' [...] (Innokenty of Alaska, p. 26).

During his twelve years as metropolitan, Metropolitan Saint Innocent, besides fostering missionary work, undertook revisions of many Church texts that contained errors. He took

special care of the impoverished clergy and their families by raising funds to improve their living conditions. He also established a retirement home for clergy :

> The seventy-two year old prelate, disregarding the fact that he was ill, exhausted and nearly blind, set about his new task with all the faith, hope, love and enthusiasm which he had shown in every previous task. Schools were upgraded, new societies for the aid of orphans, widows and the poor were founded. Asylums were made more humane and better equipped. The administration of the Russian Church was greatly improved. [...] In 1879, Metropolitan Innokenty was eighty-one years old. He had served Christ's Holy Church for fifty-eight years and he was now blind. [...] At 2 o'clock A. M. on the morning of Great, Holy Saturday, the soul of the great missionary departed its body and ascended to the eternal Pascha. His last words were a summary of his whole life: 'No eulogies are to be read at my burial; let them rather glorify that which is certain. Let them rather preach a sermon that will be instructive: here is the text for it: "*By the Lord are the foot-steps of a Man directed*"' [Psalm 36:23] (Innokenty of Alaska, pp. 26-27).

The blindness referred to in the previous citation was not simply that which sometimes comes with old age. The Synaxarion attributes the blindness to the many years during which he travelled over snow, which magnifies the brilliance of the shining of the sun. The same Synaxarion tells us that at the end of his days he was completely blind, and that he nevertheless continued to serve entirely by heart-memory and also to administer the Church as always. Moreover, this holy man was in his later years suffering continually from the pain of arthritis, which is usually attributed to the many years of his travel by sea in small boats. The very damp and humid climates in which he worked no doubt contributed to the development of these pains. He reposed on 31 March 1879. He was interred at the Holy Trinity-Saint Sergius Lavra.

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We face challenges. I doubt that they match those faced by the holy Metropolitan of Moscow. However, since such comparisons (or any comparisons) are dangerous or even destructive, they are not to be over-emphasised. It has been very formative in my heart and productive in my life to try to imitate his overall love for Christ, his whole-hearted dedication to Him, and the nurturing and gathering of His people. I have tried to do this as far as possible in my own circumstances. I have been able to read books about Saint Innocent (one being a translation of his own diaries). This reading made me feel very close to him in some ways, although I cannot say that I had constantly to travel in small boats. This feeling was strengthened by visiting Alaska itself, and by hearing people speak of him there ; and by visiting Sitka, and by standing in the home that he built there. I have been able to see that it is because of Saint Innocent's faithful missionary work in the Russian Mission in Alaska, the Aleutian Islands, the Kuril Islands, Kamchatka, and Yakutia that the Orthodox Faith grew and multiplied later in the whole of North America. It is because of his faithful missionary labours that the Orthodox Faith touched the lives of the Inland Tklinkit people who live in northern British Columbia and in the Yukon. Some few of them remain Orthodox until this day, although there has not been any persistent missionary activity in this region until recently, with the establishment of a mission in Whitehorse, YT. In former times, the faithful from these areas would travel over the mountains to Juneau or Sitka to worship.

I have found it to be a real blessing that I have been able several times to approach and to venerate his holy relics which rest in the Dormition *Sobor* in the heart of the Trinity-Saint Sergius Lavra near Moscow. *Sobor* is a Slavic word for an assembly of the Church, or for a larger church

building. And even more, his relics are in the same monastery as those of Saint Sergius of Radonezh, a priest-monk whose example touched me early in life, through reading, and through hearing the words of those who love him. Being able to kiss the relics of Saints Innocent and Sergius (and those of many others there and elsewhere) has been a great gift to me.

Of course, having been raised a Lutheran, and then having spent time as an Anglican, I had previously understood that such things as the veneration of relics were to be rejected. Now, being for a long time an Orthodox, I still find it greatly liberating and encouraging to be able to venerate them. This allows me to express the love and respect that I feel in my heart for the holy person. It allows for a joyous personal encounter, just as when we meet anyone we know. If we are Orthodox, at such times we are usually kissing each other two or three times, and often hugging. Of course, such veneration also allows me to glorify Christ who shines in that person ; and the respect I show to the beloved holy person goes straight to Christ, who shone and shines in the saint. We do not worship the relics, just as we do not worship icons. We venerate them. We give them honour. By this, I mean that we do not in any way put any icon or saint between us and the Lord in any substitutionary manner. We do not regard them as idols. We do not worship the creature rather than the Creator, as seen in these lines from Saturday Vespers before the Sunday of Orthodoxy :

> We glory in the icon of the Word made Flesh ; this we venerate, but we do not worship as an idol. [...]
> As Saint Basil says, 'The honour given to the icon passes to the prototype it represents'.

As Saint John of Damascus († *ca.* 749) rightly taught us, we venerate and honour and respect the body of this person who has revealed Christ in her or his life. We do this in the same way as we venerate an icon that presents Christ to us either directly through His own image, or through someone who has become like Him. Only the Holy Trinity do we worship : the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

When the Lord shows the very real presence of the activity of His love for us through such relics, it confirms in my heart all that I have been formally taught about why we do these things. I am in a monastery in Kremenets, and I touch and kiss a relic of Saint Panteleimon that is warm, almost hot to the touch. This is not for scientific debate. I encounter God's glorification of the Great-martyr and Healer, and I do give God glory in response. I venerate the incorrupt hand of Saint Job of Pochaiv ; and after four hundred years in the reliquary in the cool basement cave, his hand is quite warm to the touch. It is the same when I have had the blessing to kiss his incorrupt forehead. I give God glory. Sometimes relics are aromatic ; sometimes they give myrrh ; sometimes the Lord works miracles of healing through them. God has to be glorified by me, and I do give Him glory — verbally, as I have pointedly and repeatedly been taught to do. I cannot but give thanks for such signs of His immediate love, signs which remain always with me.

Thanks be to God. Because of the generosity of Eleana Silk, the Librarian of Saint Vladimir's Theological Seminary in Crestwood, New York, there is available a very complete bibliography about Saint Innocent at the end of this work. This bibliography can help us all get to know his life, but more importantly to be able to know him better and to come closer to him personally.

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— *Patriarch Saint Tikhon of Moscow and all Rus'*

> *O God of Powers, turn about, now ; look attentively from Heaven, and see : visit this vine, which Your right hand planted, and establish it* (Psalm 79:15).

Patriarch Saint Tikhon (Belavin) is one who never forgot his responsibility as "arch-pastor". Because of this, I regard him as a sort of template for serving as an Orthodox arch-pastor. All bishops and priests are understood to be shepherds of God's rational sheep, us human beings. Every bishop is the chief of shepherds, the arch-pastor, in the diocese under his care. Long before I became Orthodox myself, I had heard stories about Saint Tikhon's activities in Canada, stories about his love for Christ and his kindness, from those who could still remember him from their childhood. His example as an accessible and loving father always stood out for me, as did his obvious missionary care for the flock entrusted to him. He and Saint Innocent of Moscow have much in common.

Born in 1865, the son of a priest of the Pskov diocese in Russia, the future patriarch always showed a particular love for the Church, as well as meekness and humility. He graduated from the Pskov Seminary and then from the Saint Petersburg Academy. After this, he began teaching, at which time he was tonsured a monk, and ordained. Soon afterwards, he was ordained to the Holy Episcopate (1897). Whilst in North America, Saint Tikhon was responsible for laying a solid foundation for the future growth and development of the Orthodox Church on this continent. It is reported that when he was formally greeted by Saint Alexander Hotovitsky,

> Bishop Tikhon responded by stating that his personal prayer, as he entered his diocese, was 'Thy Kingdom come,' and that missionary work is precisely work for the coming of the Kingdom (Orthodox America 1794-1976, p. 83).

It was during his time as Archbishop (beginning in 1898 in San Francisco) that there increased greatly the immigration to North America from eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. There was so much of this in the eastern USA that he saw the need to move the centre of the diocese from San Francisco to New York, which he did. It was this great immigration that he immediately began to address pastorally by his personal presence. Thus, he travelled constantly by horse, by foot, by rail and by ship. He visited the developing communities of immigrants, and he helped to organise them ecclesiastically and civilly. He blessed the foundation and organisation of parishes throughout Canada and the USA. He helped the forming communities to organise themselves in the context of civil law (meaning that they became legal entities). The format which he offered allowed a reasonable approximation to normal Orthodox ecclesiastical polity. In Canada, overcoming many difficulties, he managed to incorporate the bishop-and-diocese through a 1903 act of the Northwest Territories Legislature (pre-Alberta and pre-Saskatchewan). Incorporation federally by Parliament in Ottawa had been blocked by Protestant-minded and imperial British-minded MPs who did not care for this sort of "foreign bishop". Of course, such an Orthodox bishop would also have been considered to be too much like the Roman Catholics. As a result of these challenges, Saint Tikhon already was gaining experience of governments that were resistant (if not hostile) to the Orthodox Faith.

One of the fruits of meeting the pastoral needs of the flock was the ordination to the Holy Episcopate in 1904 in New York of the dynamic Bishop Saint Raphael (Hawaweeny) of Brooklyn

(†1915). With the blessing of the Holy Synod of Bishops in Saint Petersburg, the ordination was by Saint Tikhon and Bishop Innocent (Pustynsky) of Alaska. It was the first ordination of an Orthodox bishop on the continent. It can be said, therefore, that this ordination clearly underlines the continuity of the Church in North America with world Orthodoxy, and with historical Orthodoxy — all the way to the apostles and those ordained by them and their immediate successors, such as Saint Ignatius of Antioch. It also demonstrates the unity of the one Orthodox Church here (even if we do speak many different and unrelated languages. Saint Raphael was given primarily the responsibility of leading all those Christians arriving from the Middle-East, although he also certainly spoke Russian. Before this, in 1898, when Archbishop Tikhon was visiting the Syro-Arabic Church of Saint Nicholas in New York, it is reported that the rector, the then Archimandrite Raphael, said in his homily about Saint Tikhon :

> 'He has been sent here to tend to the flock of Christ — Russians, Slavs, Syro-Arabs and Greeks — which is scattered across the entire North American continent' (Orthodox America 1794-1976, p. 83).

Saints Raphael and Tikhon were both self-emptying, missionary-minded, Christ-loving shepherds. This significant pastoral act was amongst the many others accomplished in just a few years, which revealed Saint Tikhon's understanding of the visible unity which is the nature of the Orthodox Church. This unity that Saint Tikhon nurtured is precisely the expression of the teaching of the Apostle Paul about the Body of Christ.

Saint Tikhon consecrated new rural and urban Orthodox Temples both in Canada and in the USA. Often, especially in rural places, he stayed in the homes of the people. There are some stories still told in Canada about his taking care of children in the home while the parents were occupied with ploughing or harvesting. According to reports, he did this for many families. Those who had such a childhood encounter with him passed on to the next generations, even to the present, a deep love for Christ, and a deep commitment to Him.

The labours of this loving Christian father and arch-pastor bore much living fruit wherever he went. When he was transferred in 1907 to the Diocese of Yaroslavl, there, also, his fatherly tenderness drew many to our Saviour. Saint Tikhon was then given the heavy responsibility of leading the Moscow Patriarchate at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, and he bore this with his usual dedication and paternal love. This period was clearly the most difficult for him. During these years, the new communist government was actively working at destroying the Church. Churches, monasteries and seminaries were being closed. Clergy, monks and lay-persons were being killed in very large numbers (tens of thousands). Properties and resources were being confiscated. Holy things were being stolen or destroyed. Communications became very difficult locally (and often impossible internationally). A fake church, the so-called secularising "Living Church" was invented by Stalin, and many clergy betrayed and abandoned the Canonical Church for the sake of an easier way. They brought considerable suffering upon the true Church, and they caused the imprisonment of the Patriarch. Saint Tikhon had to improvise in order to keep together what sheep still remained in the fold, and to reunite the scattered ones. He had to give wise, careful instructions and directions to the bishops and faithful abroad, so as to allow refugees and emigrants to establish the Church properly on their own in whatever place they found themselves. He knew that, because of the political situation, they had to do this without any further material support from the mother Church. For several years, he did this from prison and from house-arrest in the Donskoy

Monastery in Moscow, where the daily services and the brotherhood helped to support him. To strengthen the flock, he wrote :

> 'In celebrating the Divine Services according to the prescriptions of the *Typikon*, which has its origins in ancient times and is observed throughout the Orthodox Church, we are united with the ageless Church and live the life of the whole Church. [...] The divine beauty of our services [...] must be maintained without impairment in the Russian Orthodox Church as its greatest and holiest heritage' (The Synaxarion, 25 March).

Saint Tikhon did not change after becoming the primate of the Russian Orthodox Church. He foresaw the suffering, and accepted everything with loving humility. He knew that his service would be filled with affliction and tears, but through all his suffering, he remained the same accessible, unassuming, and kindly person. Saint Tikhon was deeply rooted in the love of our Saviour, and he exemplified the first words of the poem "If" by Rudyard Kipling (†1936) (and many of the other thoughts in the poem as well) :

> If you can keep your head when all about you
> Are losing theirs and blaming it on you [...].

Saint Tikhon also showed us, by his life in Christ, what is a real man. He exemplified in his life the well-known words of Saint Irenæus of Lyon († *ca.* 202) :

> The glory of God is Man fully alive ("Against Heresies" 4. 34. 5-7).

The Archpriest Leonid Kishkovsky succinctly and accurately describes Saint Tikhon :

> In all aspects of his archpastoral work, Archbishop Tikhon was the embodiment of exceptional meekness, perseverance and clarity of vision (Orthodox America 1794-1976, p. 101).

Saint Tikhon persevered in his determination to serve the scattered sheep, leading his far-flung flock in and towards Christ. This he did (even at the cost of his life) ; and those who supported him certainly risked their lives out of love for him. He was helped by monks and other believers who served as secret couriers of letters and messages. Despite being ridiculed, imprisoned and tortured, Saint Tikhon confessed Christ. That is why he has been officially called a confessor. A confessor is similar to a martyr, although the witness of a confessor is not always unto death. Although he went to such lengths to serve and protect the Church and the faithful sheep, there were nevertheless some who considered him to be a collaborator with the Bolsheviks, and a betrayer. Some still do. Many more, however, consider him to be a martyr, because the circumstances of his death in 1925 suggest that he did not die of "natural causes". Now, since the discovery of Saint Tikhon's relics in the Donskoy Monastery, these relics are a significant site of pilgrimage and veneration for the Orthodox faithful, who are touched by Christ's love through this contact with Saint Tikhon (see Everyday Saints and Other Stories, pp. 335-345). The people come to their spiritual father, the spiritual father of their country, to ask for a blessing. Tertullian († *ca.* 225) wrote that "the oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow : the blood of Christians is the seed of the Church" (see Apologeticum, ch. 50). In the same spirit, in areas of severe persecution in our days, others who suffer say that the more we are killed, the more we grow in depth of faith, and in numbers. Christianity is now said to be the most persecuted faith in the world. This fact has been stated by political leaders, and printed in magazines (see, *e.g.*, USA Today, 2 April 2013). Therefore, following the example of Saint

Tikhon, the arch-pastor walks at the head of the flock, and he shows the rational sheep how to live as a Christian, and how to die as a Christian.

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It was a great blessing and a great joy one year in October when Patriarch Aleksy II gave the blessing to me to share in carrying the reliquary of Saint Tikhon on my shoulder during a transfer of the relics from the main Temple to the winter church in the Donskoy Monastery in Moscow. It is a blessing to have been able to venerate his holy relics repeatedly. This confirmed and increased the relationship that had already begun through my venerating icons of Saint Tikhon. It is a blessing to see his face in icons in our Temples, and to have Temples dedicated in his name in Canada. It is a blessing to see how the faithful are venerating icons of him, both in our Temples and in their homes, and to see how their own relationship with him in Christ is developing. Some are naming their children after him. It is a blessing to remember the first time I saw a hand-written *gramota* (certificate) written and signed by him (a few of them remain in Alberta). It is a blessing to have known some of the persons who had met him personally in their childhood, and to see how his love for Christ has been bearing fruit. These are persons in Edmonton whom I met during the time of my early but not earliest encounters with Orthodoxy, and long before I would wake up and embrace it. These persons lived the love of Christ, especially in their hospitality. By their personal witness, they demonstrated that Christ Himself is the first priority of their life, and that worshipping Him therefore takes the first place in the priorities of life. That this warmed my heart is an understatement. To know and to see the succeeding generations continuing in just the same path is for me a constant joy, and a constant occasion to glorify God. Yes, we can have affection in Christ for holy persons such as Saint Tikhon, just as he and they have affection for us. It does bear fruit. In this regard, Church life in central Alberta feels similar to my experience in Alaska. There, Saints Innocent and Herman are always present to the local people. Both of these strike a note of harmony with Church life in Egypt. It is a great blessing indeed for us all that we have been given such an intercessor and loving father for our North American Church as a whole.

The following words, which summarise his life, are excerpted from the farewell words of Saint Tikhon to his clergy in North America on 7 March 1907 :

> 'I appealed to you for common work from the very beginning, in my first address to you in the cathedral of San Francisco, and my appeal was not made in vain; if something has been accomplished here, it was not I alone who accomplished it, but we together. It is self-evident that the Lord God helped us. Many times I have told you that the more I study the history of the Orthodox Church in this land, the more convinced I become that our task here is God's task, that God Himself helps us. Precisely when it appears that everything is just about to collapse, our Orthodox Russian mission, instead of dying, rises up in new strength and brilliance' (Orthodox America 1794-1976, p. 99).

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— *Archbishop Arseny of Winnipeg and Canada*

My heart is ready, O God ; my heart is ready (Psalm 107:1).

The holy Archbishop Arseny (Chahovtsov) of Winnipeg is remembered (amongst many other things) for his repeating these first words of Psalm 107. He seems to have repeated these words (also found in Psalm 56:8) most particularly at pivotal moments when he understood that the Lord was calling him to a new work. That this could be called his "trade-mark" is just one of the indications of his familiarity in his heart with the Scriptures, and a sign that he lived in these Scriptures. I mean that the use of this excerpt is a demonstration of the depth of the unity of Vladyka's heart with our authentic Tradition. Such short verses used to be repeated often in ancient times, in times before the final development and clarification of the "Jesus Prayer" itself. These are not the traditional "classic" words from Psalm 69:1, but they are truly representative. These words became characteristic of Vladyka Arseny, because they describe him in Christ. Vladyka's heart was truly in Christ, since he so readily used such words in his response to knowing what the Lord was asking of him. In a similar manner, when we are deeply familiar with the Scriptures (particularly with the Psalter), the Lord moves our hearts to become united with such words that are deeply meaningful to us and which have helped us. They may even be considered by others as our "trademark". I have heard many persons, even to this day, use particular scriptural phrases in their speaking, because the Scriptures are so much a part of them.

Vladyka Arseny was both a predecessor and a contemporary of Archbishop Ioasaph in Canada. It was in Vladyka Arseny's foot-steps that I followed when I served for a time first as pastor of Holy Trinity *Sobor* in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and then later as Bishop of Canada. At the time when I was in Winnipeg, there were still several people alive who had known Vladyka Arseny when he served as priest and bishop there. Their loving respect for him was indeed real. Many people reading this book do not know Vladyka Arseny at all, so I am now sharing facts about his life, in order to help us all know something about him, and through this to know him.

The future holy archbishop was born in 1866 in Ukraine, and he was educated first in the Kharkiv region, north-east of Kyiv. It was there that he married, had a son, was ordained to the Holy Priesthood, became widowed, was tonsured a monk before 1900, and served as a monastic abbot. His son stayed and grew up in Kharkiv, Ukraine (with other family-members), where he was ordained to the Holy Priesthood. In 1937 he suffered along with hundreds of others during the two-year massacre of clergy, and then became known as the New Priest-martyr Dionysii Chahovtsov of the Kharkiv province. In 1902, Igumen Arseny was called by Bishop Tikhon to serve in North America. Having served only for a few years in the Kuriazkskii Monastery as its abbot, he obediently prepared to leave. On his departure, he presciently said :

> 'Now I go to the New World, with a cross and a Gospel and begin the work of my calling; where reason will prove useless, where a word will become ineffective, there I will open my heart and fulfil all with love. But I know that this road is not going to be easy [...]' (Archbishop Arseny: a Vita, p. 35).

Multilingually gifted, Igumen Arseny served at first some parishes in New York and Pennsylvania. Then, with Archbishop Tikhon and Bishop Raphael, he founded Saint Tikhon's Monastery and Orphanage at South Canaan, Pennsylvania, and Archbishop Tikhon gave the

blessing that he be the first abbot. His lifelong work was to include helping people return to Orthodoxy from the Unia. He was constantly speaking and writing plainly and honestly about proper canonical order in Orthodox Christian living.

Following this significant and productive work, in 1908, as an archimandrite, he became the administrator of the Canadian parishes, and he was based in Winnipeg and Edmonton until 1910. In 1910, he saw to the construction next to the Holy Trinity Church in Winnipeg of the large building that would later be called the "school building". This building is now the parish hall and clergy residence at Holy Trinity *Sobor* (as it is now known) in that city. He lived in one of the second-floor rooms, arranged as monastic cells. He was a diligent pastor, missionary and worker, and with a visible sense of humour he described himself as flying from end to end of the diocese. In doing so, he enabled the Holy Spirit to encourage the hearts of the faithful, and Temples to the Lord sprouted everywhere Vladyka visited, much as mushrooms after rain. He was also such a gifted preacher that his nick-name was already "The Canadian Chrysostom". One commentator wrote the following :

> 'By God's Providence, to us was sent a tireless protector for this country. He was an excellent organiser and a wonderful preacher and all of this led to the progress of parishes in all of Canada. His incomparable, majestic sermons acted upon their listeners and very soon churches were full of faithful, sincere parishioners, particularly immigrants from Bukovina' (*op. cit.,* p. 38).

Caring for and feeding the sheep entrusted to him, he published the periodical The Canadian Field, about Canadian missionary work, which Tsar Saint Nicholas II (†1918) is known to have read. Then he also established the periodical, Canadian Orthodox Messenger. Both periodicals were in Russian, of course. However, his health had already been weakened by his labours, and by the poverty in which he lived. He suffered greatly from a hernia. In time, he petitioned to be returned to Ukraine, because he was so ill that he thought he might die.

He did receive the blessing to return to Ukraine because of ill health. There, his health did recover. However, soon after this came World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution. During this period, he taught in Crimea and he helped soldiers of the White Army in their distress. He wrote about his experience in words quite similar to a war-time recollection by his later successor Archbishop Sylvester :

> 'As a missionary preacher, under the whistling of the bombs, the explosion of shrapnel, I comforted the soldiers, and wished to give my life for my brothers' (*op. cit.,* p. 40).

During this time of turmoil, he was captured and sentenced to be shot. However, clearly by a miracle, and despite the waiting firing squad, he lived. He was rescued, and escaped to Serbia (Yugoslavia). It was there that later he was somehow found by his beloved Canadian faithful sheep, and at their request he was ordained to be a bishop and their arch-pastor.

In 1926, he was ordained to the Holy Episcopate in Serbia. In that same year, he was given the blessing to return to Canada, where he served as Bishop of Winnipeg for another eleven years. He continued to visit, to encourage building, to establish monasteries, and to develop the already existing one in Sifton, Manitoba, which first operated an orphanage, but then later a pastoral school. The environment to which he had returned was one of great chaos. Archimandrite Anthony (Tereshchenko) (†1947), who followed him as rector in Winnipeg, and then as bishop in Montréal, wrote :

> 'A whole book could be written, outlining in it all that Vladyka Arseny suffered in Canada after his return, but it would be a catalogue of horrors. His Eminence had to wage war against the "ill weeds" on several fronts' (*op. cit.,* p. 42).

As did Archbishop Ioasaph, Vladyka Arseny lived through the years in which, because of some differences in opinion, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia and the *Metropolia* were sometimes in communion with each other and administratively united, and sometimes not in communion with each other and not united. The normal order of life in the Church was also being broken by very many other conflicting opinions, many of them political. People had succumbed to anger and to fighting with one another. In his speaking and in his writing, he vigorously defended the Orthodox Way, and the proper order of Christian living, following the Gospel of Christ. This obedience of living in visible harmony and unity in Christ and in constant mutual forgiveness is what we call "canonicity".

There was a correspondence between him and a schismatic bishop, in which Vladyka Arseny tried hard to convince the schismatic to repent and to return to communion with the Church. This person was Adam Filipowsky, who had been an archimandrite earlier at this diocese's Holy Trinity *Sobor* in Winnipeg. The correspondence was sometimes heated. In due time, Archbishop Adam did return to canonical order, and he became a part of the Moscow Patriarchate in the USA before his death. However, Vladyka Arseny's honesty in his defence of canonical Orthodoxy, and his faithful service were rewarded by his being shot in the leg one day by an extremist whilst he was presiding at a parish meeting in a Saskatchewan parish-priest's home. Now, with his health deteriorating, he asked for retirement.

He was returned to Saint Tikhon's Monastery, where he still found the energy in Christ to establish Saint Tikhon's Pastoral School in 1938, and to nurture it (the pastoral school later became a seminary). He continued actively visiting the local parishes and travelling for special occasions. At Saint Tikhon's Monastery, Vladyka Arseny was elevated to the dignity of archbishop in 1939, in recognition of his tireless work. At this seminary, he had a great influence on the students. One such is the Archpriest Dimitri Ressetar, now retired, who at that time was a seminary student. In a video produced by Saint Tikhon's, he relates that he was a cell-attendant to Vladyka Arseny. He comments about how much Vladyka loved the Lord and the Scriptures. He also tells about how he had to recruit his sister's help in order to learn how to braid Vladyka's long hair (it was long, because he lived and behaved as a monk). At the age of 79, illness overcame him, and Archbishop Arseny reposed on 4 October 1945, in Scranton, Pennsylvania. His funeral and interment were at Saint Tikhon's Monastery, and the services were attended by many hierarchs, priests and faithful.

In a manner similar to Archbishop Ioasaph, Archbishop Arseny was known and recognised during the course of his life as an agent of Divine Grace, both in healings and in clairvoyance. The first reason that he is considered by very many to be a Confessor is because during the civil war following the communist revolution, as a consequence of his faithful service and preaching, he had been condemned to death. From this, he miraculously escaped to Serbia. The second reason is that about two decades later, because of his Orthodox preaching, teaching and witness, he was shot and wounded in Canada (see p. 22 for a definition of "confessor"). He lived and worked in Canada during a time of many divisions (imported through foreign politics), but he worked constantly to overcome the divisions. He strove to enable the praying and worshipping together, the co-operation and the working together of Orthodox bishops and

believers in Canada. He was, most certainly, an excellent Christ-loving preacher and teacher and pastor.

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There are many persons who are testifying to the activity in our days of the Archbishop's continuing intercession before the Lord for this diocese, and to his continuing pastoral care and love for the sheep of this flock. I will cite one person in particular, who does not live on this continent. He had serious problems following a hip-replacement until he asked Vladyka Arseny to pray for him. Immediately after he asked for this help, he recovered unexpectedly quickly. This is one example amongst many of the living and reciprocal activity of love in Christ. One person in Moose Jaw, who is now reposed, told me of a time when Vladyka Arseny was visiting her family when she was a child. Suddenly at the table, Vladyka Arseny became silent. Then he said that someone in the family had just died. Almost immediately, the news came that her brother had been killed in a coal-mine accident. His heart could know this only because of his deep love for Christ and for the flock he tended. The Lord revealed this so that he would be ready and able to comfort the family. On her part, she rightly understood that because of the Lord's love, Vladyka had been able to be physically present with them at the right time. Vladyka Arseny kept himself oriented with the phrase from the Psalter with which we began this reminiscence, and which was always the characteristic expression of his readiness to do the Lord's will. By his example, he helps us and encourages us to keep ourselves properly oriented by also repeating these words, or some other words given to us by the Lord. Vladyka Arseny leads by doing. We can imitate his example with Christ's help and the support of the Mother of God.

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— *Archbishop Ioasaph of Edmonton and Calgary*

He will bring forth your righteousness as light (Psalm 36:6).

The holy Archbishop Ioasaph (Skorodumov) is a bishop I never met. I did, however, both read about him, and also encounter persons who had long ago met him and been influenced by him. I recall a particular conversation during a visit to the Church of the Dormition of the *Theotokos* (that is, Birth-giver-of-God) in Shandro, Alberta. One parishioner had a warm and clear memory of this holy bishop, so full of the love of Christ, and of his vision for the Orthodox Church alive in Canada. Here are some facts about his life.

The future archbishop was born in 1888 in the village of Rebovichi, Tikhvin county, Novgorod diocese and region. He had a twin sister. Their father was a priest of that diocese. He was educated at the Monastery in Tikhvin, at the Seminary in Novgorod, and then at the Saint Petersburg Academy. After his graduation, he travelled to Astrakhan, where, in 1912, Bishop Feofan tonsured him to be a monk, and gave him the name Ioasaph (Joasaph). Soon afterwards, Bishop Feofan ordained him to the Holy Diaconate and then to the Holy Priesthood. In obedience, he was appointed Assistant Inspector in the seminary in Yaransk in north Russia, and then in Poltava, Ukraine, in 1913. He was ascetically inclined from childhood, and he imitated both the great ascetics, and his best teachers. As a result, his whole life was characterised by paschal joy. He consciously emulated Saint John Chrysostom († 407). By 1920, after the Bolshevik Revolution, he was in Crimea, where he was elevated to the dignity of archimandrite. In Constantinople (Istanbul), Archimandrite Ioasaph was assigned to serve in the Russian military hospitals until he, with many others, travelled to Serbia (Yugoslavia). There, he settled first in a village monastery, but he soon was given teaching responsibilities in several different regions. Then he became a teacher and chaplain to a cadet corps that was being trained in view of a hoped-for return to recover Russia. At the request of a friend, he arrived in Canada in 1930 to serve in the Church of Saint Nicholas in Montréal, Québec. Soon afterwards, he returned to Yugoslavia to be ordained to the Holy Episcopate so as to serve as a Vicar-Bishop in Montréal. At his ordination, with the following words, he was exhorted by Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) to show the flock entrusted to him the true path in Christ :

> 'You are going to people who have long lived with an understanding of things that have nothing whatsoever to do with Christianity. Bring them the teaching of humility; accept this staff as a staff of benevolence and, as you bless the people who now stand before you, think of the flock there, who already love you' (ROCOR Studies : Archbishop Ioasaph ; see in the internet resources, p. 372 following the first bibliography).

He served Vespers and Matins daily from that time until his life's end. When he returned to Montréal, he had to face the chaos and turmoil of Orthodox Church life in Canada as it was at that time. Having come to Canada nearly penniless, Bishop Ioasaph found that in the new vicariate there were no assets, and no organised parish life. He therefore had no salary, and he lived on personal donations. He was subjected to hardship and adversity. He nevertheless set to work to establish better order in the areas of his responsibility. In due time, he established himself in Edmonton, and also in Calgary in Alberta.

He was always focussed on the reality of God's mercy. He lived in the awareness that the end of all could occur on any day. Because of his loving service, and the witness of his service in continual poverty, Vladyka Ioasaph was not only loved greatly, but his labours also produced considerable fruit, including new parishes and two monastic communities in Canada. He, along with other bishops in Canada, suffered from the tensions and sometimes divisions that had arisen by that time in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Because of these circumstances, there were periodic divisions in Church administration in North America. Sometimes there was a united administration that included the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia and the *Metropolia* (the missionary administration established and strengthened by Saint Tikhon). The headquarters of the ROCOR was then still in Yugoslavia, and its bishops cared for people all over the world. The headquarters of the *Metropolia* was in New York, and these bishops cared for people in North and South America only. Sometimes the administrations were separated. These periods of separation occurred primarily because of differences of opinion as to how the Russian Orthodox Church itself should be regarded, and whether there should be renewed communication with it, considering the political situation there. Throughout all these times, Vladyka Ioasaph continued to live in the love of Christ, as did Vladyka Arseny, and he showed this to others by his way of life. He gave them heart and encouragement. However, such long-term poverty, sparse living-conditions and hard work often produce illness, and it did so with Vladyka Ioasaph.

In 1945, Vladyka Ioasaph was elevated to the dignity of archbishop. In 1946, when the *Metropolia* and the ROCOR separated, he remained with the ROCOR. In 1947, the Canadian ROCOR diocese was divided into two, and Vladyka Ioasaph was given the responsibility for the western half. In 1951, he was sent to Buenos Aires in Argentina, under the ROCOR. Amongst Canadians, there were already reports of his sanctity ; as the Grace of the Holy Spirit continued to be poured out through his service, and healings occurred, these reports continued for the rest of his days. Indeed, such reports continued after his repose as well. He reposed in Buenos Aires in 1955.

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Archbishop (Saint) Ioasaph is a shining example of a person who loved the Lord from childhood, and whose fundamental desire has been to live in harmony with the Lord and His will. Always, as we see in the lives of the saints, this desire to please the Lord is tested sharply by the powers of darkness. The Lord blessed his offering, and his offering bore good fruit. In my youth, I listened to personal experiences from those who had met him long ago. My recollections of these stories confirm to me that indeed, as people wrote about him, so Vladyka Ioasaph actually lived. By this I mean that he put Christ first in everything ; that he gave up all for the sake of his love for Christ ; that this love was returned by the people he loved ; that he served and nurtured the flock entrusted to him because of this love ; that he endured great suffering for the sake of Christ ; and that he indeed shone with Christ's love, even after his repose. There is the well-known report of light shining from his grave. The relationship of love continues in Christ, and mutual prayer continues in Christ. So it is that when people reflect on such a person whose life in Christ gives life in Christ to them, they talk about their personal experiences in very concrete ways. The continuing fact of their love for Christ that has grown out of this personal, human encounter is a testament in itself of his love and of God's Love. It is such a person as he that my heart has always yearned to emulate.

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— *Metropolitan Leonty of New York and America*

> *Blessed is the one understanding the poor and the needy ; in the evil day, the Lord will rescue him* (Psalm 40:1).

The holy Metropolitan Leonty (Turkevich) is an outstanding personality, one about whom it has been said by more than one person : "If he is not a saint, then who could be ?" However, as with Archbishop Arseny, it is argued that it is too soon after his death to be making official declarations about sainthood. Nevertheless, there are so many stories about how this man lived in the love of Christ and in harmony with the Gospel, that he could not but be a strong example for me, personally. In my experience, it is only someone truly alive in Christ who could have such a profound influence on such a wide variety of persons, persons who are convinced that he is truly a holy man. Despite the lack of "official recognition", he, and many others who are holy but not officially declared so, continue to pray for us in their love for Christ. No-one in authority escapes having to disappoint someone by saying "no", or by imposing some sort of discipline, or by taking a decision that is contrary to someone's opinion ; but when this is done in Christ's love, the pain can be healed easily if we co-operate. This highly intelligent person was to have a profound influence on the way our Church life would develop in North America, as will be demonstrated here. This is the fruit born of the love of Christ.

Born in 1876 into a priest's family in Kremenets in Volyn, Ukraine, the future metropolitan was educated at the Volyn Seminary at Lutsk, and then at the Kyiv Academy. He served as a teacher in several different cities until he married. He was then ordained to the Holy Priesthood in the Pochaiv Monastery (the spiritual centre of the Volyn area), and then assigned to his father's parish in Kremenets, 25 km distant. In 1906, Archbishop Saint Tikhon took the then priest Leonid with his family to the USA, where he became the founding rector of the first Orthodox seminary in the USA, Saint Platon's Seminary, in Minneapolis. He helped in the formation of the first Parish Statute at the 1907 *Sobor*. In 1912, he was assigned to be the dean of the Cathedral of Saint Nicholas in New York. The seminary moved to Tenafly, New Jersey, and he remained dean. He served as the editor of the Russian-American Orthodox Messenger from 1914 to 1930. Such publications were in the Russian language. Together with Father Alexander Kukulevsky and others, he represented the North American diocese at the All-Russian *Sobor* (Council) of 1917-1918 in Moscow, Russia. Because of the strength of his character and his intelligence, he quickly became a leading personality in the Church in North America. This leadership provided stability and support at a time when the previously united Russian Mission was becoming divided along nationalistic-linguistic lines after the communist revolution. Then, to his great sorrow, his wife reposed in 1925. This was to some extent attributable to the suffering resulting from the activities of the Stalinist so-called "Living Church", which took over the New York Cathedral and expelled him and his family to the street. Such a turn of events was possible because the title of the cathedral had been registered in the name of the previous imperial government of Russia, and the Soviets laid claim to this property through its fake agent, the "Living Church". The American Supreme Court took this decision (probably not with a full understanding of the plight of the Church). In due time, being a widower, in 1933, he was tonsured to be a monk and given the name Leonty. He was then immediately ordained to the Holy Episcopate, to be the Bishop of Chicago. In 1937, he led in the preparation and the

adoption of a constitution for the *Metropolia* (which later became The Orthodox Church in America). This constitution organised the North American Church in the manner of a Metropolitan District with a Metropolitan, a Bishop's Council, and a Metropolitan Council.

Vladyka Leonty succeeded Metropolitan Theophilus in the leadership of the *Metropolia* in 1950. Subsequently, he guided the Church in the establishment of a solid canonical and institutional foundation. A structure of the administration was developed that consisted of the Holy Synod of Bishops (the ruling bishops who, together, lead the whole Orthodox Church in America, under the presidency of the metropolitan) and a Metropolitan Council (the Council of diocesan representatives, both priests and lay-persons, who help the bishops in the administration). He patterned it after the model of the diocesan council, which was one of the institutions established by the 1917-1918 Moscow *Sobor*. That historic *sobor*, in which he and his brother, the Priest Benedict Turkevich, had participated, was the assembly of the whole Russian Church which had re-instituted the Patriarchate, and together with it recovered a more traditional manner of Church organisation and government. It was the first *sobor* possible since before 1700 and the Church "reforms" of Peter the Great. It was the last *sobor* until about 80 years later, after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

It is amongst the divinely providential elements in his life, and the events surrounding this *sobor*, that Vladyka Leonty had been given the gift to able to be present at this historic *sobor*. He was a participant in the miraculously rapid and constructive decisions that were able to be made in such a brief window of opportunity (less than a year). He was a prayerful participant also in the election of the new patriarch, Patriarch Tikhon, who had previously served in North America. Indeed, it was Father Leonid who introduced the motion that led to the election of Patriarch Tikhon. From my own experiences abroad, I know that it would be beyond question that, during the work of this *sobor*, there would have been many conversations and contacts between Vladyka Tikhon (before and after his being elected) and Father Leonid. It is also beyond question that Patriarch Tikhon would have then had a heart-felt interest in the life of the Russian Mission in North America, just as he demonstrated both before and afterwards. I am certain that these encounters in the context of their mutual love for our Saviour and for the missionary work in North America were made possible by Divine Providence. Vladyka Leonty would therefore well understand the mind and intentions of the new patriarch regarding the development of this North American Mission into a more self-governing body.

The previously-mentioned move towards having both clergy and lay representatives in the North American Metropolitan Council was a very bold and new step to take in those days. This was partly because of the composition itself, which was a move towards greater harmony with ancient tradition. Although it had first been made possible in Russia by the brief period of freedom for the Church between the imperial and soviet systems, it was new and untried (it was followed by a reversal after the second revolution). Because of that God-given moment, the same step was able to be taken boldly in North America, but skepticism then lasted for decades.

The method that had been used by the Romanov dynasty in order to control and subjugate the Church was again taken up and adapted by the Soviets. Both the Romanovs and the Soviets used the western, German-style structures that had been established by Peter the Great. The Church never was a part of the state, but it was nevertheless controlled by it. In imperial times, many churches and monasteries had been closed. In Soviet times, the same was true, and the Church was forced to pay the state 80% of its gross income in taxes. Despite this

Soviet oppression and many repressions, the Church survived and sometimes even grew under her own renewed patriarchal structure. The newly-established structure in North America was based on the example of that All-Russian Moscow *Sobor*. This *sobor* had been opened to lay-delegates, not only from Russia itself, but to delegates from outside Russia's own culture and language (that is, representatives from the many missionary territories). The local North American administration was at first supported by many volunteers, until the positions and responsibilities of the three standard officers (chancellor, secretary, treasurer) were developed, and financial compensation for them became possible.

By the time of the repose of Metropolitan Leonty in 1965, the Church in North America stood on a well-developed foundation, thanks to this holy and wise man. The foundation was now in place for the autocephaly which was to be given to the Church soon after his repose. An autocephalous Church is one of the fifteen (at present) fully self-governing Churches mutually recognised to be rightfully so. Indeed, Divine Providence can be seen to have been at work in enabling the development of this foundation. This enabling included, as is often the case, notable and outstanding personal relationships, and exposure to important events. Patriarch Tikhon himself contributed to this foundation first in his own work amongst us, and then in his personal relationship with Father Leonid. Further, the holy patriarch both wrote and spoke about the importance of the growth towards self-government of the North American Church in order to be able to fulfil her missionary responsibilities. In this prepared structure, the inclusion of not-ordained persons in the decision-making institutions of the Church enabled a close and harmonious working relationship amongst all levels of servants of Christ in the Church. This inclusion helped the lay-persons to understand that their opinions were being heard, and that their contributions were valuable and viable. There are more recent well-known examples of persons who have contributed actively as a result. Some have been well-known teachers, for instance, such as Sergei S Verhovskoy, Alexandra Chetverikova, Sophia Koulomzin, Veselin Kesich, Constance Tarasar, and many others. From this, other Orthodox Christians in North America began to adjust their administrations similarly.

Besides all this, truly a man of balance in Christ, Metropolitan (Saint) Leonty was known to be a man of prayer, an ascetic, and a lover-of-the-poor. Many persons speak of certain phenomena evident in him when he was at prayer. For instance, I myself have heard reliable people speak of seeing him at prayer, either at the Divine Liturgy or in the Chancery gardens, with his feet off the floor or the ground. Many persons speak of how he always had something to give to the poor, how he sheltered the needy, and how lives were transformed through his love. His behaviour has been directly and favourably compared with the similar behaviour of Nikolai Afonsky, the uncle of the now-departed Archbishop Gregory (Afonsky) of Alaska (†2008). This uncle, said Vladyka Gregory, never left the house without having some money in his pocket to give to whoever might ask for help. Nikolai Afonsky was the well-known choir-leader at the New York Cathedral in those days. Both Metropolitan Leonty and Nikolai Afonsky believed (in accordance with the Scriptures and Tradition) that someone asking must truly be in need. They would say that we must give without asking questions, and without suspiciously condemning, or expecting any repayment. That is what they both did.

The following words show us that caring for the poor and needy was already at the foundation of our daily life in the context of the Mosaic law :

> *For almsgiving delivers us from death and prevents us from entering into the darkness* (Tobit 4:10).
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> *Do not withhold doing good to the needy, when you may give a helping hand; do not say, when you are able to do good, 'Come back tomorrow, and I will give you something'; for you do not know what the next day will bring forth* (Proverbs 3:30-31).
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> *He who closes his ears that he might not listen to the weak, he will also call upon someone, and there will be no one listening* (Proverbs 21:12).
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> *Stretch forth your hand to the poor, that your blessing may be complete* (Wisdom of Sirach 7:32 ; see also 17:17 ; 29:8-10).

The following words from sub-apostolic times supplement the Holy Scriptures :

> Do not be the one stretching out hands to receive, but drawing them back from giving. If you have something, give it with your hands as a ransom for your sins. Do not hesitate about whether to give, nor murmur while giving. [...] Do not turn away from a needy person ; but share all things with your brother, and do not say that they are your own (The Didachē : The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, 4).

There are other early texts which compare the behaviour of money-hoarders to that of dragons. Many are the tales about dragons that amass mounds of useless treasures, upon which they simply sleep. Magpies and crows have similar reputations. To what purpose this hoarding ? As the proverbial dog in the manger, the hoarder does not use the treasures, but only keeps them. Meanwhile the poor and the needy are deprived of any support, and they starve. In Job we find the appropriate words : "*In vain he has laboured unprofitably for wealth, of which he will not taste*" (Job 20:18). Saint John Chrysostom would not disagree with this. He gives this insight for our encouragement :

> Do you not know that God did not enact alms-giving so much for the sake of the poor as for the sake of the persons themselves, who bestow ? ("Homily on 1 Corinthians 9")
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> '"*Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away*"' (Matthew 5:42). Stretch out your hand ; let it not be closed up. We have not been appointed as examiners into men's lives, since if that were so we would have compassion on no-one. [...] It is the season of kindness, not of strict enquiry ; of mercy, not of account. He wishes to be supported : if you are willing, give. [...] Let us be merciful : not simply merciful as such, but as our heavenly Father is (see Luke 6:36). He feeds even adulterers and fornicators, and sorcerers [...], those having every kind of wickedness. [...] If we give to all indiscriminately we shall always be compassionate. But if we begin to make over-curious enquiries, we shall never be compassionate ("Homily on Hebrews 6").

Of course, in addition, we must understand that Vladyka very often went on foot in New York City, even in the neighbouring Bowery (then a very depressed area). It is often spoken of him that because of his Christ-like behaviour, and his fair treatment of all human beings, the members of the motor-cycle gangs that used to be neighbours to the Protection Cathedral added their protection to this cathedral and to its parishioners and clergy. All Metropolitan Leonty's gifts were, in balance, put to use in serving our Saviour as an arch-pastor. He practiced his evangelical faith in Christ. Everything was filled with love, firm love, for the Lord and also for people, regardless of their faith or status.

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Along with many others, I have no qualms about acknowledging the sanctity of this man who lived what he taught and preached. I have no hesitation particularly because of the multitude of reports of his Christ-like behaviour, his care for the poor and needy, his life of prayer and the fruits of it. Because of the wide variety of persons who speak of him in this way, and because I understand that there are current reports of his fruitful intercession for us, it is impossible for me to accept other than that he is truly a holy man. Further, without his work, the OCA (The Orthodox Church in America) would never have developed the strengths that it has in Christ. Indeed, it probably would not even exist. Even though Metropolitan Leonty did not live to see the fulfilment of the work of preparation for the autocephalous Church, from his own difficult experiences in life, he certainly understood the importance of this step. He saw the beginning of the communist revolution when he was present at the 1917-1918 *Sobor*. He experienced the consequences of Soviet policies when he and his family were evicted from the New York Cathedral. He understood the dangers of involvement with Soviet influences in any manner. He lived at the time of the Cold War, and he will have had his own experiences of being labelled a Russian communist simply because of his place of birth and his language. Many priests and lay-persons in North America had just this experience over several decades. Even I have had this experience on occasion. I am convinced, and I believe and accept that it has to do with his prayers that a series of unexpected events and miracles were associated with the giving of the autocephaly in 1970.

It is a great pity that in our days the significant people of the past are so easily forgotten. This is not to our benefit. If we do not know the persons and lives of those who have preceded us in the Church, we become detached from the reality of the continuity which joins us with the apostles and with our Saviour. We become isolated egocentric entities, and therefore actually no longer Orthodox. We are who we are as Orthodox because of those who have gone before us. I have found that getting to know and to appreciate persons such as Metropolitan Leonty has helped me in my heart to understand how I might better be a servant of the Lord. I know that I could never have the intellectual capacity that was given to Metropolitan Leonty ; but I also know that this is not my concern. My concern is to love Christ and the sheep of Christ, and to serve them to the best of my ability, imitating the example of this holy man (along with many others) in the context of the particular gifts given to me by the Lord to do so. How he loved the Lord influenced everything about his life and his behaviour. How he loved the Lord expressed itself in his care for others without making distinctions. This is the example I wish to follow : loving and serving the Lord, upholding our Orthodox Faith, and always remembering to feed the sheep as he did.

Before leaving this consideration of the holy Metropolitan Leonty, it seems to be helpful that the following comments be added, words from another bishop considered amongst those my heart longs to emulate. These are words that address the meaning of the term “lay-person”, which we are using throughout this reflection. With these following words, Archbishop Paul of Finland can help us to understand why the All-Russian *Sobor* of 1917-1918 was so concerned with the responsibilities and participation of lay-persons in the decision-making processes in the life of the Church :

> It is worth noting that the concept of laity is known in neither the New Testament nor the texts of the services. The Liturgy speaks either of the learners who do not yet belong to the

> Church or of the faithful and the saints. The term "layman" came into use when the people of God began to be divided sharply into two groups, those ordained to the priesthood on the one hand, and those not ordained, the laity, on the other. At the same time the clergy were identified with the Church and the laity with the world. In this way, an excessive clericalism developed in the Church, and the nonordained members of the people of God were labelled laymen, incompetents. And indeed they became ignorant about matters of the Church, and passive as well. In reality, all members of the Church who have been chrismated, anointed by the Holy Spirit, are equally members of the people of God. The prayers of all are offered in the Eucharist, and the petition for the gift of the Holy Spirit is made for all in the same way (Feast of Faith, p. 16).

These are not new concepts. Both Metropolitan Leonty and Archbishop Paul would be pleased if the faithful in churches could be reminded of this from time to time of a Sunday. The Apostle Peter writes to us quite directly about our being the people of God :

> *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy* (1 Peter 2:9-10).

The Apostle Paul sheds more light on this for us all :

> *For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together* (Romans 8:15-17).

The blessed Metropolitan Leonty reposed in Christ on 14 May 1965, in New York. He was interred outside the apse of the Monastery Temple at Saint Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania. The following words sum up succinctly the service of this holy man :

> What distinguished Metropolitan Leonty from many of his 'immigrant' contemporaries and colleagues, was his vision of American Orthodoxy, of the particular destiny and vocation of the Orthodox Church in the New World. [...] Already in 1916, in his article on 'The Tasks of Orthodoxy in North America,' he confirmed his conviction that it is in America 'that the Orthodox Church will manifest her universality in all her strength, reveal her creative ability organically to integrate all elements composing her ...'. [...] If this vision made him eminently qualified to lead the Church through a difficult time of transition, it is his truly unique charisma of pastoral patience and generosity that assured the ultimate success of this transition, made it into an organic rather than critical process. His mere presence, quite often silent and apparently 'non-committal,' had a deeply pacifying effect on the passions and controversies which were raging around him. It is as if understanding all points of view, seeing the partial truth of each of them, he transcended all of them, preserving within himself the unity and the 'wholeness' of the Church [...]. No one who attended it will ever forget his funeral in May 1965, at the New York Cathedral and then Saint Tikhon's Monastery. On that day one almost physically felt a renewed gift of unity, a new and wonderful reality of the Church, which our old Father in Christ left with us as he was called to God (Orthodox America 1794-1976, p. 233).

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— *Archbishop Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco*

> *The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears towards their supplication* (Psalm 33:16).

Archbishop Saint John (Maximovitch) of Shanghai and of San Francisco, the wonder-worker, lived and served and shone as a testimony to Christ amongst us in recent times. He reposed in 1966 (when I was twenty years old). Although I had already begun to be introduced concretely to Orthodoxy and to Orthodox persons by a beloved Anglican priest in Edmonton, Alberta, at that time, I had no idea about Saint John, nor about how he would affect me in the near future. Two years after the death of Saint John, I was studying theology in Vancouver, and meeting more Orthodox believers. Some of them were glad to share with the likes of me their loving respect for, and their experiences of the love for Christ in Vladyka John. As before, to help us all, here are some facts for the sake of context. The life of this remarkable man is all concerned with loving service of Christ, and being like Him.

Vladyka John was born in 1896 in the Kharkiv region to aristocratic parents who were active Orthodox believers. Often well-educated aristocrats would fall away from faith to philosophy, and then wonder why life seemed dark and depressing. Having lost their "rudder", then neglecting their responsibilities for the many people dependent upon them, and also for their properties, they would drift about as on stormy waters. His faithful parents were not like that. The future Vladyka John was educated at the Poltava Military School, the Kharkiv Imperial University (law), and the University of Belgrade (theology). His education in Serbia was due to the flight there of his family at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution. Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) tonsured him to be a monk in Serbia, and soon after this he was ordained to the Holy Diaconate and the Holy Priesthood. He was a popular teacher at various levels and in various languages. This resulted in his soon being ordained to the Holy Episcopate in 1934, and being assigned to be the Bishop of Shanghai and China.

In the utter chaos of post-imperial China, Vladyka John worked to restore unity amongst the Orthodox of various nationalities, and he soon directed the construction of a cathedral church, and auxiliary buildings. He organised also the building of other churches and orphanages in that city. The need for such orphanages there included not only the local children, but particularly also the children of the many refugees from Russia, whose parents had been lost. The orphanage of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, which he established, began with eight children. Before the communists forced the closure of the orphanage, the children numbered 3,500. He constantly prayed and served, and visited the sick. At the time of the communist revolution in 1949, he led all the orphans and 2,000 others under his *omophor* out of China, and he helped them to arrive at different destinations. However, immediately after leaving China, all the refugees stopped for 27 months in the Philippines. There, where many strong typhoons sweep over the islands, the camp was unaffected. Immediately after the departure of the orphans, the camp was completely destroyed by a violent typhoon. His later labours included establishing parishes in Europe and in the USA (he had subsequently been assigned in 1951 to be the Archbishop for Western Europe (ROCOR), centred first in Paris, then in Brussels). He continued in Paris as a gifted father and leader until he was transferred to San Francisco in 1962. There, he continued praying, serving and visiting as before, bringing unity and reconciliation as before, caring for the

poor and the needy as before. This holy man, full of love for Christ, in the very different cultures to which he was sent, always expressed this love in the same practical ways to all those in need. In himself, he expressed the stability of Christ Himself, and Christ's ability to meet all human situations everywhere. Strengthened by the Grace of the Holy Spirit within him, he remained faithful always to his original call from our Saviour. As in Shanghai, so in San Francisco, he enabled the construction of a cathedral, despite many difficulties, obstacles, calumnies and sharp opposition. This included a civil action against him. He had to defend himself in court against a charge of financial impropriety in the construction of the cathedral. This cathedral would appropriately be named for the Icon of the *Theotokos*, the Joy of all who Sorrow. He reposed in peace in 1966, while visiting Seattle. At the time of his funeral, many people of different jurisdictions were being drawn together. It is frequently reported that the help given through his intercession after his repose has been irrespective of jurisdictional distinctions.

Of course, Archbishop Saint John was and is known as a wonder-worker in Christ. This was already the case in his life-time. A woman was once thrown off her horse ; she hit her head on a rock and lost consciousness. In this condition, she was taken to the hospital. She was considered a hopeless case by the doctors, and it was not likely that she would live until morning. Her pulse was almost gone ; her skull was fractured in places so that small pieces of the skull were pressing on the brain. The prediction was that in such a condition she would die on the operating table. Even if her heart would tolerate surgery and the result were successful, she would still remain deaf, dumb, and blind. Her sister begged Vladyka John to go to her, which he did. He prayed alone with her for a time, and then he called the chief doctor and asked him to examine her again. The physician was naturally surprised to discover that her pulse was normal. He agreed to perform the surgery immediately, but only in the presence of Archbishop John. The operation was successful, and the doctors were amazed when, after the operation, the patient regained consciousness and asked to drink. Soon she was released from the hospital, and she lived a normal life for many years afterwards.

Vladyka John visited the prisons. He would celebrate the Divine Liturgy for the convicts on a primitive little table. Perhaps the most difficult task for a pastor is to visit the mentally ill and the possessed — and Vladyka sharply distinguished between the two. Outside Shanghai there was a mental hospital, and it was only Vladyka who had the spiritual strength to visit these terribly sick people. We can recall that this was before more modern and refined treatments. Vladyka gave them Holy Communion, and they listened to him. They always looked forward to his visits, and they met him with joy.

Vladyka John was truly courageous, in ways seen in other holy bishops, including Saint Nicholas of Myra (†343). During the Japanese occupation in China, the Japanese authorities tried in every way possible to bend the Russian "colony" to their will. I know persons who lived there in those days and who were imprisoned, and I have a sense of the atmosphere. Pressure was directed through the heads of the Russian Emigrant Committee. Two lay-presidents of this Committee strove to maintain its independence, and as a result both were killed. Confusion and terror seized the Russian "colony", and at that moment Vladyka John (despite warnings from the Russians who were collaborating with the Japanese) declared himself to be the temporary head of the Russian "colony". During the Japanese occupation it was extremely dangerous to walk on the streets at night, and most people took care to be home by dark. Vladyka John, however, continued to visit the sick and needy at any hour of the night, and he was never touched. I believe that he, with others, was able to be so bold and so courageous because of the

purity of his heart. Unfettered by fear, he would know in his heart what the Lord willed, and he would do it, knowing that the Lord is with him and protecting him. As with many others we read about, he was not worried about saving his own life ; he was concerned about the welfare and needs of others. In so being and doing, he continually found that the Lord always met his needs.

When he was in Shanghai, a voice teacher taught Vladyka the proper method of breathing and pronunciation of words, thus helping him to better his diction. At the end of each lesson Vladyka paid her with one standard bank-note in currency circulating in China. Later on in France, in 1945, before the end of the war, this teacher was gravely wounded and happened to be in a French hospital. On a very stormy night, feeling that she might die, she began asking the nurses to call Vladyka John (who was in France at that time) so that he would give her the Holy Mysteries (Holy Communion). The nurses refused since the hospital was closed and locked during the night due to war-time conditions. She was beside herself, and she kept calling for Vladyka. Suddenly, at about eleven o'clock in the evening, he appeared in the ward. Unable to believe her eyes, she asked Vladyka whether this was a dream, or had he really come to her. Vladyka smiled, prayed and administered the Holy Mysteries to her. Following this she calmed down and slept. The next morning she felt that she was cured. No-one believed the woman when she insisted that Vladyka had visited her that night (because the hospital was tightly secured). However, her ward-neighbour substantiated the fact that she also had seen Vladyka. The greatest surprise was that under the woman's pillow was found one standard bank-note of the same value as before. Vladyka had himself left material evidence of his visit.

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As the people I know have said and say, and as I have read, Vladyka John followed the example of Christ. He lived for Christ. His life knew plenty of suffering, but he lived in Christ's love. He was attacked ; he forgave. He stood out also in his desire to maintain whatever unity might be possible amongst the Orthodox. Archbishop Saint John was a man of strong character, and he was an ascetic who lived fully in the way of the ascetics, wherever he was. He slept little, and only in the sitting position. In fact, he was acutely aware of everything around him, even when he appeared to be sleeping. There are stories about his seeming to be asleep while sitting with others. There would be a conversation, and he would open his eyes at appropriate moments, make a constructive comment, and then close his eyes again. This also means that he lived always in awareness of the presence of our Saviour. As in the Divine Liturgy, this means that the whole of time is, in Christ, made present now. He was well-known for always giving his shoes to the needy, and for walking without shoes himself. By his example and by his words, he quite pointedly kept calling the sheep entrusted to him back to the right path whenever they would stray.

Vladyka John remembered to live completely in the present moment, completely attentive to the person before him, and the needs of that person. It would be the same were he in a meeting or in a conversation with a group. This can be possible only when a person is living in deep and complete forgiveness, and therefore not being distracted by painful past events and memories.

It is told by many persons that when Vladyka John served, there could sometimes be some prolonging of the service because Vladyka had been overcome with the presence of the

Lord's love in one or another manner. Not a few persons speak of their experience of his "clairvoyance". The Holy Spirit gave him the gift, when needed, to be able to know without being told what problems, sin or suffering people faced, and also to know what could be done to resolve or heal the matter. He had this gift in common with many other holy persons we may encounter in The Synaxarion. He had this gift in common also with persons who are holy, but not yet known to The Synaxarion, by whom we are also supported in similar ways. Such gifts as these are not what we understand as "personal abilities" which a person can attain by doing certain things. This is not like what is done in an oriental philosophy, in which a person learns discipline, focus, technique, regulation of the body in minute detail, and the like, through which amazing feats are known to become possible to accomplish. Rather, such gifts are given by the Holy Spirit to such persons on occasions of need. The Lord gives the occasion and the action. These are not things that a person can simply decide to do. As always, all Christians are to wait for the Lord's direction, and to do what He asks of us. Such things occur out of the Lord's love and in obedience to this love. Holy persons show us that it can be done. Those holy ones named officially in The Synaxarion are included there for some reason known to God. There are very large numbers of others who are not known by us, by anyone. There are also those who are known only by a few. Regardless, known or unknown to us, these holy persons nevertheless sustain us and help us by their prayers, since they are known by God.

By the nature of what has been written so far, it might seem as though my personal connexion with Saint John were distant. However, as noted at the beginning of this reflection on Saint John, I know and have known many persons who were deeply influenced by him (primarily in Shanghai), and who immigrated to Vancouver and to Ottawa. More than once they shared with me their memories and experiences of him. A Canadian parishioner told me that a woman healed by Saint John's prayers (even when he was physically far away) was one of her relatives. During a visit to Holland one time, I heard some persons in The Hague speak of him with great respect. These persons knew him as a very strong man, a strong leader, sometimes even scarily so. Nevertheless, they recognised the work of the Lord in all that he was doing, and in his consequent boldness. They recognised his great breadth of spirit and his understanding in Christ. It is his bravery in the face of all sorts of adversity that has touched me. Even more, it is his open-heartedness which recognises and tries to maintain the visible unity of the Church which has touched me, and which I have been trying to follow. I have hoped and prayed that I might, in my life and service, be able even to begin to imitate the stability, firmness, conviction, generosity, clarity of understanding and confidence in Christ which characterise the life and service of Saint John. These characteristics reveal how his love for Christ is expressed in a tender love to all around him, a love like that of Christ. Even more, I was given the blessing to be able to have a tiny portion of one of Vladyka John's vestments, so that he is truly close to me.

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— *Archbishop Sylvester of Montréal and Canada*

Come, O children, hear me : I shall teach you the fear of the Lord (Psalm 33:12).

About Archbishop Sylvester (Haruns) of Montréal and Canada one might easily write too little. That would be a great mistake. In a manner of speaking, he is an example of the saying : "Still waters run deep". I first met him in 1979 in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, where and when he ordained me to the Holy Diaconate. His kind and peaceful disposition and also his paternal hospitality were very evident to me from this first meeting. Much of the following information about Vladyka Sylvester was made available by Alexei Pavlovich Liberovsky, who grew up in his Montréal cathedral parish, and who was his spiritual child. The main source is his contribution to the article in the autumn 2000 issue of the Canadian Orthodox Messenger. Some of the information comes from the spring 1991 article in the same periodical, by the late Pavel Ilyich Miklachevsky, who was his contemporary, and had also been one of Vladyka's parishioners.

Ivan Antonovich Haruns was born of Latvian-Russian parents in 1914 in Dvinsk, Latvia. From 1932, in the *gymnasium* (university-entrance high-school) he became involved in the Russian Student Christian Movement through the influence of the Archpriest Serge Tchetverikoff. He later became president of this movement, and he remained concerned with and about it for the rest of his life. From those days, he devoted his life entirely to serving the Church. At this time, he also met, and was a devoted disciple of Archbishop John (Pommer) of Riga, until the archbishop became a martyr in 1934. During these days, the future archbishop became acutely aware of the persecutions in the USSR, because Dvinsk was very near the border. Then, despite the early opposition of his parents (which later changed), he went away to study at the *Institut de Théologie Orthodoxe Saint-Serge* in Paris, France. He would never again see his homeland or the members of his family, most of whom were to perish in the turmoil of the Soviet takeover of Latvia. In 1938, at the *Institut Saint-Serge*, Ivan Antonovich was tonsured to be a monk and given the name Sylvester. He was then ordained to the Holy Diaconate and to the Holy Priesthood by Metropolitan Evlogy of Paris. At that time, many other students followed the same path.

Father Sylvester was assigned to serve in eastern France, in the region of Belfort, Montbeliard, Besançon, Strasbourg and Nancy, where there were many refugees from the time of the Bolshevik Revolution. As World War II began, he ministered also to Russian Orthodox service-men in the French armed forces there (including those who served in the north at the Maginot Line). Then, from 1941, the Germans began bringing thousands of Russian-speakers from the Soviet Union to northwestern France as prisoners to serve in labour camps. He felt a call to minister to them ; and having obtained official permission from the authorities and the blessing of his bishop, he left his parish to devote himself completely to this service, which took him to many locations often under difficult conditions. In 1944, he was falsely accused by a "brother" in the Faith. He thus was imprisoned by the Gestapo in solitary confinement for ten days. This was followed by six weeks in a more general population of the prison for interrogation. However, after an investigation, his name was cleared and he was released. Significant here is the fact that the Gestapo, on his release, gave him the name of his denouncer. After the war, the collaborators with the Nazis were in difficulties because they were being held

accountable by the French government. The one who had denounced him (not knowing that Father Sylvester knew about this) came to him to ask for help, so that he could be given a recommendation to assist him in his legal straits. Father Sylvester said that he could not help him. However, as the man was leaving the room, Father Sylvester told him he would leave his calling card on the table. The man took the card, and it provided him with the help he needed.

Experiences in solitary confinement (with or without torture) have been described by others in such a situation as a gift from God, and they can help us sense what Father Sylvester had passed through. First, there is the silence for prayer. There is no need to talk. Second, as those who have spent a much longer time in prison have said, it serves as the best formation for a monk to have such solitude. He likewise would have been able to glorify the Lord in this solitude, and with Saint John Chrysostom to give glory to God for all things. Such a six-week period can feel like a life-time, and the Lord helps His faithful children grow greatly in such times. Although Vladyka Sylvester did not himself tell me this, I can easily suppose that because of the sort of person he was, he would have indeed developed spiritually during this period of confinement (which surely felt interminable). From my experience of him (and from the words of others), I see in him similarities with confessors for Christ whom I have met or heard of, who survived much longer periods in confinement and hard labour in Romania, and who did speak a little about their experience in similar terms. I have been told also that some persons in such terrible circumstances have managed to keep their focus by making the sign of the Cross within their mouths, using the tongue. Near the end of the war, Vladyka was serving in the hospitals of Paris.

In an undated article, edited by L Zander, there are printed the following extracts from the Russian Messenger of Church Life, which were written by the then Hieromonk Sylvester about his experiences with refugees :

> Beginning in 1941 I was able to have personal contact with Russian war prisoners from the Soviet Union. During that time I encountered thousands of war prisoners, workers and children. There were many conversations, discussions, debates. [...] I cannot express the feeling of deep spiritual joy that I felt both during and after these talks. After a day of very hard labour, physically exhausted, mocked by the guards, they would surround me in their barracks between their bunk-beds, hungry and barely clad. [...] I often think of my first visit to Jersey, the island of suffering and death of Russian youth and children. After the first day on the island my only desire was to flee, as soon as possible. There was the feeling that under these conditions, I could do nothing to alleviate their suffering, and that they did not seem to need a priest. Exhausting work, lack of food, dirt and non-stop swearing made me think of Sakhalin Island by Doroshevich. The day after my arrival, in the evening I served the very first moleben and said some words of consolation to my brothers in Christ. Many were sobbing. After the moleben they came to kiss the cross. Many did not know how to cross themselves, but all were trying. They thanked me with tears, and all were taking the little crosses that I had brought with me for them. After having thus prayed together, they truly became my brothers, dear and close to me. And when it was time to leave I did not want to part with them. [...] There is a heavy bombardment. I am in the trenches with a group of Russians. It is an indescribable horror: we are covered with earth that seems to fall straight from the sky. Next to me is an 18-year old lad. During our talks, he was often my opponent, blurting out with great conviction all his antireligious baggage that he had received in school. Now I hear him whispering something. In the noise of exploding bombs I cannot hear him. Afterwards we are going back joyfully to the camp. The lad is walking beside me. 'What were you

> whispering during the attack?' He blushes, looks at me with embarrassment and lowers his head. We continue in silence. Suddenly he stops, looks at me and blurts out: 'And what were you doing? What were you thinking about?' 'I was praying.' 'Me too.' I expressed my astonishment. 'Yes, I was praying, Father. Maybe there really is a God.' [...] I will always remember the death of a boy. I came to see him in the hospital when he was already dying. I had the impression that he could not see me. I was standing in front of this Russian child, dying from overwork and starvation, and I wanted so much to ease his last minutes. I wanted so much to give him Holy Communion. In me there was a real battle: Can I? Has he been baptised? Does he believe? For some moments I hesitated. I tried to talk to him, but by his expression I had the feeling that he was not aware anymore. In the end I overcame my hesitations. I prepared the Gifts, took the chalice into my hands, and started to pray. Then I bent over him, and suddenly his whole face lit up with a smile and he whispered 'I know'. I cannot to this day put into words what I felt at that moment, when this child by those words both confessed his sins and expressed his faith. Within a few minutes he was dead' (Canadian Orthodox Messenger, Autumn 2000, pp. 4, 5, 6).

In the context of his service to refugees during the war, there is one outstanding personality to be mentioned. At the time of the invasion of Latvia, there arrived, at first in Germany, then in France (and in due course in Paris itself) the heroic Elena Adamovna Iushkevich. Early in the war, she arrived from Riga, the capital city of Father Sylvester's homeland, Latvia. Elena Adamovna brought with her several dozen children, orphans from the women's monastery in Riga. She had brought the children over a very dangerous route through Poland, in order to save them all from the Soviet occupation. While she was in Paris, Vladyka Sylvester took her and three of the children into his own home, since they had no refuge. Soon, Elena Adamovna opened an *atelier* (studio) which helped the gifted children amongst her orphans and others produce remarkable works of art for sale. In due course, she and several of the orphans came to be Vladyka's parishioners in Montréal. Following her example, they have been active and very visible (even prominent) servants of Christ.

After the war, Father Sylvester was appointed to serve the large parish of Our Lady of Sorrows in Paris, where he became a very active teacher, which allowed him also to develop an extensive education programme for youth. The parish became well-known for its excellent church-school, which was described as the largest and best amongst the Russian parish schools in Paris. In co-operation with Father Sylvester, Father Alexander Schmemann was an extremely popular teacher of young people. When he taught, children would over-fill the room, and listen through windows and in any way they could. At this time, Father Sylvester also headed the Missions Department of the Russian Orthodox Diocese in Western Europe and the Immigrant Aid Society. He served as co-editor, together with Father Alexander, of the *Vestnik* (Diocesan Herald). Later in 1951 when Father Alexander Schmemann emigrated to the USA and there became a teacher, then dean, then protopresbyter, Father Sylvester continued alone as the publication's sole editor for another five years. In 1952, he was ordained to the Holy Episcopate by the Exarch, Metropolitan Vladimir of Paris (Ecumenical Patriarchate) and by Bishop Cassian of Catania, and given the title "Bishop of Messina". He was assigned first to those administrative duties connected with missionary work and publications. It can be said that this productive period mercifully provided a time of stability and peaceful routine for Vladyka, during which much interior healing after the war could occur. In those days (before the post-traumatic stress disorder was identified as such), this wise and pastoral bishop, Metropolitan Vladimir, knew what was necessary to provide for this spiritually sensitive man. He first provided "desk-work" as both a transition and a preparation, in view of his obvious intention to

give him later on the responsibility of the pastoral care of parishes in southern France and Italy, with his official residence being in Nice.

Throughout his life, Archbishop Sylvester continued his involvement in the Russian Student Christian Movement. This was a movement, amongst many others, whose first aim was to support university students in maintaining their Christian life. It began in the very early twentieth century in Saint Petersburg, as a part of the World Student Christian Federation until World War I. Of course, after the communist revolution, the movement could not continue in Saint Petersburg. The RSCM did continue to thrive in Western Europe amongst Russian emigrés, and expanded its work to include younger children. A long-lasting product of this work is a summer camp in France which functions to this day. From the RSCM, directly or indirectly, have grown other movements including the World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth (generally known as *Syndesmos*, a Greek word meaning "bond of union"). This *Syndesmos* (association) was developed in various places by members of the RSCM and of other youth-movements, including Father John Meyendorff. During the post-war years, Vladyka Sylvester was particularly active in work amongst the youth, and he had a devoted following amongst young people. After his consecration to the episcopate, he was affectionately nicknamed "Bishop of all the Youth".

In 1954, Vladyka was transferred to Nice, to look after southern France and Italy. From 1963-1979, he was the Chairman of the RSCM, and he was actively involved in its publication efforts, especially the Diocesan Herald (*Vestnik*), and in the organisation's support of dissidents in the Soviet Union (this was always a dangerous activity). He later maintained a lively correspondence with Alexander Solzhenitsyn after the latter's expulsion from the Soviet Union, and was pleased to host him at the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Montréal for Holy Week and paschal services in 1975. Of course, they had many areas of experience in common, including prison, and this enabled each of them to benefit from the other. Indeed, the solace and strength given by the Lord during the many painful and difficult experiences of each one would be an element readily shared. Such support from the Lord is written about by many others who suffered similarly. For Father Sylvester and for Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the exit from prison will have presented its own challenge. This would be particularly so for Alexander Solzhenitsyn, I suppose. Returning to "regular" society can be very challenging, and it can even affect a person's relationship with the Lord.

Vladyka's being invited to North America is said to have begun early in the 1950s. It is likely that there were verbal invitations at first, followed by a more formal invitation in 1958 ; but it was fulfilled only in a particular process that began in 1962 when he was accepted into the *Metropolia*. By the spring of 1963, his immigration processes were completed, and it was possible for him to cross the ocean to become the Bishop of Montréal and Canada. Here, he was able to direct and hasten the completion of the construction of a new building adjacent to the cathedral. This building would provide space for Vladyka to include the diocesan offices within his own second-floor apartment. It also made a physical connexion between the historic Temple (a former Anglican church that was bought by the cathedral very long ago) and its historic manse, in which the parish-priest's family would live. This building's significance is linked to a British garrison (military headquarters) that was formerly nearby (one can still see the Governor's House at *rue de Lorimier* and *rue Nôtre Dame*). The resulting U-shape left a small enclosed garden that opened onto *rue Champlain*. Under his leadership, the interior of the cathedral was also soon completely refurbished with beautiful new iconography in traditional style, which enabled the

Temple to be more fruitfully prayerful. Many say that in every way it is the best iconostas(is) amongst our Canadian churches. An iconostas is a screen of varying heights which holds icons of various saints, and always principally of the Saviour and of the *Theotokos*. This screen serves as a sheltering demarcation between the Altar area and the nave.

Due to the great distances of his vast diocese, and the almost complete lack of resources, Vladyka was not often able to visit more remote communities. Nevertheless, he frequently visited the major cities, and strove to maintain a solid organisational structure in the far-flung Canadian archdiocese. Early on, however, he did make a more thorough visitation. His subsequent report to New York explained the great need for bilingual (English-Russian, or English-Ukrainian) clergy who would be able to serve over a long period of time in the parishes. This was not a request which seemed able to be fulfilled. The significant person who did arrive in those days and remain, was the Archpriest Svetislav Balevich, who was latterly from Saint Tikhon's Seminary. It was there that they met during Vladyka Sylvester's travelling for meetings. Father Svetislav was a living and loving personal example of what came of Vladyka Sylvester's loving concern for this diocese. Like Vladyka Sylvester, he was a man of prayer, of concern for the sheep in his care, and of good and quick humour. He served his first and only parish (Holy Trinity, Moose Jaw) for thirty-three years until his repose.

In 1966, Vladyka Sylvester was raised to the dignity of archbishop. In the late 1960s there were negotiations between the Church in North America (the *Metropolia*) and the Moscow Patriarchate about the pending autocephaly, which produced considerable controversy (and greater distance between the *Metropolia* and the ROCOR). Archbishop Sylvester considered that this autocephaly was necessary and correct for the North American Church under the conditions existing at that time. He managed to calm the fears of some, and to pacify the inflamed passions of others about this matter. The Lord's Grace moved through him. From 1966-1972, he served additionally as the Administrator of the Diocese of New England. After the granting of autocephaly in 1970, Vladyka served as Chairman of the Department of Church History and Archives, and he also chaired preconciliar commissions that prepared for All-American Councils. When, under special conditions, the OCA accepted several parish communities in Australia under its *omophor* (that is, the protection of the Holy Synod of Bishops), Vladyka was assigned to oversee them from 1972-1981. He made several trips to Australia to give spiritual nourishment to the flock there. He was fondly remembered by parishioners, as I personally heard from them when I visited there one time. In 1974, he was appointed Temporary Administrator of The Orthodox Church in America to assist the ailing Primate, Metropolitan Ireney. In this position of great responsibility, he ably fulfilled many functions of the Primate until 25 October 1977, when Metropolitan Ireney retired and Metropolitan Theodosius was elected to succeed him. This happened at Vladyka Sylvester's Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Montréal, Québec, during an All-American Council. Archbishop Sylvester then was appointed to be the Vice-Chairman of the Holy Synod. He retained this title, as well as his responsibility as the Archbishop of Montréal and Canada, until his retirement in 1981. It was not as a mere formality that Vladyka Sylvester had been given and carried all these responsibilities. He has been described to me as "an excellent administrator", and he was very careful with finances. He was a wise pastor.

Despite these qualities, Vladyka Sylvester was not properly supported materially in his desire to provide for the well-being of the Canadian archdiocese : neither within the archdiocese, nor by the Central Administration. Indeed, in order to facilitate communication in the

impoverished archdiocese, and with the help of the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Montréal, Vladyka purchased copying equipment. With it, from a converted bedroom in his flat, he published a monthly newsletter in and for the parish (in Russian and English), which included news from the Canadian parishes, and which was distributed to these parishes as well. It was perhaps only through the influence of his former colleague, the Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemann, that several priests finally did arrive in Canada and stayed on to serve in Canada, but this was only near his retirement.

However, during all the years of his service in North America, despite his readiness and willingness to serve the whole of the OCA, Vladyka Sylvester was not, in fact, well-appreciated nor properly understood. He was a quiet, shy and reserved man. Some mis-perceived him as being aloof. A sensitive person, he was quite aware of the difficulty that he had with speaking English. He did not like to engage in frivolous conversation, but he always spoke intelligently and with a sharp sense of humour. In the Russian language, he was an articulate public speaker and his homilies were inspiring to many. Vladyka Sylvester was a popular father confessor, and he never abandoned the thousands of his spiritual children both in Europe and North America. He, himself, lived trusting in the words of the Lord in Hebrews 13:5 : "'*I will never leave you nor forsake you*'". Vladyka lived meagrely, and he demanded little for his own material comfort. He was approachable, sought-out and beloved by many for his wise and kind spiritual counsels.

Archbishop Sylvester was always generous in helping those in need, organising within the Canadian archdiocese extensive charitable aid for the needy in many parts of the world. The Saint John of Kronstadt Society (a charity fund which he established in Montréal) continues his work of compassion to this day, supporting orphans in particular, besides widows and others in need. Archbishop Sylvester would surreptitiously send Orthodox literature to communist Russia, and he quietly provided assistance to the families of those imprisoned for their religious beliefs. Because he also supported needy emigrants and needy widows in several countries, we can see how his love was expressing his memory of those whose pain and trouble he had shared and known. He was prayerfully expressing his memory of them, and his love for them enabled him to help others in similar circumstances. Vladyka loved literature, and he had a great knowledge of culture and history. He had a broad and intelligent world-view. He could be described as profoundly traditional, but this statement must be taken only in a positive manner. He was not a reactionary.

Vladyka Sylvester loved the Church's liturgical services, and he celebrated them with great dignity. Over a long period of years, he was a firm proponent of frequent reception of the Holy Mysteries by the laity in much the same way as was Archbishop Paul of Finland. This was clearly (to me) first a result of his devotion to Saint John Sergeiev of Kronstadt (†1908) ; and second, a result of his acquaintance with teachers in Paris. I have seen some evidence that suggests that his devotion to Saint John of Kronstadt (besides his own reading and prayers) resulted from his pastoral activities. Many of the refugees he served in France were of an age to have had personal experiences of Saint John which they would have shared with him. His resulting disposition about frequent reception of the Holy Mysteries would include the obvious need for regular confession, and it also reflects the canonical Tradition :

> If any bishop, presbyter, or deacon, or anyone on the sacerdotal list, when the Offering is made, does not partake of it, let him declare the cause ; and, if it be a reasonable one, let

> him be excused ; but if he does not declare it, let him be excommunicated (Apostolic Canon 8).
>
> All the faithful who come in and hear the Scriptures, but do not stay for the prayers and the Holy Communion, are to be excommunicated, as causing disorder in the Church (Apostolic Canon 9).
>
> All who enter the church of God and hear the holy Scriptures, but [...] turn away by reason of some disorder from the holy partaking of the Eucharist, are to be cast out of the Church until, after they shall have made confession, and having brought forth the fruits of repentance, and made earnest entreaty, they shall have obtained forgiveness (Canon 2 of the Council of Antioch (341)).

There are other contributions to this disposition, of which he would have been aware, including recommendations given by Patriarch Theodosios of Constantinople in the eighteenth century. Further, this attitude was in him rather in advance of the broader appearance of a similar attitude, on similar foundations, in North American Church life. He was also open to the use of liturgical languages other than Slavonic in the services, such as English and French. I understand from my own experience how it is possible to be open to and to support the use of other languages, but how it is difficult to promote them if one cannot oneself speak them fluently.

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Above all, Archbishop Sylvester was a faithful and loving arch-pastor in his firm adherence to the teachings of Christ. He was also a true monastic in his personal piety. If Vladyka Sylvester had not done what he did, and been who he was, there would very likely have been nothing at all to be inherited by his successor. I know very well the difficulties Vladyka faced, because they were exactly the ones I continued to face. But I did not inherit only difficulties. I inherited a diocese that was already in its true and serious recovery because of his love, his labours, his wisdom from the Lord. It is on the foundation of Christ in his life and work, in co-operation with Christ, that everything since then has been built, thanks to his prayers, and glory to God's merciful love. Although Vladyka Sylvester had maintained a familial unity in the diocese, and although he did everything he could to provide for it, he did not have many practical resources available to him. The diocese was held together because of him personally. In his last years as the "ruling bishop" of Canada, between 1977 and 1981, Vladyka blessed the establishment of four English-speaking missions : Montréal, Edmonton, Ottawa and Kingston. He further blessed a monastic hermitage (first in Rawdon, then near Fitch Bay, Québec). When one former Anglican priest came to him to ask to be received, he asked the man why he would leave all the security he had to come to great uncertainty. He wept when this man replied, "When you find the Pearl of Great Price, you sell all you have to acquire it" (see Matthew 13:45-46). The man and his family were received, and many good fruits followed. When Vladyka Sylvester retired in 1981, there was not yet in place a stable administrative structure. If it had not been for the careful, personal, pastoral oversight and direction of Metropolitan Theodosius (from 1981 to 1990, he took care of the diocese after him, and saw to the needed re-organisation in Canada), the Archdiocese of Canada might not have survived as such. Metropolitan Theodosius used what he had received from Vladyka Sylvester, and with his support he cemented things together to increase the foundation and to begin some other construction upon it. Vladyka Theodosius lived by his own inherited proverb : "Measure seven times ; cut once".

On the many occasions when we spoke together (with or without translation), the deep love of Vladyka Sylvester for Christ and the Church was obvious, as was his care for and generosity towards the needy. He really behaved as a father ought. After his retirement from being the diocesan bishop, and while still serving as rector of the Montréal *sobor*, his health steadily weakened. Nevertheless, he continued to serve constantly in Montréal and Rawdon and, when asked, in some other localities. He eventually became incapacitated, and in his weakness he was no longer able to serve, which caused him great anguish. Rather soon after this incapacitation, in the year 2000, he received Holy Unction and also the Holy Mysteries soon before his repose. This was through the hands of the then Hieromonk Irénée (Rochon), who would later become the Vicar-Bishop (assistant bishop) and then the Administrator of the Archdiocese of Canada. Now, many years after his repose, even after the repose of many who knew him closely, there remain alive many whose personal experience of Vladyka Sylvester continues in a love and respect for him which is still talked about.

I was always grateful to be in the presence of this generous man, who showed by his life and actions how to be a father in Christ, and how to live the Gospel. There was peace and wisdom and patience in his words, and joy in his hospitality. Of course, I had great respect for this man as Archbishop, but at the same time I always had love for him as for a loving father. I was far from alone in responding in this manner. It was joy to sit at his table, or to sit beside him as he sat in his rocking-chair whilst we were discussing details of diocesan life. This man, I would say, was able rightfully to sign himself "humble Sylvester".

In his directions about his funeral, he asked to be given the funeral and burial of a monk. Bishops do not usually request this, but I see in his request both an indication of his humility, and a constant awareness of the primacy of his monastic life of repentance. This says more than words can convey, and serving that funeral for him in the presence of his body was a blessing for me and for all the others present. It felt to me that he was somehow near us. Now, his body rests in the Cemetery of Saint-Séraphim in Rawdon, Québec, near some trees. He rests amongst priests and deacons who served with him for many years, and amongst Russian-speaking Veterans of the armed forces of several countries, including those of Canada. It was long ago in this very cemetery, very near this grave, where I, as a freshly-ordained bishop (along with several others who now also lie there in repose), first served together with Vladyka for the memorial of the Russian Veterans. This righteous man suffered not a little, and remained always loving and generous, and a true father. As our Saviour said we should, he had done his duty as a faithful servant, and will surely have been greeted with the words from Matthew 25:23 : "'*Well done, good and faithful servant* [...]'".

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— *Bishop Ioasaph of Edmonton*

> *In darkness has light sprung up for the upright ; he is merciful, compassionate and righteous* (Psalm 111:4).

Bishop Ioasaph (Antoniuk) served as Vicar-Bishop of Edmonton from 1968 to 1978. Living in western Canada, he worked together with and supported Archbishop Sylvester (who lived in Montréal). This man was an extraordinary personal example of long-suffering love, as we can see from the events and the course of his life. He was a model for us of concern and care for others, of hospitality, of piety, of paternal love. I met him in Vancouver in 1970, at the Holy Resurrection *Sobor*. That was not long after his own arrival in Vancouver from Edmonton. At that time, I was a very young Anglican theology student at a college on the UBC campus, not far away. I and some others visited this church from time to time to pray, and we were greatly touched by our encounters with Vladyka Ioasaph and his parishioners. We were touched by the depth of his simple and direct speaking, which showed the depth also of his love for Christ. His English was strongly accented, but we had no trouble understanding him. Being with him felt to some extent like being adopted into his family (his family being "in Christ", that is). He ate very simply, but in open-hearted hospitality he shared with us what there was. Everything about him was an open-hearted and loving embrace. Some of what follows finds its source in the summer 1992 article of the Canadian Orthodox Messenger, by the then Protodeacon Andrey Somow. Some of this information (and much more) can be found in Holy Resurrection *Sobor*'s historical documents, which were catalogued by Father Andrey.

His early life involved great suffering. Stephan Antoniuk was born in Kobrin, Grodno, Byelorus in 1897. He finished his first education in Brest-Litovsk, and then travelled to Kyiv to study in the Pædagogical Institute. He completed his studies during World War I, and he married his wife Elikonida. At the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, he and his wife fled to Siberia. It was there, in Cheliabinsk, that he passed the examinations that permitted him to teach in elementary schools, which he began to do. However, in May 1920, he was drafted into the army of Admiral Kolchak, and he worked as a clerk until the remains of the defeated army retreated to China. Meanwhile, his wife moved on with others to Manchuria (China), along with many other refugees (most likely by railway).

After the military defeat, Stephan first spent some time in a detention camp by the Lena River ; and then (with others) he escaped, and walked the rest of the way to Harbin in Manchuria along the Trans-Siberian Railway. There, he was reunited with his wife, who was a singer in the opera. It was she who then encouraged him to complete his studies towards ordination. As he continued to teach, he also studied, and he served and sang at the Cathedral of Saint Nicholas in Harbin. He became a reader, then he was ordained to the Holy Diaconate, and finally on 7 April 1923 (Annunciation, OS), he was ordained to the Holy Priesthood. For seven years, he served actively and lovingly in Harbin. He was known for his fiery sermons, and for being a good and encouraging example. On 19 August 1930 (Transfiguration OS), he and his family (now including a daughter Olga) arrived in the USA to serve Saint Nicholas' Church in Stratford, Connecticut. This was yet another challenge.

Having moved from the cathedral in Harbin, he now found himself serving in a house that was set up to be a church. The dining-room became the Altar, a storage-room the sacristy. The choir sang from the kitchen. There was a bell that was hung from one of the eaves, and it was rung from an open window. Father Stephan's family had one room on the second floor, and two other rooms were rented out for income by the parish-mission. All were suffering together through the Depression years. This continued until the consecration of the grand and beautiful new church in 1942. Of course, it was Father Stephan who had to travel widely in order to raise the funds for the construction. Such circumstances are not unknown even now in missionary situations in Canada. Although they lacked resources, the flock he tended did recognise that he was a good shepherd, and they were grateful. Then, in 1963, his wife reposed, to his great sorrow. Soon after this, he was tonsured to be a monk. He was given the name Ioasaph (for Saint Ioasaph of Belgorod), and he was elevated to the dignity of archimandrite. He continued to serve this flock for another five years, completing thirty-eight years of service with the sheep entrusted to him. It was then, in 1968, that he was ordained in New York to the Holy Episcopate. It was at that time that he became the Vicar-Bishop of Edmonton, and he assisted Archbishop Sylvester in the Canadian archdiocese. As is the case with some other bishops, Vladyka Ioasaph would serve hierarchically from time to time in Edmonton and elsewhere, while at the same time functioning daily as a parish priest. He first lived in a small Edmonton apartment, from which he served under difficult conditions both in a small urban parish nearby, and also in various rural parishes. Because he was not young, his daughter Olga went there with him in order to help him for a time. He was immediately loved because of his modesty, humility and graciousness. However, in those days, heating and insulation were not what they are now. In parishes (and likewise diocesan administrations), economising on heating expenses has always been a factor. Furnaces would be started or fires lit at the latest possible moment before a service (rather than the previous evening). One winter, his fingers were frost-bitten because of holding the Chalice, and he became quite ill. Poverty and straitened circumstances are real enough for bishops, dioceses and parishes. A Winnipeg family I know used to reminisce sometimes about their experiences in the 1930s. As they weekly (if not oftener) walked 7 km to church, in winter they would also drag a bag of coal on a toboggan, so that there would be heat at that service.

In 1970, Vladyka moved to Vancouver. As Rector of Holy Resurrection Church, he served for over eight years with great spiritual authority. From there, from time to time, he continued to travel to the parishes in the western provinces, as he visited and served them on behalf of Archbishop Sylvester. He tended to use the bus more often than the railway or the airlines, much as did Archbishop Victorin with his Romanian parishes. He was deeply loved and respected, and his Christian manner enabled numbers of persons to find the Orthodox Faith and become part of the Church — even though Vladyka's English was limited, as I have noted. Here, he also lived in sparse conditions, in what was then a small house, along with two monks. When, as he often did, he would after a service invite someone to the house for tea and bread, that would be exactly what was available. Once I paid such a visit and a boiled egg was also possible on that day. Father Andrey Somow wrote :

> He prayed for all with sincerity and purity of heart, was attentive to the needs of individuals, comforted the sick and the suffering, and did all this freely, not demanding any payment for his services. Bishop Ioasaph was not concerned with himself and served at the Altar of God until the end of his days (Canadian Orthodox Messenger, Summer 1992, p. 6).

He avoided mixing money with the sacred. His nurturing paternal love covered all. His loving simplicity covered all. His visible purity covered all. He loved all ; he cared for all around him ; and he did this without distinction or partiality. His life shows the application of the words of this catholic (general) Epistle :

> *And above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins'* [see Proverbs 10:13] (1 Peter 4:8).

Vladyka would always be full of gratitude for everything, and he would bless all who helped him. He was this way naturally, from his heart. During a hospital visit, he would not only bless the particular parishioners he visited, but he would also bless everyone he met. This was the case in grocery stores, and anywhere he went. Full of loving gratitude, he brought the blessing of Christ everywhere, as a bishop is ordained to do. However, as is common, not everyone comprehended this humility and simplicity. Sometimes he was joked about and mocked behind his back. I am sure that he must have known that he was sometimes thus mocked, because I did see this happen, and I know that such things are usually carried by word-of-mouth. However, he never gave any evidence of his knowledge of it, nor of any resentment if he did. I don't know that anyone ever reported seeing him express anger. These characteristics help us to understand that he was living in continuous forgiveness with all those he encountered. In 1978, he became quite ill at the fall session of the Holy Synod, and left by train, in an attempt to reach his daughter in Stratford, Connecticut (she lived in the home of the Repass family). On the way, his illness increased, and he was taken off the train and transported to the hospital. There, he soon and suddenly departed from us (of heart-failure) on 18 October 1978. Outstanding in him is the fact that he would, right until the end, be referred to by the affectionate Russian term *batiushka*. This word is used by faithful people almost only when they speak to or about clergy who are clearly loving fathers, spiritual fathers, life-giving fathers in Christ.

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Although Bishop Ioasaph is a very different person from Archbishop Sylvester, and about him very much less is written — in fact, almost nothing is written about him — he stands out no less in importance as a rôle-model. I know for a fact that there are many other persons besides me who, on meeting Vladyka Ioasaph, said in their heart : "I want to be like him". Little did I understand at twenty-three that to become like him would be possible only through significant suffering. I strangely had not yet understood that life in Christ, commitment to Christ, love for Christ would necessarily mean such a direct and personal participation in His suffering. I was too young, and too distant from the heart. It would be good were Archimandrite Juvenaly (Repass) and some others to write about their personal experiences of him. It would be very good were those who knew her also to write about his daughter Olga (who was very like him). Vladyka Ioasaph serves for us as a truly Christian witness. Of course, this lack of any writing about him is consonant with the humility he demonstrated on a daily basis.

What stands out for me is that Vladyka Ioasaph, unlike most others, did not react, and never paid back negatives in kind. In accordance with the Gospel, he gave good for good, and good for evil. Like our Saviour Jesus Christ washing the feet of His apostles, he cared about and served everyone near him, whether he knew them or not. He prayed "Lord, have mercy" for

those passing by in ambulances, and for those to whom fire-engines were rushing, and he blessed the vehicles with his hands. He prayed from a genuine, Christian, compassionate heart. I was young when I knew him, and I hoped that I could be at least a little bit like him. Because of his humility he was, in a way, not visible to many, despite how much good he did, and how many blessings accompanied him. He was deeply loved and respected, but at the same time he was "just there". This just "being there" in Christ is more important than any big reputation. His "being there" allowed people to perceive Christ in him.

His was the first Orthodox funeral that I attended after my embracing of Orthodoxy (there had been a funeral I attended of a distant cousin many years before, all in Slavonic at that time). Even though this funeral was substantially in Slavonic also, I was deeply moved by this experience. An open coffin was new to me, as was the intimacy with the body of the departed and beloved Vladyka. But it all made such good sense. It was practical. It was a clear application of our Christian life. We could say good-bye to our beloved Vladyka in a very immediate way by venerating (kissing) him. We could carry him to his grave. We could know at the end, through this worship and prayer, that we had given him to the Lord. We also were refreshed with the hope that he would be continuing to pray for us in our mutual love and respect.

In long retrospect, I can now see that during this funeral (and others like it afterwards) I was in my own heart wishing and desiring that it could have been possible to pray in a similar way at the time of the repose of my parents, grand-parents, aunts and uncles. Whilst I prayed for Vladyka (and others), I could also now, finally, pray properly for my older relatives, who were all Christians. They were all long departed by this time. It is not that there had been no prayer for them after their repose, but it was really not the same. Prayer is an eternal act. I really learned how to pray for the departed through this experience. Our hope in Christ was reinforced and increased in me through this. The prayers do indeed inform the heart. When we pray the prayers of the Church (morning, evening, for the living, for the departed — all the prayers we have), by the Grace of the Holy Spirit which flows through them all, the prayers teach the unformed or malformed heart how truly to pray in harmony with the Church and in harmony with Christ. "Memory Eternal" we sang then, and we sing it now as well. We remember because we love. The Lord remembers us because He loves us. Thus, Bishop Ioasaph still keeps me company. Indeed, his life and service help me to recall the exhortation :

> *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: 'My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives'* [Proverbs 3:11-12] (Hebrews 12:1-6).

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— *Archbishop Paul* (*Arkkipiispa Paavali) of Kuopio and Finland*

> *The Lord is my Strength and my Hymn, and He has become Salvation for me* (Psalm 117:14).

My personal experiences of Archbishop Paavali (Olmari) began whilst I was yet at Saint Vladimir's Seminary, but they continued frequently over the greater part of a year in Finland. Always they were marked by the palpable feeling of the Divine Presence. Archbishop Paul was one of the last of the Old Valaam monks to survive, although he had not actually lived very many years in the monastic community itself, because of World War II. He reposed in 1988.

Born in 1914 in Saint Petersburg, Russia, the future archbishop had grown up in a believing family, and he was educated in the seminary in Sortavala, Karelia. This is on the north-shore of Lake Ladoga. From a young age, he was directing singers, and this continued after he was tonsured to be a monk in Old Valaam Monastery, located on islands in Lake Ladoga. Leading singing continued throughout his life, until the end. From 1940, he was compelled to serve in the military chaplaincy in various capacities during the war with the Soviet Union and World War II. After the war, he suffered from a crisis that lasted for two years before he returned to active pastoral service.

In this context, it is helpful to understand that in the case of regular soldiers, for those who had had to kill others, who had been required to shed blood, there had always been monasteries to which they could turn and in which they might recover afterwards. Besides the omnipresent monasteries, there were some monasteries to which soldiers could turn in particular. Of course, there may have remained some such monasteries in Greece ; but in Russia, they existed only before the communist revolution. The shedding of blood (either deliberately or accidentally) has always been a matter of serious concern for Orthodox Christians. Such soldiers would be asked to spend a period of repentance in sorrow for the willing or unwilling loss of these lives, and they would often voluntarily and readily do so. This period could be for five years or even more, depending on the person. It was part of their own healing, because such events cause the hearts of the soldiers deep traumas. In these monasteries they could repent and be healed. Vladyka Paul would not have killed anyone, but he would indeed have seen much bloodshed, and he would have had to help many a soldier cope with the trauma of having to do such things. If you are truly compassionate, you tend to carry your brother always. People I know, who knew him closely, suggested that the crisis may have been a depression of some sort, although it could as well have been an attack of accidie. Accidie is a spiritual condition. The word comes from the Greek word ἀκηδία, *akēdia*, whose meaning has grown amongst monks to include negligence, not taking care, or indifference ; but nuances also can involve sloth, spiritual torpor, sadness, restlessness, laziness, apathy, inertia, despondency, even including some of all these. Either or both would not be surprising, considering the painful experiences of the preceding years, and considering the real sensitivity that I myself saw in him in later years. Because of that sensitivity (especially during those two years after the war), he would have continued to carry in his heart the men he had cared for, and for whom he had been praying.

His Christ-like disposition and vulnerability were visible even many years later. Immediately upon his assuming the chaplaincy responsibility, he had been given responsibilities

regarding the care of the multitude of refugees from Karelian Russia who now lived in Finland. Later as bishop he was responsible for re-organising the life of the Finnish Church in a traditional manner that was not so affected by local (and particularly Lutheran) customs. It is because of his God-blessed labours, his personal example and his teaching, that the Finnish Orthodox Church came to be well-respected in Lutheran Finland, and that it became maturely self-aware and self-confident in Christ. It is because of his labours that both the New Valamo Men's Monastery and the Lintula Women's Monastery (about 18 km distant) were able to survive and to grow in the new environment (the male and female monks were also amongst the refugees). As others have said about him, he never forgot his monastic roots in Valaam Monastery. In the foreword to Archbishop Paul's book The Faith We Hold, the Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemann explains that at the time of his installation as archbishop in 1960 (he had been ordained to the Holy Episcopate in 1955 as Vicar-Bishop of Joensuu), the Church of Finland was still in post-war (WW II) recovery. She was in recovery because of the war, and the transfer of so many thousands of Orthodox people (70% of the Orthodox population) from what had become Soviet Eastern Karelia to Finnish North Karelia. The Church was in recovery also because there was an ecclesiastical legacy of confusion continuing from the time after World War I. With the Bolshevik Revolution, Finland declared itself politically independent from Russia, and the Orthodox in Finland likewise considered themselves free from the Church which had quickly been taken into the grip of the Soviets. Then, because communication lines were sporadically open, the Russian Church recognised the Finnish Church as legitimately autonomous in 1921. There was, however, considerable political turmoil at that time, and communication from within to without the Soviet Union territories (and *vice-versa*) was often almost completely stopped. The Finnish Orthodox therefore turned to Constantinople for stable, spiritual protection. Then the gift of autonomy was given to the Finnish Church by Constantinople in 1923. Confusion nevertheless continued. In 1924, the Russian Church revoked its previous recognition, and the present autonomy was not accepted or recognised by the Russian Church until 1957. Therefore, a reconstruction was necessary on all levels : national, spiritual, canonical ; and the new archbishop embraced the task. Father Schmemann emphasises that, after twenty years, the Church is now equally Finnish and Orthodox, and there has been a profound liturgical and spiritual revival and renewal. He further explains that :

> the architect, as well as the inspiring bearer of this Finnish Orthodox identity, of this creative and living synthesis integrating the various 'heritages' preserved by the Finnish Church, is unmistakably Archbishop Paul. [...] This [...] is due not only to Archbishop Paul's administrative abilities, but above all to his spiritual vision combined, in what seems today a unique manner, with his pastoral charism. Not a theologian, not a canonist, not a liturgist in the narrow, 'academic' sense of these terms, he is nevertheless all of that on a much deeper, much more authentic level: on the level of a fully-accepted — as obedience, as total responsibility — *episcopal ministry*. For it is not some particular interest in any of these 'disciplines' but rather his total identification with the Church, with what is *good* for her and for the human souls entrusted to him, that makes him into a theologian, a canonist, a liturgist, and that marks all his words with that courage, simplicity, directness and — I would add — 'self-evidence' [...] (The Faith We Hold, pp. 8-9).

Archbishop Paavali's work of renewal included some liturgical practices, the manner of singing, the manner of teaching, and details of normal daily life. He also practiced and taught the use of the "Jesus Prayer", which began to be practiced by many others, besides the monks. By his personal actions, he perpetuated the Karelian Orthodox way of life in which he had been

nurtured. He would always, for instance, be careful on entering a home to greet the icons before greeting the hosts. When he was conducting the singers (as he often did even late in life), he used a very minimum of movements. The singers paid close attention to these minimal movements, and the result was beauty. It was my joy a few times to have been able to sing under his hands. He directed from the heart. When he was serving, the atmosphere was unforgettably peaceful, which can only be expressed as a sense of the weight of the Presence of God. The Latin word *gravitas* comes to mind. This word can mean "weightiness", "seriousness", "dignity" and the like (see 2 Corinthians 4:17). This cannot but express to me that his life in Christ had brought to his heart deep healing, deep repentance, deep joy, and deep forgiveness. This forgiveness would particularly be focussed on those soldiers he had served during the war, and those also on the invading side. When he served the Divine Liturgy, he made a point of reading many of the prayers aloud, and there was deep silence and focus amongst the faithful and singers when he presided. Arkkipiispa Paavali also encouraged the renewal of traditional Karelian folk-singing, which included special spiritual songs sung at the grave-side.

In his personal disposition, the beloved Archbishop Paul was paternally very "approachable". He was always the archbishop, the man respected in Parliament, but he also always addressed everyone with respect as a human being and as a Christ-bearer. In other words, he knew well that we who are baptised into Christ have put on Christ (see Galatians 3:27), that we are growing into His likeness. As Saint John Chrysostom wrote, thus the archbishop did : he expected to encounter the presence of Christ in those he met, since we each are to be incarnating Christ in ourselves as well as we are able. He served in the capacity of Archbishop of Finland for twenty-seven years (1960-1987), and he left a legacy not well-enough known outside Finland. Much more must be written in English by someone, about this great archbishop.

Archbishop Paavali produced service-books in Finnish, with music. He renewed formal theological education, and he renewed the formation of cantors. He renewed awareness of and interest in the Valaam Monastery chant. He supported the survival of the New Valamo Monastery through difficult times, and he nurtured its revival. He helped to provide for the very important historic library of the monastery. This unique library contains, amongst other volumes, at least one copy of all the books published in the Russian Empire before the 1917 revolution there. In 1940, the library had been transported along with the monks from the Lake Ladoga site to the new site in Heinävesi County. I understand that they all went on trucks over the ice. In time, with the help of the Finnish State, this library was protected and conserved, and finally housed in a special building in New Valamo. Besides this, Archbishop Paavali helped in the establishment of the Icon Conservatory at this monastery. This was a significant supplement, because many unique and historic icons and paintings had been transported from the then-sovietised territories with these monks and with other Orthodox believers. This conservatory now also restores religious and other art in Finland and from other parts of Europe. Moreover, he enabled Finns to do Orthodox missionary work in east Africa. One of the best-known of such missionaries has been the competent and gifted Abbess Marina (Iltola), recently-reposed, of the Lintula Holy Trinity Women's Monastery in Finland.

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So much was done by Archbishop Paul in increasing the stability of the Finnish Orthodox Church, its interior life, and its exterior relationships, that it cannot all be written here. As a man who suffered pain and other difficulties in the manner of us all, he managed in the course of his life, in co-operation with the Grace of the Holy Spirit, to enable amazing things to happen.

For instance, it was during his twenty-eight years of episcopal service that the Finnish Church truly developed into the Autonomous Orthodox Church of Finland as it is known and experienced at this time. In his days, it came to be widely and officially recognised that the Finnish Orthodox Church had its own true and visible existence in its daily life. An autonomous Church is one which is recognised by the various patriarchs and autocephalous leaders as being able to function almost completely on its own. However, an autonomous Church's head bishop's election must be accepted and confirmed by the head of its autocephalous mother Church. By this time, Finnish Church life was far more than simply a basic structure and paper-work, more than a group of people trying to hold on to the bare basics of Church life. In Archbishop Paul's early days, the Orthodox people, a bishop and some priests held themselves together in the midst of a sea of opposition, and sometimes persecution. They could not manage more than survival on every level. By the end of his service, there were now properly established parishes and dioceses and many clergy. There were now enough bishops for the Finnish Church, as an autonomous Church, to be truly self-sustaining and self-perpetuating. Archbishop Paul saw to it that lay-persons had a more active role in the church services. He made the services more open (participatory) and intelligible. Following Constantinopolitan practice, the Royal Doors were kept open more often. He stressed the importance of partaking of the Holy Mysteries as often as possible, and with this he refreshed the memory of the flock he tended about the accompanying Wednesday and Friday abstinences as part of the preparation. Archbishop Leo of Finland, his successor, spoke about him in a homily on 2 December 2012 :

> [...] we celebrate the memory of one such servant sent by the Lord, Archbishop Paul of Finland, who through his writings and example helped inspire generations of Orthodox Christians to come to the banquet of the Lord, to receive again Holy Communion, not as an event, but with regularity. [...] If the Eucharist was participation in the Kingdom of God, then it was through the Divine Liturgy that Archbishop Paul taught we could enter that Kingdom. Like Saint John Chrysostom, and more recently the great Russian theologians, Archbishop Paul returned again and again to the importance of the Divine Liturgy, to help us understand it not as a performance to be watched, but a living, vital, inspiring experience that leads, through the Eucharist, to that day without evening, the Kingdom of God. [...] Most importantly, Archbishop Paul lived that which he preached. Finally his own life was centered on the Eucharist, and his joy was the Divine Liturgy, for it was there he witnessed until the end of his life, the reality of the Kingdom (see in the internet resources, p. 372 following the first bibliography).

Besides all these signs of the action of the Grace of the Holy Spirit in Archbishop Paul, it seems to be useful that this following personal example be added. He was ready to accept the unexpected from the Lord on the spur of the moment, and by his example he taught me to try to do the same. Archbishop Paavali was making an official visit and was serving at Saint Vladimir's Seminary when I was yet a seminarian there. As was my obedience, after the Divine Liturgy I was pouring coffee after breakfast for the guests in Father Alexander Schmemann's office. At this very time, the archbishop was requesting a priest to serve in New Valamo Monastery for that very summer. Father Schmemann turned to me and asked me : "What about you ? Can you get out of whatever else you might have planned ?" Ten days later, I was

travelling with Archbishop Paul to Finland, to begin that new obedience. On the very first morning there, I began Finnish lessons at breakfast at his table. Then, and afterwards, he treated me much as would a father. I saw later how this would be so for local Finnish seminarians, and for others as well. When he had asked the question of Father Schmemann in New York, the archbishop would have had no idea that the answer would come in the way it did, nor how instantly. He had to work very quickly to organise the consequences of this immediate answer, rather than taking a month or so through usual channels. It was a shock, but a blessed one, and I remained for much more than the summer. It was to end after nearly a year.

In the course of this year, I had become the main daily serving-priest in New Valamo Monastery, which freed up for other necessary work the monks who had administrative and other responsibilities. In this daily serving of the Divine Liturgy and other services, I had also the blessing to stand almost daily next to the holy Archimandrite Simforian, the last of the Old Valaam monks in the monastery, and then to participate in his funeral in January. Indeed, returning in obedience to North America from that time in Finland was one of the more painful events of my life. It was the pain of separation from people who had become family in my heart. They opened their hearts ; we opened our hearts. So this departure felt somewhat like dying. Nevertheless, I have had frequent contacts with the many people in Finland whom I love (and I do love that Church). These contacts have brought healing balm, and they have reminded me to keep mindful of the Resurrection.

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— *Patriarch Aleksy II of Moscow and all Rus'*

> *For You are my Endurance, O Lord. O Lord, You are my Hope from my youth* (Psalm 70:5).

Regarding Patriarch Aleksy II (Ridiger) of Moscow, I must say that there is not likely another person in my life about whom my opinion has changed so completely. This has to do with the troubles associated with the "Cold War" era, and my gullibility.

The future patriarch was born in 1929 in Tallinn, Estonia, and he graduated from the Russian *Gymnasium* there. He and his family had narrowly escaped deportation to Russia by the NKVD (communist secret police) during the first Soviet occupation in 1940. As a consequence, along with all the other believers, he had to find a way to live and to survive as a Christian in this new and oppressive environment. After the final Soviet take-over of Estonia (after the defeat of the Nazis) in 1944, he was able to enter and to graduate from the then Leningrad Theological Academy, where he was ordained to the Holy Priesthood. Afterwards, he served in various parts of Estonia, and he was ordained to the Holy Episcopate in Tallinn in 1961. Very significantly, there were no churches closed in Estonia during the twenty-five years of his service as Bishop (and then Metropolitan) of Tallinn. Later, he served in a productive manner as Metropolitan of Leningrad/Saint Petersburg, where churches began to be opened instead of closed. Then he became Patriarch in 1990, at the time when the Soviet system was collapsing. He was a remarkable man whose presence brought a sense of order, joy, peace, hope, love and paternal care. The Grace of the Holy Spirit active in him enabled many cases of reconciliation and harmonisation. The same Grace enabled him to give many wise words of advice.

He was very clear and firm in his direction, but he was also patient. People say that he would see everything, and not miss any details as his eyes passed over all those serving at a service. He had to have patience in order to develop a proper Christian world-view in the flock he led and protected. These sheep had been terribly deformed by the godless materialism of the Soviets, whose overt programme was the destruction of all faith and faiths. Included in this programme was a pernicious system of spying and informing, which produced a universal atmosphere of distrust. Vladyka Aleksy's liturgical serving was always with a sense of personal connexion with others around him at that service (and not only the clergy). One of our own deacons saw him on one occasion entering Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Moscow for vesting. As soon as his *mantiya* was put on, he sharply turned to one side, and went to talk to a grand-mother there whom he knew, and to enquire after her health. He had a reputation for knowing the people under his care, and for remembering their names. All this is an expression of how his Christian hope kept him focussed and strong always and in all situations, for the sake of the flock entrusted to him, in whom he was able, in Christ, to instil this same hope. In Christ's love, his example helped to overcome the divisive suspicion that grew from the spy-network.

Because he began his life outside the Soviet Union, as a child in Estonia he had many opportunities to meet the remaining fathers of the Valaam Monastery who lived on the Valaam Islands in Lake Ladoga (which in those days was still beyond the borders of the Soviet Union), which he visited with his family. I am aware of many other families that did so as well. He later continued this association even as Metropolitan of Tallinn, when he would travel sometimes to

New Valamo in Finland in order to visit the last of the old fathers before they reposed. During my personal experience of him in 1980 in particular, he would visit Archbishop Paul and Archimandrite Simforian. He had a considerable life-experience and understanding that the spiritual foundation of the Old Valaam monastery was in continuity with ancient monastic tradition, and that this continuity was kept alive and revealed in these Valaam fathers. All this helped him considerably in his work of renewing and re-establishing regular and normal Orthodox life in Russia after the collapse of communism. This included the sending of monks to repopulate the Valaam Monastery on Lake Ladoga.

Indeed, Patriarch Aleksy might well be considered a living bridge between pre-revolutionary Russia and modern post-communist Russia. One aspect of this bridging is shown in the rôle he played in Christianising (to some extent) some major figures in Russian post-communist political life. It was he who catechised and baptised Yuriy M Luzhkov, the long-time Mayor of Moscow. It was he who re-catechised Vladimir V Putin (he had been baptised in infancy), and who enabled his return to a normal Orthodox sacramental life, together with his wife.

His was a very difficult path to tread. Despite his failing health, he constantly travelled, and he constantly served liturgically. In every aspect of his life he served Christ in the Church. He was always leading and always feeding the sheep given to his care. He spread joy and hope, and as a result he was always surrounded by those wishing just to be near him, to hear him preach, to hear him teach. So it was that people would go out of their way to be where he would be serving the Divine Liturgy. At meals after services, time and again it was obvious with what paternal love he was leading this flock. He nurtured the new bishops ; he guided them as a father ; he knew the details of their lives and spiritual struggles, and he supported them. I remember well the reception I attended after the ordination of a new, young bishop. Patriarch Aleksy began speaking about the specific details of the very difficult life of this young man — how he was left without parents (his father had been a priest who was taken away with his wife), how he was raised by relatives, how he and his siblings struggled faithfully, nevertheless. He drew attention to the relatives who were also present, and encouraged the young bishop to be a loving shepherd. Who could not be moved by such blatant avuncular (if not paternal) love and care ? As he spoke, his eyes were clearly adding : "That's my boy". He spoke and he behaved as a loving father. Already, paternal bonds of love existed between them, and in his public behaviour, he strengthened these bonds, and he let the young bishop know so.

Vladyka Aleksy greatly encouraged a stronger and more united expression of Orthodox life in North America. This was particularly evident in his public words, and also during his private talks with the bishops during his visits to North America in 1994 and 1996. This unity was and is as much in the interest of the Russian Orthodox Church which brought Orthodoxy to this continent in the 1700s, as it is in the interest of us who inherit this gift and are responsible for sharing it. This man was a loving pastor with a missionary disposition not different from his predecessor seventy years before, Saint Tikhon of Moscow. As a result of his love and his welcoming warmth, it was during his years of service that there was a great increase in visiting from North America to Moscow and vice versa ; and there was also a notable increase in visiting by North American bishops to the Church in other former Soviet countries.

It is worth mentioning that not all his closest co-workers seemed always to comprehend his self-emptying labours. Once, when with a group being shown his home working office by a

nun who worked with him, we were told by her through a translator that she considered that he just liked to work, because he would be in this office every day and often after midnight. At the same time, he regularly awoke very early, and often served the Divine Liturgy in the domestic chapel with the nuns. Even she did not apparently comprehend what I had been told previously, that is, that the audio and video equipment in this home-office was there for the purpose of enabling communication with the many bishops of Russia, and their administrations. These bishops are spread over nine time-zones (during his days, the number was eleven), and I suspect that this fact alone contributed to his "burning the midnight oil". This sort of frequent and direct communication became possible from the beginning of his patriarchal service because of the new technology. It expedited, therefore, the calling of and the preparation for the first *sobor* since 1918 of all the Russian Church's bishops, along with the clergy and lay representatives, and it also expedited and enabled the work that would follow from it. This *sobor* of 2000, supported by new technology, enabled a deeper unity in this far-flung patriarchate. At his unexpected, sudden repose in 2008, after having served as Patriarch of Moscow for eighteen years, the pain of loss and the sorrow were felt deeply in many, many places.

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The paternal character of Patriarch Aleksy II is what convinced me that he is real and true. When I first encountered him in 1980 in New Valamo in Finland, I was, with some others there (North Americans who lived in Finland), very apprehensive of him exactly because he was the Metropolitan of a city in a country that was part of the Soviet Union. There was no small suspicion and nervousness about anyone in such a position. At New Valamo (the monastery in which I then lived) we had recently been hosts of a general assembly of *Syndesmos* (World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth). Great care had had to be taken about the nature of communication with delegates from the Soviet Union. Soon after that meeting, I had the blessing to visit Saint Petersburg (then called Leningrad), where the people had suffered through decades of oppression, repression, betrayals and persecution. I saw there the same phenomenon of separation, mistrust and fear amongst the believers, who were very wary and cautious.

During the passage of about twenty years since I had seen him the first time, many changes occurred in me, and also in the environment. I had acquired both experience and exposure which enabled me to see much more clearly what is true not only about this man of God, but also about others, and about myself. I grew to appreciate this man greatly. This was deepened in 1994, when I was able to participate in the events of his official visit to North America in the year of the Bicentennial of Orthodoxy in North America. Patriarch Aleksy arrived in Kodiak in September to venerate the relics of Saint Herman of Alaska. He had re-traced the steps (albeit by air) of the first missionaries. He had begun in Russian Karelia, at the source, Valaam Monastery. After his arrival in Kodiak, at a dinner at Saint Herman's Seminary, I saw that he accepted with open affection a pair of running-shoes from the indigenous youth there, given by them to help his health (it had been recommended that he use a tread-mill), and to ensure his safe walking on his pilgrimage. Indeed, he accepted the shoes with love, and a demonstration of warmth. He made sure to add in emphatic terms and with joy on his face that he had felt very much at home when he visited Spruce Island. It reminded him very strongly of the islands of Valaam in Lake Ladoga near Saint Petersburg. I could share this feeling. New Valamo in Finland is not so different. Then, I had the blessing to visit Russia a number of times from 1996 (mostly only the Moscow region), and I could there see how the Church, under his Christian and loving leadership was helping to overcome the poison of suspicion and division

that had been so prevalent earlier. In the new "openness" in Russia, people were becoming free to live openly as Christians. It will still take generations of work to re-Christianise much more of the country, but under his leadership a great, rapid and stable beginning had been made. Later, upon his repose in 2008, although it was a very sad occasion, I was glad that I had been blessed to participate in his funeral in Moscow. It was an event which was truly a mixture of personal grief and Paschal joy.

Love, Christian love, are the words I would use to describe the main characteristics of this man whom I do call truly a man of God, a real and true Christian. Through his pastoral service, the sort of fear that had permeated the whole of life in the Soviet Union quickly began to dissipate ; and the freedom of Christ's love, along with His peace, began to settle in amongst the people. Under his nurturing, the Russian Orthodox Church experienced what might be called a resurrection. Indeed, it can be compared to the instant appearance of mushrooms after rain. However, the tempter is active, trying to block and destroy this resurrection. In this resurrection, there is much that is truly beautiful and alive in Christ. However, just as all mushrooms are not life-giving (but can even be deadly), not every part of the renewal is truly healthy or life-giving. As with mushrooms and other plants, things which may appear beautiful may sometimes be deadly. Discernment and understanding are crucial. Human beings are, after all, fallen creatures. The co-workers and successors of this beloved father, this beloved patriarch, will need similar love and wisdom to continue the healthy nurturing of this growth in Christ. Patriarch Aleksy, and we with him, have received intact and pure from all those Christians who have gone before us this living Tradition of the personal encounter with Christ the Truth. This is, in fact, the living and life-giving food to which the arch-pastor leads the flock, and on which he, himself, is also fed. This is the very source of that wisdom, discernment and understanding from which we all must drink in order to be able to hand on to others this living and life-giving, loving personal relationship with Christ.

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— *Catholicos-Patriarch Ilya II of Tbilisi and Georgia*

> *He shall be like the tree planted beside the streams of waters, which shall give its fruit in its time, and its leaf shall not fall. In all things, whatever he may do, it shall go well* (Psalm 1:3).

Catholicos-Patriarch Ilya II, much like the departed Patriarch Aleksy II, is a remarkable person. He also has been the leader of the sheep under his *omophor* through the difficult transition from a communist society to a type of democratic government. I have found him to be a man similar to Patriarch Aleksy in his notable love of Christ, and the clear witness of his life in Christ.

Born in Vladikavkaz, North-Ossetia in 1933, the future catholicos was eventually able to become a graduate of the Moscow Seminary and Academy. Circumstances of his life and of the Church placed many obstacles in his path. He was tonsured to be a monk, and ordained to the Holy Priesthood at this Academy. He was ordained to the Holy Episcopate in 1963. After having first served as a bishop in two places, and having become the first rector of the Mtskheta Theological Seminary, he was given the responsibility of leading the Patriarchate of Georgia as Catholicos-Patriarch in 1977. It fell to him to renew and revive the Georgian Church, which he accomplished despite having to do so under the Soviets. He managed to ordain very many priests, and he renewed monasteries and monastic life under seriously adverse and life-threatening conditions. These dangerous conditions affected everyone. Patriarch Ilya has not stopped working until this day. He is truly a loving father to his spiritual family, the Georgian people. He is more a father to the Georgians than any political leader. The whole Holy Synod of Bishops of the Georgian Patriarchate has now been ordained by him. There is a real unity brought about by his paternal love, which is easily seen in Georgia. That this characteristic of love is so prominent does not in any way mean that he is not a firm leader.

The Grace of the Holy Spirit is with him. A sort of confirmation of this can be found in the unexplained appearance of a white dove at the time of the consecration of the new Holy Trinity Cathedral in Tbilisi. The white dove (a very rare bird in Georgia) unexpectedly appeared upon a seminarian's shoulder at the entrance of the cathedral, just at the arrival of Patriarch Ilya. A perceptive archbishop immediately took the dove to the Altar, and placed it on the back of the patriarch's large chair, which was just to the south of the Royal Doors, against the iconostas. It remained there peacefully for the whole service. Despite all sorts of photo-flashes and movements of people, the bird remained still. When Patriarch Ilya came to the chair, the bird remained standing. When the patriarch sat, the bird nestled down. When the patriarch stood, the bird stood. There was a somewhat similar occurrence in Crete, when a white dove unexpectedly appeared during a pastoral visitation there in 2012 by Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople (*i.e.* Istanbul). In this case, the dove was seen to stand upon the *kalimavkion* (a stiff, cylindrical hat worn by clergy, called *kamilavka* in Russian) of the greeting-priest, and also upon the Gospel-book as it was presented to the patriarch.

The Grace of the Holy Spirit that is with Patriarch Ilya is shown by the nature of his own iconography. Many have stood near this man and indeed had the sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit. They have thus been encouraged to do what is necessary in Christ, and to be able to

encourage their neighbour through the same experience of love. I certainly sensed the same presence in the similarly-beloved Metropolitan Volodymyr of Kyiv. In the case of both men, one of the ways in which their paternal love is revealed is in the manner in which they speak.

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The fruit of the presence of the Holy Spirit can be seen in the renewal of all aspects of Church life in Georgia, in its traditional manner, and in the visible Christian disposition of people in general. Patriarch Ilya II not only knows the history of the Georgian peoples, but he also embodies it, and he lives it. This history is bound up with nearly two thousand years of lives of persons who have known Christ and have lived in Him, and who have suffered martyrdom in very great numbers. Martyrdom has constantly been the source of the renewed strength of the faithful, as is the case now. Patriarch Ilya's faithfulness to Christ (and his fidelity to the faith of those who came before him) has helped him lead the flock under his *omophor* into an astonishing flowering of the Orthodox Way, producing what might be described as one of the most natural-as-breathing-air Christian societies of our day. Since I encountered this man, I have myself taken much from him in my own attempt to follow Christ. In fact, what I saw in him in terms of a bishop who embodied his flock, reminded me much of what I had seen already in Archbishop Sylvester, my predecessor.

My encounters with Patriarch Ilya reinforced my concern about keeping alive the historical memory of our people in Canada not only regarding the history of our own diocese, but also the history of Orthodoxy in general in this country, and even more, the history of the Christianisation of Canada as a whole. Ours is a huge territory with a very small Orthodox presence, and almost no public awareness of Orthodox Christianity. I am certain that amongst us Canadian Orthodox Christians, everyone can often feel the distance from other Orthodox Christians. I believe that we all are tempted to perceive it as isolation. It is essential that we support one another in being salt and yeast here (see Matthew 5:13 ; 13:33). There are many common links between us and Georgia on all levels (except the size of territory). In our times, since our general society tends to live only in the present and to be forgetful of the past, the burden of responsibility does fall on the heart and shoulders of the bishop to help the sheep to know how the Church in Canada came to be as it is today, through the work of the Holy Spirit in many different persons and events. Patriarch Ilya also reinforced my understanding that a bishop really has to be a loving father to the flock under his *omophor*, and that I must do everything possible to be that in Christ for this Canadian flock. In these areas, there is still far to go, but the primacy of being a father and a shepherd is not forgotten. Because of how I write, and how I speak, I have often been described by others as a "Pollyanna" or "pronoid" (the opposite of paranoid). I don't agree with such an assessment. I hope that, following Archbishop Sylvester and Patriarch Ilya, I do not ignore the presence of evil and darkness in our society. I bear with them the responsibility of showing others where is the Light of Life, and of leading them through all the darkness, suffering, sorrow and evil to this Life-giving Light, Christ Himself.

We all constantly must be reminded of this Light. Paying too much attention to evil and darkness is paying too much attention to the activities of the devil who is sometimes called "the enemy of our race" (that is, the enemy of the human race). The word "devil" has a Greek origin, διάβολος, *diabolos*. This word implies "accuser", "slanderer", "calumniator", "deceiver", "divider". This fascination with evil will bring a person down and ensnare that person in

darkness and death as in a maelstrom, where there is no hope of escape. If we allow this evil to become our focus instead of Christ, we risk giving victory to the enemy of our race over ourselves. He is not called the wolf-of-souls (the devourer-of-souls) for no reason. We need to call for help to others (to friends and saints, but especially to the Lord) in order to escape. If we do not, we could be then compared to a deer that is paralysed at the sight of the headlights of a vehicle, or to the chicken that begins to be fascinated by the cobra rising before it. Looking into those eyes, and upon the out-stretched hood that holds its attention, the fascinated creature is quickly and suddenly bitten, poisoned, killed and devoured. It is necessary to find in Christ, with the help of others, the strength to look away, to turn away, and to turn to Jesus Christ our Saviour. It is He who descended into Hadēs for us and rose victorious over sin and death. He delivers us from death and darkness. That is why the Apostle Paul exhorts us to focus always on what is good and beautiful :

> *Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things* (Philippians 4:8).

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— *Metropolitan Vasili of Warsaw and Poland*

> *The righteous one shall be in eternal memory. He shall not fear hearing evil ; his heart is ready to hope on the Lord* (Psalm 111:6-7).

Metropolitan Vasili (Basil) (Doroszkiewicz) of Warsaw is a person I met near the end of his life. It was during a pastoral visit abroad, which allowed for a few personal conversations with the metropolitan. This man had led the Polish Church for nearly thirty years, and he was an outstanding personage in the life of this Church.

Born in 1914 in the village of Cisy in Bialystok, Poland, Wlodzimierz Doroszkiewicz graduated from the Orthodox Spiritual Seminary in Vilnius, which was at that time a part of Poland. He was ordained to the Holy Diaconate in 1937, and in 1938 to the Holy Priesthood, after which he was assigned to serve a number of parishes. He also began his higher studies at the Warsaw Academy, but this was stopped because of World War II and because of the later arrival of communism. There followed a period of time during which, he said to me, he would gladly have been studying ; but instead, he was for some length of time, "cutting trees in the forests for Mr. J Stalin", as he put it in my hearing. He spoke with wit about this period of confinement in forced hard-labour. He was an effective organiser of the Orthodox faithful who were refugees from the political agitation of "Operation Wisła" in the late 1940s. Operation Vistula/Wisła (named for the Vistula River) was the code-name for the 1947 forced resettlement of post-war Poland's Ukrainian minority (including people from the Boyko and Lemko regions) to northern and western regions, which was carried out by the Polish communist authorities in order to remove the support-base for the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. This took place in the aftermath of the 1943-1944 "ethnic-cleansing" in Galicia and Volyn by the insurgent army on Nazi territory which had produced massacres of Poles, in order to make these provinces more Ukrainian. Later, after the war, he was able to continue his education, and he graduated from the Moscow Theological Academy.

The future bishop was not tonsured to be a monk until 1960, just before his ordination to the Holy Episcopate. He served first as Vicar-Bishop in Warsaw, and then in 1962 as Ruling Bishop of Wroclaw-Szczecin. In 1970, he was chosen to be the Metropolitan of Warsaw and All Poland. As metropolitan, he witnessed the growth of the Church of Poland, adding two dioceses : Przemysl-Nowy Sacz and Lublin-Chelm. He also created the Orthodox Ordinariate (a chaplaincy administration similar to a diocese) of the Polish Army. He nurtured and encouraged education in the Church arts, and he blessed the formation of the School of Writing Icons in Bielsk Podlaski, and the Psalmist's Study in Hajnowka. He also witnessed for the Church of Poland by actively working in the Polish Ecumenical Council and the World Council of Churches. These representations were particularly important in his days, because for the Orthodox in Soviet territories, these encounters and relationships enabled the only contact with other Orthodox Churches throughout the world. They also made possible, for all the Orthodox Churches, contacts with pre-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches (contacts that to this day have no other real avenue of communication). The Oriental Orthodox consist of Copts, Armenians, Ethiopians, Syrians and East Indians. Vladyka Metropolitan Vasili reposed in Warsaw in 1998.

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It is notable to me how Metropolitan Vasili (along with others of his era) was able, in working with the Lord, to bring about a rapid renewal and strengthening of traditional Orthodox Church life in the wake of materialist communism. Much of this renewal was catalysed by his enabling all those who had been privately and secretly faithful to come out into the open. Because Metropolitan Vasili (along with many other bishops of his day) had a personal continuity with pre-communist Church life, he had interior resources and understanding with which he could help those coming into the light of Christ to know immediately what was necessary and right to do as an Orthodox Christian. He helped them by his example to overcome fear, just as in the Scriptures one hears in many angelic greetings, and in the words of our Saviour Himself : "*Do not be afraid*" (Matthew 14:27). This is a very significant quality in his nature, considering that fear was the main characteristic of the Leninist, Stalinist and Khrushchevist camps.

I find it remarkable how a person who had suffered so much for the sake of Christ was able to maintain such a lively sense of humour, a generosity of spirit and an absence of fear. From all that I have read and heard, the main atmosphere of all such camps is obviously a combination of fear and divisiveness. Absence of fear must have become possible for such a person, because it had been previously overcome by the power of Christ's love, by the Grace of the Holy Spirit, in the days of the labour-camps. The akathist-hymn "Glory to God for All Things" was written in such a camp, and this akathist helps many who suffer today. This infusion of Christ's love will have happened deeply within him and within others like him, not lightly spread around, such as jam-on-toast. It is remarkable how Metropolitan Vasili was able to live so clearly in the love of Christ in the midst of the challenging upheavals and persecutions of his day, and that he was able to set a very firm and clear direction in the life of the Church. It is note-worthy how the bold blessings given through and by our beloved Metropolitan Vasili bear such abundant fruit.

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— *Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South*

> *The mouth of the righteous one shall ruminate on wisdom, and his tongue shall speak fair-judgement* (Psalm 36:30).

Since at last the obedience given to me by Archbishop Dmitri (Royster) many years ago begins to be fulfilled, it is obvious to me that I must write about him also. As long as I have known him, he has been for me a clear indication of the way to be a bishop (particularly a missionary bishop). It was a privilege for me not only to have served for a year under his *omophor*, but also to have been able to watch him and work with him as a member of the Holy Synod of Bishops.

The future archbishop was born in 1923 in Teague, Texas. From his youth, he constantly put the service and proclamation of Christ as the first priority in his life and work. This man, the personification of real fatherhood, gave himself up, emptying himself to build up in the apostolic manner the Body of Christ. It must be written (as Vladyka Dmitry would insist) that his sister greatly supported him and his offering to Christ. This was the case even before he began his labours in the Diocese of the South. Once Vladyka Dmitri had taken up the arch-pastoral responsibility, he divided his personal presence between Dallas and Miami, and he drove around this extensive diocese, nurturing his charges with the real food of Christ. He taught them. He wrote for them. He cooked for them and fed them. He gave them the experience of real Christian hospitality that they were themselves capable of continuing and perpetuating. Vladyka Dmitri knew the sheep in his care personally, and they could know him personally. Because he was from the South, he knew how to speak to the people of the South in a manner that they understood. He opened the way to the Way for many a small child to whom he spoke, and for whom he has been a living and loving example. This applied also to grown-up children of God. He talked with every sort of person. Servers at the IHOP (International House of Pancakes) restaurant near the OCA Chancery remember him because of his equal treatment of everyone.

He was, as it were, a magnet drawing many to Christ who was revealing Himself through the love, life, humour and work of this man. Thus it is that the Grace of the Holy Spirit has been flowing, and multiplying the offerings of this servant of Christ, beyond even the hundred-fold. When he was ordained to the Holy Episcopate in 1969, he first served as Bishop of Berkeley (the Diocese of San Francisco and the West). This made him the first Orthodox convert in North America to be ordained to the Holy Episcopate. Then he was assigned in 1970 to be the Bishop of Washington, Vicar-Bishop to Metropolitan Ireney (Bekish) ; and in 1971 he was chosen to be the diocesan Bishop of Hartford and New England. When he returned to the southern states as the missionary ruling bishop in 1978, he began with a few widely-scattered parishes, and the hope that there would be a positive response to what was being offered. By 2012, this mature and well-developed diocesan family had six deaneries with about seventy churches, missions and monasteries. This means that this good shepherd saw to it, by God's Grace, that not hundreds, but thousands of persons have been able to receive the real food that they need. It means also that many, many people have been able to find the truth of Christ in Orthodoxy. There are many stories of such conversions amongst the faithful believers in that diocesan family. In the South, such conversions often require a major change in world-view. It

is clear to me that Archbishop Dmitri had had his own personal experience of such a change. Therefore, he co-operated with the Holy Spirit in order to help others make these changes also. Seeing how the Lord prepared the way for His work through the events of our beloved archbishop's life, we can also see that many clergy (some were my own class-mates) were also moved by the Lord to be willing to move to the South, in order to join him in his work of love. In embracing this work of love, like the archbishop, these same clergy co-operated with the Holy Spirit in their service, and He inspired the hearts of many from their missions and parishes also to go to seminary. The Holy Spirit then inspired them to return to work in this mission-field. Because of Archbishop Dmitri's pastoral guidance, sometimes the students were supported by their parish families with some financial aid to undertake this study. Later there developed a more systematic method for giving financial support to students from the South as they studied in one or another seminary.

One of the gifts that Archbishop Dmitri received from the Lord in order to accomplish all this was the ability to learn and to speak several languages, including Spanish and Japanese. This linguistic ability was applied to his many writings (some of which are in the bibliography). The Priest's Service Book, his work that has passed through several editions, remains a standard resource for many clergy, not only because of the accuracy of the translation, but also because of his evident capability with the English language. He wrote a number of books about the Church and our life as Christians, and he wrote very useful and heartening commentaries on the Scriptures, his favourite subject. He saw to the publishing of The Dawn, the monthly newspaper of the Diocese of the South, which he edited for about forty years. In my memory, there was always a section in Spanish, and more recently one in Russian. There were also words for children. Vladyka Dmitri always took care of the whole diocesan flock with love, a love which, in later years, would be compared to the love of a grandfather. The example of his personal service, supported by the life of the diocese, has provided for many others a life-giving influence. Therefore, the flock he nurtured so well has been able to remain intact and healthy, despite a long interim without a new ruling bishop to succeed him. It may be confidently said of him that in the year 2011, as he reposed in Dallas, he was received into the Heavenly Kingdom.

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When I was a priest, I served briefly under the *omophor* of this loving father. Being "green", I was not always ready to recognise the wisdom of some of the archbishop's directions. Now, with experience, I understand better. He knew and understood the nature of the flock he led ; he knew what they needed and what they would accept. He knew in Christ's love how to feed our Saviour's sheep first with food that they recognised, and also how to lead them to more substantial food. It requires loving patience first to wait for the Lord to act with the sheep according to His time (which is always the right time), and then to be ready to see, to understand, and to co-operate with this action. These are lessons from him that I have very much taken to heart. It has been easier to take these lessons to heart because I had already served with him in his diocese, and also because I later sat with him through many Holy Synod of Bishops meetings after 1987. I saw in his comments there the signs of his careful pastoral approach to many situations. I saw how he was determined to feed the flock under his care to the very best of his ability, always being his loving, caring self. I have deeply appreciated Vladyka Dmitri's love, his patience, his wisdom, his understanding, his paternal care, his selfless service. These were important lessons for me to try to follow as I tried to lead a different sort of flock in what southerners like to call the frozen north (indeed, some Canadians say about

ourselves that we are God's frozen people). Yet, I always sensed an affinity between the Diocese of the South and the Archdiocese of Canada. The people who live in these two areas have some very subtle, similar dispositions and attitudes despite the great difference in climate. I very much appreciated how much was accomplished by Archbishop Dmitri's writing, although I did not dare to try to undertake what he alone could do. I am not he. Large as is the territory of the Diocese of the South, it is rather small compared to that of Canada (the populations are quite different in size, too). Time and resources were lacking, it seemed to me, and so I simply tried to write what I could in our own printed periodical from time to time. Nevertheless, I cannot but try to allow the Lord to do something through me under this obedience to write, and in imitation of the example of Vladyka Dmitri, in order that He may feed His sheep. With God's help, I will continue to depend upon his prayers, and to do the best I can to follow along on the trail blazed by this godly archbishop.

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In addition to the exemplary persons who have been presented so far, I will only briefly mention Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate, one of the bishops who in 1987 (besides Metropolitan Theodosius of New York and Bishop Boris of Chicago) ordained me to the Holy Episcopate. A bishop for more than thirty years, he has shone in my heart as one having a heart for monastic life, and for helping those who are oppressed. Since 1984 he has, in Christ, led the flock entrusted to him with determination and love. For me, his example has been noteworthy because of the special situation of the Romanian Episcopate within The Orthodox Church in America. The OCA environment itself, which made possible the thriving of the Romanian Episcopate, has nevertheless not always enabled a proper appreciation of the contributions of this episcopate to the overall spiritual life of the Church. Very many are completely unaware of the history of the Romanian Episcopate, and of the pain that still lingers because of this history. Being labelled "ethnic" by the territorial (or "mainstream") dioceses can have negative repercussions in more than one direction. In the face of some rather sharp comments in this vein at some All-American Councils, Archbishop Nathaniel has always taken the higher path, followed the Gospel, turned the other cheek, and he has forgiven. I have, with some others, often asked myself the question : If we are to fulfil our responsibility to be the local Church in North America, then how can we mistreat each other, not welcome our own, and still expect to be able to fulfil the command of our Saviour in Matthew 28:18-20 ? The dignified, patient and Christian manner in which Archbishop Nathaniel has been leading the flock entrusted to him has strongly and positively affected me on various levels. It is not a small thing that the Romanian Episcopate has multiplied in size during his years of service ; and it is not a small thing that under his omophor monastic life has slowly and steadily progressed in a healthy way. These communities in particular have positively affected very many of our faithful of all backgrounds in their desire to follow Christ. As I perceive things (having myself made these same mistakes which I point out), we have a particular weakness. We have been given the responsibility to bring our Orthodox faith in Christ to the North American continent. This continent has several dominant languages, and many others besides. This is what our Lord has given to us. It is not for us to limit our evangelical work by focussing only on one or two languages, or on this or that calendar. It is for us to feed the sheep that our Lord has given to us, and not to tell Him that we want only to work with the sheep that we want to work with. In fact, as I see things now, we are very far from living up to our responsibility in Christ even towards those using the English language. It seems to me that we have considerable work to do in conforming our hearts in obedience to Christ. It is only through true humility in Christ that we can hope truly to become the Church in and for this continent.

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These previous bishops presented are but a few of the many about whom I have learned, or have known personally. Many details could be presented about the life-work of very many more living bishops (both in North America and abroad). Some of these are : Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, Patriarchs Justinian and Teoktist of Romania, Metropolitans Kallinikos of Piraeus and Irenaeos of Khania, Archbishop Victorin and Bishop Polycarp of the North American Romanians, Metropolitan Sotirios of Toronto, Metropolitan Volodymyr of Kyiv, Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk, Metropolitan Onouphriy of Chernivtsi, Metropolitan Sergei of Ternopil, Archbishop Avgustin of Lviv, Archbishop Feodor of Kamenets-Podilsk, Archbishop

Mark of Khoust. This list is a very short list, to which could be added many other bishops of Canada, USA, Mexico, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Georgia, Greece and Russia. There are also the four previous Metropolitans of the OCA now reposed or retired, who, despite any illnesses, any mistakes they made, and despite any negative criticisms spoken against them (this happens to all bishops), nevertheless did their best to increase in and amongst the people love for Christ, and devotion to the Church. Amongst them, I especially mention Metropolitan Theodosius, who (with the active support and help of the Diocesan Secretary, Archpriest John Tkachuk) was given the responsibility of being *Locum Tenens* of the Archdiocese of Canada when Archbishop Sylvester retired in 1981, and to whom the archdiocese owes a great debt of gratitude for his personal care and attentive presence over nine years.

I know some bishops who (because of the twentieth-century chaos) did not always fit the proper canonical structure ; yet, even while suffering, they faithfully led and fed their flocks. Some were finally united to the canonical Church. To write the life of some of these bishops could require at least one book for each one. Pope Shenouda III of blessed memory (†2012) of Alexandria and Africa, Patriarch of the Copts for 41 years, did not happen to live in communion with our Orthodox Church. Nevertheless, I have been impressed strongly by some of his particular characteristics. I met him in 1988. His foundation included having been a hermit for six years in the Egyptian desert. Afterwards, he was always seen to be a strong teacher and organiser. Under his arch-pastorate, the Copts were united and strengthened, and they were kept united and well-fed as their emigration to other countries increased. Most notable was his habit over several decades of dedicating Wednesday and Friday evenings in Alexandria and in Cairo to answering questions from the thousands gathered there. Questions scribbled on paper would come to him ; he would pray, and he would answer over several hours. He emphasised knowledge of history, giving of hospitality, and living in humility. He lived this. May all who are arch-pastors constantly keep in mind a fatherly, pastoral concern such as his for the nurturing of the flock.

If more names were named, with elaboration about each of them, it would be, in my view, asking too much of the reader in this context. Nevertheless, in the previous paragraphs the names have been provided of some other bishops (and there are still many more besides). Any interested persons so inclined could do their own research about them. They could also ask me personally. The bishops mentioned in this book are only representatives of Christ-loving, self-emptying bishops who put the service of our Saviour above and before everything in their lives. They represent in Christ all the others who might be mentioned. From their offerings, the Lord increased the fruit greatly. Knowing something about these bishops can give heart to us all because we can see that, as He was and is with them, the Lord is with us now and always. It is important to understand that every bishop I know so far has seemed to me to have been a man called to serve Christ, and who in doing so has had to face considerable suffering and difficulty. This is the way of any Christian, who is to be in the world but not of it. What these representatives do for me, I hope they do for others : they show us that even if it might be very difficult to serve properly as a bishop, nevertheless, in Christ, it can be done. I regret not naming them all personally.

Moreover, I cannot but add that besides the named and described bishops, there is a very large number of Christ-loving, devoted priests and deacons and their wives (not to exclude an even greater number of lay-persons, as well) who have helped to keep me mindful of Christ and focussed on what is important. In addition to these, I must and do give thanks to the Lord for

the non-Orthodox clergy and lay-persons of my pre-Orthodox days who made sure that I would know that I am loved by the Lord, and who did their best to instil love for the Lord in me. There were many whose hearts and minds were close to the Orthodox Way, whether or not they knew it.

By the Lord's mercy, there was one Anglican cleric in particular, Lloyd Gedge, whose personal witness and care for the sheep he tended showed in every way. A former New Zealand police-man (and later a graduate of Cuddesdon College, Oxford), he was an Orthophile whose life-circumstances blocked his full integration into the Church. Nevertheless, he opened the way for others, and many are the people he served who would not likely have managed to remain Christian without his contributions. It is he who introduced his parish young people to the Orthodox Church through recordings, books, and visits to churches. I am not the only person to remember and to speak of him fondly after the passage of forty-five years. He is very old now, but except for being almost blind, he remains much as he was then. Even if all the services we attended were in Slavonic at the time (in Edmonton, at the Cathedral of Saint Barbara, of the Moscow Patriarchate), the encounter with the Church at this cathedral in Edmonton reinforced our prepared foundation in Christ. The free-spirited Mitred Archpriest John Margitich, the sincere and Christ-loving Archimandrite Dimitry (who had long been the archdeacon of Archbishop Panteleimon), and the rather older and joyfully serious Father Germogen were an interesting variety of personalities. They helped me to understand that there can be a relaxed freedom in worship that does not descend into irreverence. Until then, I could not have comprehended how this could be. It has to do with the freedom and confidence that children feel at the feet of their loving and watchful parents and grand-parents. This was all the more focussed at Saint Barbara's Cathedral, as we venerated the incorrupt right foot of the Great Martyr Barbara. Even more was this encounter reinforced by Father Gedge's introducing us to Anastasia Holden and other such Christ-loving persons. Through her, I later met Vancouverites, including Sophia Ewachniuk, Olga Rudkevich, Olga Petrovna Fetissova, Anatoliy Efimovich Portnoff and Deacon (later Archpriest) Andrey Somow and his wife Henrietta, and others, who helped to prepare my way.

By the Lord's mercy, there were for me in my childhood influential teachers and neighbours who were Ukrainian Orthodox. In early adulthood, when I was a student in Vancouver, I came to know the then new converts Dr. Edward and Vivian (†2013) Hartley. Over the course of ten years, they constantly reminded me that the Orthodox Church is my true home. What I was unaware of at the time (because of too much thinking and not enough prayer) is that there was a longing in my heart. A long-standing parishioner who is a convert very recently put it into words : "My heart was longing for a place to give thanks to the Lord. Only in Orthodoxy is it possible". Others have said : "Now I can breathe". Thus the Lord in His merciful love draws us all to Himself ; and He patiently waits for us to accept His invitations, just as He did for me.

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PART B

1

Preamble about what it is to be a bishop

> You are a passageway for those killed for God ; you are initiates together with Paul, the sanctified one, who had received a testimony and proved worthy to be deemed blessed. May I be found in his foot-steps when I attain to God ("Letter to the Ephesians", 12).

These are the words of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, the God-bearer and Martyr, who is a near spiritual descendant of the Apostle Paul. At the very beginning of addressing what it means to be a bishop, we need always to recognise that the source of the episcopate itself is found in the work and service of the Twelve and the Seventy Apostles. The apostles, appointed by our Saviour, are the ones who established bishops in every place they went on their missionary journeys throughout the known world of their days. Thereby they enabled the growth, the nurturing and the stability of Christ's Church everywhere. Amongst all the apostles, glorious in their miracles, service and suffering, the Apostle Paul stands out for us as a paradigm to emulate. Following are some words of Saint John Chrysostom about this apostle. Addressing the subject of priesthood in this work, Saint John refers repeatedly to the high-priesthood (that is, the episcopate) which is in Christ the source of all priestly work and service in the Church. There is a close affinity between the service of the high-priesthood and its near associate, the priesthood, an affinity sufficiently proximate that in his writings Saint John does not seem to distinguish between the two. These words of this golden-mouthed patriarch about the Apostle Paul show that he truly serves as the great example for all who serve as high-priests in Christ's Church :

> He [the Apostle] had a greater power than speech, a power which was able to effect greater results. By his mere presence, and without a word, he terrified the devils. If the men of today were all to join forces, they could not with any quantity of prayers and tears do as much as the handkerchiefs of Paul once did. Paul by his prayers used to raise the dead and work miracles so wonderful that he was regarded as a god by the heathen [barbarians]. And before he departed this life he was thought worthy to be caught up to the third heaven and to listen to words which are not lawful for human kind to hear. [...] For if we pass over his miracles and come to the saint's life and examine his angelic behaviour, we shall see the Christian athlete a conqueror here even more than in his miracles. Need I mention his earnestness, his forbearance, his continual perils, his constant cares, his unceasing anxieties for the churches, his sympathy with the weak, his many tribulations, his unexampled persecutions, his daily deaths ? What place in the world, what continent or sea remained ignorant of the struggles of that just man ? Even the desert knew him and sheltered him often when he was in peril. He endured every form of intrigue. He won every kind of victory. His efforts never ceased, nor ceased being crowned (Six Books on the Priesthood, p. 120).

It seems that there is very little written about what it means to be a bishop ; and most bishops (in North America at least) enter this service without much real preparation, except for a basic exposure to the methodology of serving. Serving services, however, is only a part of the bishop's responsibility, a responsibility which requires the dedication of his whole being.

Because of the nature of our corporate society, most people (including me, long ago) consider the bishop to be mainly an administrator. Indeed, it is one of the great dangers facing a bishop that, by dint of such circumstances, he might indeed come to consider himself not primarily as a shepherd and father, but as "chief executive officer" of a corporation, with the Church being that corporation. There is much about the business-and-money focus of our current societies which prepares people to perceive the Church only as a corporation, with the consequent impersonal reduction of everything and everyone to monetary value. Then, in such a perception, the person in higher authority is only an impersonal executive, or rather, perhaps, an executive surrounded by protective walls and intermediaries. In such a situation, there remains no sense of the shepherd at all.

In this environment, there often appear the quite dangerous attempts by some persons to ensure that the Church will be operated strictly on the basis of business principles. This is dangerous because such a manner of operation can easily exclude the Holy Spirit. Another such consequence of this mentality can be the requirements, the regulations and the legal entanglements of insurance policies and insurance companies. All this gives the illusion of staving off fears of one or another problem with financial compensations. This is a danger I have myself faced. I have been tempted by it, and I have sharply felt the consequences of others' having embraced the temptation. Even a very well-intentioned person could drift into this mentality. Slipping away from the clear awareness that Christ is in charge of His Church, we become more and more bound by fear. Forgetting Christ, and being too conscious of fear and dangers, we protect ourselves with more and more rules and regulations. The result is that we become thoroughly enmeshed in these rules, completely paralysed as a consequence of our fear. We can become fearful about every conceivable catastrophic possibility. We try to protect ourselves by trying to be in control. Supposing that we could be in control is but a mirage. However, driven by fear, we cannot seem to let go of the fear. We are so self-preoccupied that we cannot bear not knowing all the details about everything. Deceived as we are, we cannot bear to release our grip, and allow the Lord to act instead of us. We can become as ridiculous, then, as Chicken Little. Rather than this, with God's help, and with the protection of the armour of Christ, all dangers can be overcome in Christ if we resist this fear and forgetfulness. Always, in the Orthodox manner, balance is to be maintained. Organisation has its place, but the Holy Spirit must always be in the lead, and we must always be ready to follow.

A potential source for distortion in the understanding of a bishop's true responsibility and authority can be found in the words of some of our liturgical prayers for the bishops. The Greek and Slavonic texts of the Great Litany (Litany of Peace) and of other liturgical texts are classically translated in a manner such as this :

> For our great lord and father, the most holy Patriarch n___, for our lord, the right (most) Reverend (Arch)Bishop n___ [...].

The use of the word "lord" in this context can allow us to think that there is worldly authority involved in the bishop's service. This possibility is increased when we address him using terms such as "your grace" (a term used for a duke, or even a monarch). In the Church, the term is not intended to convey such a worldly understanding, but it seems inevitable that this understanding nevertheless be the case. When a bishop sits in parliament, or takes the kingship or presidency of a country, it is inescapable. Correctly, if this term is to be used, then the bishop and the faithful people together must understand that all lordship of any sort belongs only to

Christ. We Orthodox Christians must remember always that we are citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom, not citizens of any temporary worldly kingdom or country. It is crucial that we not forget this.

In reaction to such distortions and distractions as those that link the Church and the world too closely, I hear all too often younger or middle-aged persons insisting that they do not wish to be part of an organised religion. It seems that they do not yet understand that Orthodoxy is not at all a religion as such. It is also absolutely not a political party or bloc. Rather, even if one might say that it is a movement (in the sense of a group wishing to catalyse change), it is in reality the Way. As our Saviour said about Himself : "'*I AM the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*'" (John 14:6).

Because it is our way in the Way, the Church of Christ, Orthodoxy, the Body of Christ, is a living organism, and lives and grows through and despite every adversity. Orthodoxy is certainly not organised, although it is truly hierarchical. I must hasten to state that the appearance of not being organised has much to do with the activity of the Holy Spirit. In other words, there is organisation, but it is not under our own control. There is a hierarchy of responsibility, and each bishop is responsible both to his brother bishops in his synod, and to the archbishop, metropolitan or patriarch who heads this synod. There needs to be an environment of mutual loving obedience amongst the bishops, which flows from them by the power of the Holy Spirit to the whole flock, to the whole Church. These details, in fact, are expressions of the intent of the word "synod". From the Greek word σύνοδος, *synodos* (which in Latin is *concilium*), this word means "assembly". However, the implication is not simply a gathering, but rather a gathering for the purpose of unity. The compound Greek word *syn-odos* implies "together on the same path". This hierarchy does not mean rigid structure or organisation, again because of the Holy Spirit. By the Grace of the Holy Spirit, the hierarchs in assembly try to live in a relationship of mutual respect and love. Human beings are fallible, of course, so sometimes this does not happen. Nevertheless, it truly does happen, and often.

Rigid organisation imprisons the Holy Spirit, it may be said, and it impedes the moving of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Because of fear of breaking rules and regulations, a priest or high-priest may be unable to hear the prompting of the Holy Spirit in his heart. Thus, he may not be ready and willing to allow the authentic Tradition of the Church to be applied to the particular needs of particular persons in particular situations, in the manner that has always been our practice. Such rigidity gives visible expression to our own fears, and our desire to control our environment tightly. It reveals lack of trust in the Lord. Further to this consequence of rigidity, protection and control, I am told that when in a business there develops a distance between executive and workers, and thus the workers no longer feel that they are a living and valued part of a living organism, the business therefore begins to disintegrate. The words of the King and Prophet David are related to this, as follows : "*The head of their encircling, the trouble of their lips, shall cover them up*" (Psalm 139:10). A comment on these words by Saint John Chrysostom is summarised here :

> Saint John Chrysostom interprets 'head' in the sense of summit, or culmination. He further explains that the wicked schemes, the summit of their corrupt outlook, will bring them down, becoming the bane of those employing it, and will submerge them completely. This may be described also as a 'boomerang effect' (Foot-note on this verse, in The Psalter According to the Seventy).

Life in the Church is definitely not the same as life in business. It never has been, nor will it ever be. However, despite all that we have been freely given at great cost, very often we seem to behave in the same way, I mean the worldly way. With this mentality, human beings can try to turn the Church into some sort of institution, or even a form of civil government. How many times have I heard to my pain the faithful describing the Church as a thing, as if she were man-made and quite distinct from Christ. I once addressed this matter during a talk given in Stockholm, Sweden, and I use similar words now. In the twenty-first century we Orthodox Christians have strayed very far from the apostolic example. Almost everywhere now in the Orthodox Churches we see the use of politics and power, similar to the way secular people are behaving. We readily use manipulation and manoeuvering, posturing and positioning, dependence on civil governments and money. Human beings are fallen creatures. The holy Canons are given to us with the intention that we use them as medicinal prescriptions for healing spiritual illnesses in the members of the Body of Christ. Instead, we seem now to use them in the manner of civil law, wielding them as clubs with which to beat each other, to try to force each other into submission. In fact, when we take such an attitude, we might as well admit that we have become idolaters, in a manner of speaking. When the Canons, which are given for life and healing, are instead turned into inflexible decrees by which we inflict punishment, then we have inverted things. We have disconnected ourselves from Him who created the Canons, and we have supplanted Him by these Canons. It did not help the Church at all that Roman Emperors (perhaps well-intentioned) calcified and petrified some of these Canons into official imperial Roman Law.

When we behave in this way, then Orthodox Christians are, in my opinion, not demonstrating to the world the power of Christ, but rather the opposite — the weakness that comes from not imitating the example of the Apostle, and forgetting those words he received: "'*My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness*'" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Coercion and impatient forcing of people or actions distort the Christian Way. I believe that by behaving in a faint-hearted manner, we are actually betraying Christ, not proclaiming Him. Saint John Chrysostom, as we have seen, "boils down" the consequences of such behaviour to what is depicted in his rather dire warnings. The distortions are actually tantamount to co-operating with the Evil One, with the expected deadly results. This "boomerang effect" as described in the previous comments (the summary of Saint John Chrysostom's words on Psalm 139:10) is another way to say : "What goes around comes around". Alternatively, the Finns say : "What you leave behind you, that you will find in front of you". If we co-operate with evil, and coerce others, the consequences of our acts will return to us in due time. It is important, therefore, that we all keep mindful of looking always to Christ, first and foremost, ever looking to Him for the solutions to difficulties. If we are prayerfully careful at all times in Christ to live in daily and complete forgiveness, then in His peace we will not be so easily tempted to resort to the violence that is inherent in coercion and other dangerous short-cuts. I remember well, for instance, once meeting Archbishop Evlogy (Smirnov) of Vladimir and Suzdal in Russia. In showing us pilgrims his small office, and beside it the other not-large room where the diocesan council met, he was quick also to show us the domestic chapel. This was immediately adjacent to the office. He said that every time there would be a difficulty or a controversy in the council meeting, they would all instantly adjourn to this chapel to serve a service of intercession to the Lord, in order to ask for His help. From this prayer would always come a resolution.

Indeed, the high-priest has the great responsibility most particularly to guard his heart and also his whole life, because this "boomerang effect" is in action, regardless. It is often said that the high-priest (or priest) lives in a glass house or a fish-bowl. Everything real or imagined about him and his life (whether high-priest or priest) is watched and interpreted and discussed. In our present technologically-assisted days, this is so, much more than ever before. The following words by Saint John Chrysostom caution us about the perils associated with the priestly service :

> The priest's short-comings simply cannot be concealed. On the contrary, even the most trivial soon get known. The weakest athlete can keep his weakness secret as long as he remains at home and pits himself against nobody ; but when he strips for the contest, he is soon shown up. [...] But those who are set upon the pinnacle of this honour not only catch every eye ; more than that, however trifling their offences, these little things seem great to others, since everyone measures sin, not by the size of the offence, but by the standing of the sinner. The priest must be armed with weapons of steel — intense earnestness and constant sobriety of life — and he must keep watch in every direction, in case anyone should find a naked and unguarded spot and strike him a mortal blow. For everyone stands round him ready to wound him and strike him down, not only his enemies and foes, but many of those who pretend to love him. We must, therefore, choose souls as hardy as God's Grace once proved the bodies of the saints in the Babylonian furnace. The fuel of this fire is not brushwood, pitch and tow, but something far worse than that. It is no material fire to which they are exposed, but the all-devouring flame of malice envelops them, rising up all round, and attacking them and searching their life more thoroughly than the fire did the bodies of those young men [see Daniel 3:50]. When it finds the slightest trace of stubble, it quickly lays hold of it [...] while all the rest of the building, even though brighter than rays of sunshine, is scorched and blackened completely by the smoke. For as long as the priest's life is well regulated in every particular point, their intrigues cannot hurt him. But if he should overlook some small detail, as is likely for a human being on his journey across the devious ocean of this life, all the rest of his good deeds are of no avail to enable him to escape the words of his accusers. [...] Everyone wants to judge the priest, not as one clothed in flesh, not as one possessing a human nature, but as an angel, exempt from the frailty of others. [...] And as covetous sons begrudge their fathers a long life, so when some of these men see the priestly office held by anyone for a prolonged period, they are anxious to depose him, as it would hardly be right to murder him (Six Books on the Priesthood, pp. 85, 86, 88).

Ideally, in order to prepare for the many and subtle temptations that confront a bishop, before taking up the responsibility himself, a candidate would serve first as an "apprentice" in some capacity in close proximity to an active ruling (*i.e.* diocesan) bishop. I use the word "apprentice" instead of "disciple". What is needed is a mixture of watching and learning "how to", and growing spiritually in imitation. This ideal is really found in our traditionally-received way of forming a monk by allowing the learner to see-and-do likewise, and at the same time to grow spiritually through imitation and asking questions. However, this possibility is rare on this continent, mostly because of our small numbers, the great distances from each other, and probably also limited finances (I mean, because of priorities in budgets).

It is true that a period of mentorship has become usual in the method of formation of priests as developed in our seminaries. For the high-priests, however, the opportunity for some sort of mentorship after ordination is still a rarity. Sometimes "trial periods" of several years have been attempted, in which a novice bishop would serve as a vicar to a ruling bishop. Rarely

has this truly achieved its intended purpose. The vicar-in-waiting (as it were), as an apprentice waiting to be the master, more often than not has to find his own way (sometimes he prefers it this way, since novices often consider that they already know what is necessary). It seems to me to be more practical (whenever possible) that the person being considered as a candidate for the episcopate be sent to live for at least six months in a monastery on the Holy Mountain (Mount Athos, Greece, near Thessalonika), or in some other equally stable and spiritually mature place, in order that the heart of this candidate may have the opportunity to be both prepared and cleansed for what lies ahead. Saint Gregory the Theologian († *ca.* 390) writes :

> A man must himself be cleansed, before cleansing others ; himself become wise, that he may make others wise ; become light, and then give light ; draw near to God, and so bring others near ; become holy, then make them holy ; be possessed of hands to lead others by the hand ; be possessed of wisdom to give advice ("In Defence of the Flight to Pontus").

Even so, this preparation does not guarantee that episcopal service will therefore automatically follow. This preparation could and would only be in the context of attempting to discern which persons may be being called by the Lord to this service. It is the Lord, the Knower of Hearts, who calls, and who inspires the hearts of the faithful at the times when discernment and election are necessary. Nevertheless, it can be possible in the daily life of the Church to discern persons who have the heart for this service, by the nature of their behaviour. I use this word "heart" because this service properly requires such a heart of love and imitation of Christ before all other qualifications. A Ph.D. may be very useful, for instance, but if the person with the doctorate is without the primary and absolute requirement of a living, loving relationship with Christ to guide him, the academic knowledge, for all its value, may prove to be more harmful than helpful. It is not so hard to discern the fruits of the person's labour. Does his service already, in joy, nourish, hearten, liberate, strengthen the faithful ? Does the flock become frightened, obsessed with rules and correct procedures ? Does the flock feel heavily burdened, ground down ? Does his service unite, or scatter ? The words of our Saviour to the Pharisees apply to us as well, as I frequently recall :

> *'For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen by men'* (Matthew 23:4-5).

> *'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone'* (Matthew 23:23).

We are exhorted in this catholic Epistle : "*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you*" (James 4:8). These simple words can bring to the mind of anyone who reads the Scriptures often, the fact that here are references to these Old Covenant passages : 2 Paraleipomenon (2 Chronicles) 15:2 ; Zechariah 1:3 ; Malachi 3:7 ; and also Hebrews 7:19 (the "Old Covenant" is sometimes called the "First Covenant"). This loving attitude of always seeking the Lord and His love is foundational for our way of life in Christ. There cannot be any substitute for love in Christ. It is through this very love that the bishop himself is nourished and enabled. Through this very love, he is able to nourish the sheep given to him in Christ, and to lead them in Christ. As is popularly and rightly said, a gift may be given, but to be truly received, it must be taken in hand and opened and used. Our Lord offers us His Body and Blood. It is we who must receive this gift, and co-operate with the life-giving activity of the Holy Mysteries. This Eucharistic

Mystery acts within us when we receive it. It changes us. It heals us. Then, through us, the gift acts further as in its life-giving energy it touches other human beings and creatures around us. A good education is very important for a person who may be called to serve as a high-priest, but the good formation of the heart is yet far more important. It is the heart that enables the proper use of the gift. It is therefore the responsibility of the bishops (besides all their other responsibilities) to try prayerfully to discern persons who may be called to serve as arch-pastors, and to provide for them opportunities to experience aspects of this awesome responsibility. This is very much in the manner of apprenticeship, which indeed is the typical historical manner in which Christians are formed for exercising responsibility. There is never a guarantee that such preparation in any one person would result in ordination to the arch-pastoral service, but such preparation is never a waste, because serving in accordance with Christ's guidance, and in obedience to Him, is the way of every Christian, always.

In this regard, it must be mentioned that the most important historical element in the formation of a bishop has now, in our westernised and so-called advanced societies, become woefully lacking. It is not completely absent, but it is very hard to find nowadays. This element is the traditional functioning of the Orthodox Christian family. In these present days, the family is reduced to the "nuclear" family, and even this is fragmented. Material demands have made technological slaves of us, and the cost of living has so risen with the pursuit of so-called comfort that few families now escape the fact of both parents' working. Parents and children alike find themselves labouring under the heavy burdens of daily demands, and there is general fatigue and malaise, together with loneliness. The former custom of daily prayers together before the icons in the family's principal prayer-place is now quite rare. The former custom of regularly gathering to eat together as a family at all the main meals is now very rare. Our people often eat alone, and while doing something else. The former custom of talking, of having family conversations at these meals is now very rare also. The former custom of being together as a family most of the time is now changed in the opposite direction. Each one has his/her own room, a room which is almost or completely self-contained, and isolated and insulated from other family members. The former custom of reading daily from the Scriptures and from the lives of saints is now very rare. The former custom of blessing everything we do, and of giving thanks to the Lord for all that He gives on very many occasions during every day is disappearing. Now we forget to bless each other as we depart from the house. We forget to bless our means of transportation every time we use it. We forget to bless our food both during its preparation and at the time of eating.

We are losing our sense of dependence on the Lord, and of gratitude to the Lord. Worse, this leads us to fall into the personal isolation and individualism that promotes our inclination to become, in our delusion, so-called captains of our own ships, pilots of our destinies and would-be saviours of our own souls. We then neglect to remember what a blasphemy is this attitude. The result of defiantly turning our backs on our Lord is that we "captains" run aground on every reef, shoal and rock. This happens because we are not looking for true spiritual health. This would require that we let go of our fearful and obsessive grip on control, and allow the Lord to take charge of our lives. As we pursue our own agendas, we are forgetting our mutual responsibilities to one another in families, and significantly our responsibilities to our extended families and our church families. We would do well to remember that all our lives are inter-connected. Everything we do, say and think affects everyone and everything everywhere

around us. It affects the whole of creation, indeed. Scientists are not the only ones who are aware of this fact.

It is the Orthodox Christian home which has been the most important element in the development of a real Orthodox Christian mentality. Perhaps it is useful to comment that any attempt to recover this important way of life requires a sort of missionary disposition (particularly on the part of the parents). With the loss of this important inter-dependent element in our formation, so much more is it the case that we are lacking a major element in the formation and preparation of persons who may be called to serve as a bishop in Christ's Church. This lack affects us all. As a result, we frequently behave in dysfunctional ways.

It is possible to say (many have so said) that much of our dysfunctional lack of conscious dependence on the Lord, and our not looking to the Lord for His help and healing, has to do with urbanisation. This is true enough. Urban people often have no idea of what a sheep or a shepherd is, or what might be the relationship between them. For many, milk comes from a carton or bag ; eggs come from a carton. The imagery of the Scriptures is often distant, even foreign to urban people who know only the city. I know, however, that I always have particularly enjoyed visiting the rural churches, because the farming people still may have a sharp and clear awareness of this relationship with the Lord. They are ready quickly to pray to Him for help, to see His action, and to thank Him.

In whatever ways the times and circumstances may change : whether the condition of the societies may change for better or for worse, whether or not the Church is in persecution or temptation, whether the Church is in the context of a friendly or unfriendly kingdom or other type of government, whether some external and superficial details are added or subtracted, the real character of the episcopate does not change, and cannot change. This is precisely because the Lord is changeless, as the Apostle emphasises : "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and unto the ages*" (Hebrews 13:8). Christ is changeless, although His love is ever dynamic, life-giving and growing.

The bishop is to be a Christ-bearer. The bishop is to reveal Jesus Christ in and through his own life, to maintain authentic Christian humanity. He cannot, therefore, present a façade. He must have learnt how to fight the good fight (see 1 Timothy 6:12). He must have learned about spiritual struggle and the subduing of his passions, which means not fighting (as in boxing), but rather turning away from temptations and calling for our Saviour's protection and that of the Mother of God. The Apostle reminds us that Jesus Christ is changeless. Therefore, by dint of the usual Orthodox paradox, one may say that the bishop is to reflect the changelessness of Christ, most particularly through the stability of his love ; and at the same time, he is to reflect the change which comes with repentance. The bishop is a human being like everyone else, and his life has to show the people entrusted to his care that transformation through repentance and living the Christian life can be done. He must truly be a person in a living and loving relationship with Him who is the Lover of Man(kind). "Man" is capitalised to show that this word refers to the human race, not simply a male-gendered person. In Greek, it is very much easier than in modern English to convey the meaning of this title, Φιλάνθρωπος, *Philanthrōpos*, which expresses the Lord's unwavering and eternal love for His creature, the human being. In Greek, there is a special word *anthrōpos*, which means "the human race". By his own life, the bishop is to show all peoples Who is Christ. By his own life, he is to show the people in his care the manner in which a Christian lives life in this world. By his own life, he is to show the way to

and in the Way. In doing this, he reminds us that we are all, together, the children of God, because we are His creation, and members of His Body. Christ Himself, as the Lover of Man(kind), does not Himself change ; He, as Love, always loves us in the same way. Christ is ever the same, and yet He ever encounters each human being in every time and situation in accordance with that particular moment and context. As does Christ, so may the bishop do. May he be one who is sometimes correcting, but at the same time always encouraging, uplifting and nurturing. He may well show by his own life how to be in Christ truly child-like, but not childish. His joy in living can clearly convey to all the flock the real joy of Christ.

There can be no "instruction manual" on how to be a bishop, how to work as a bishop, how to live as a bishop. Each bishop is a unique person and personality with a unique personal history, and he is created uniquely by the Lord. Each bishop has his own gifts, grace and charism of the Holy Spirit in which he leads the flock in Christ. Being a bishop cannot be taught. As with Christ's love, what it is to be a bishop must be caught. I mean, it must be transmitted to him. The Apostle's exhortation here applies to each of us :

> *Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us* (2 Timothy 1:13-14).

The vast and ineffable realm that describes the whole way of the life of a bishop must be domesticated, one might say. In each bishop, the way of being a bishop requires being brought from the general to the particular, and this is accomplished, of course, by the Holy Spirit. All the principles that we are considering (which apply to bishops and their way in general) also require being focussed in on the particular life of each bishop, in the context of the particular gifts and calling and personality of each particular bishop. This is accomplished by the working of the Holy Spirit in the heart of each bishop. This is much in the manner in which the rapid flow of a swift river can be channelled through reinforced banks so that it does not overflow and flood the surroundings ; and it may even be channelled so as to produce abundant electricity.

Saint John Chrysostom gives us a verbal icon of "what qualities a man needs if he is to withstand such a tempest" of obstacles, temptations, distortions and difficulties, as he serves as a high-priest. These qualities must spring from Christ :

> He must be dignified yet modest, impressive yet kindly, masterful yet approachable, impartial yet courteous, humble but not servile, vehement yet gentle, in order that he may be able calmly to resist all these dangers [...]. One thing alone he must consider : the edification of the Church. He must do nothing out of hostility or favour (Six Books on the Priesthood, p. 93).

2

Meanings of words, and some historical perspectives

> *The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away* (1 Peter 5:1-4).

These words are the exhortation to "elders" (meaning "presbyters") by the Apostle Peter in his catholic Epistle. He uses here the word "overseer", which simply translates ἐπίσκοπος, *episkopos*, the Greek word for a bishop. It is important that we recall this apostolic exhortation which is foundational to a bishop's service. A little preliminary attention to the meanings of some words and terms will be useful for us as we reflect on these responsibilities.

To begin with, a brief etymological consideration of the words "episcopate" and "presbyterate" may help us to understand some deeper implications, and also to understand the nature of the service each word implies. Both words are related in intent. "Episcopate" (along with its related word-forms) has its origin in Greek ; and from it, through Latin and Germanic languages, comes to us the English word "bishop". "Episcopate" carries the main meaning of "overseeing". It is related to the supervisory responsibility exercised by the chief-slave (bond-servant) in a household. Moreover, this supervising (which means overseeing) carries with it a sense of doing so with love, attention and care. This is well-expressed in the meaning of the Russian word for this responsibility : хозяйство, *khozyaistvo* (economy, housekeeping). All this is understood in Orthodox mentality in the context of the functioning of a family. This understanding includes all Christian communities and the diocese in particular. An attempt to find in many dictionaries the meaning of "episcopate" can frequently produce only references to the Latin, and to "government by bishops" (episcopacy), and similar structural and institutional concepts. Nevertheless, the word implies an environment of personal relationships, responsible leadership, supervision and guidance. Such a leadership of supervision is one that is exercised under obedience, not independently, not "alone". This obedience is, in the first place, both in and under Christ as a chief-slave of Christ, and in the context of the synod of bishops to which the bishop belongs. Each is obedient to all. Even the chief of the bishops of this synod is living in obedience to his brother bishops collectively.

"Presbyterate" comes to us also from the Greek through the Latin, giving the English word "presbyter", which means "an elder". Such a person was originally understood to be a leader in a local community of Christian believers (see Acts 14:23 ; 15:6 ; 1 Timothy 5:17). In yet earlier times, in synagogue communities (and even before they came into being), there were also such senior, experienced leaders. As with regard to the word "episcopate", so also with the word "presbyterate", dictionaries tend to focus narrowly on the structural nature of it. However, an elder, as the word itself implies, is presumed to exercise the seniority as a personal responsibility in relationship with others, and in a familial context. The Orthodox Christian elder is sharing his experience ; and in fact, he exercises this eldership in harmony with, and as an extension to the episcopate.

It can be seen that these words (episcopate, episcopacy, presbyterate) understand a function that involves personal relationships. Saint John the Apostle helps us understand that godly love is the context, and this is reinforced by Saint Ignatius of Antioch :

> *If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also* (1 John 4:20-21).

> Therefore, in your concord [one-heartedness] and harmonious love, Jesus Christ is sung. And man by man, become a choir, that being harmonious in your concord, and taking up God's pitch in unison, you may with one voice sing to the Father through Jesus Christ, so that He may both hear and recognise you through these things that you, being melodies of His Son, do well. Therefore, it is profitable for you to be in blameless unison, that you may partake of God at all times as well ("Letter to the Ephesians", 4).

This environment of harmonious inter-personal relationships and godly love is the standard by which we are measured. If we behave otherwise, we might well ask ourselves to what extent we might be betraying Christ. Saint Ignatius of Antioch has frank words for us about this, as does a canon :

> Flee divisions, as the beginning of evils. All should follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and follow the presbytery as you would the apostles ; and reverence the deacons as being the commandment of God. Let no-one do anything in the Church without the bishop. Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which occurs under the bishop, or the one to whom he has entrusted it. Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] be ; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic [that is, universal, of the whole, and therefore Orthodox] Church. It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptise or to hold a love-feast ; but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God, so that everything that you do may be secure and established ("Letter to the Smyrnæans", 7-8).

> He who honours the bishop has been honoured by God ; he who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop, serves the devil ("Letter to the Smyrnæans", 9).

> Let nothing be done without your [Polycarp's] consent ; neither do anything without God, which very thing you do not ; be steadfast ("Letter to Polycarp", 4).

> Let not the presbyters or deacons do anything without the sanction of the bishop ; for he it is who is entrusted with the people of the Lord, and of whom will be required the account of their souls (Apostolic Canon 39).

Everything must be done in the proper order, as we well know from the words of the Apostle Paul : "*Let all things be done decently and in order*" (1 Corinthians 14:40). For the Body of Christ to function in a healthy manner, everything must be done in the correct and proper order, in the spirit of Christ's love and in mutual obedience under Him.

Notwithstanding the directions in the "Letter to the Smyrnæans" 8 in particular, it is well known that there are canonical provisions for baptisms by lay-persons under extreme or emergency conditions. Such provisions have been used in every century because of one or another urgency. However, the priests must be informed of these emergency baptisms by lay-

persons so that any lacking details (and particularly chrismation and reception of the Holy Mysteries) may be completed if possible.

Related to these two words (episcopate, presbyterate) are two other parallel words, "high-priest" and "priest". These are the historical words applied to a bishop and a presbyter to describe their liturgical and sacramental functions ; but these sacramental functions must be undertaken and lived within the context and meaning of the two descriptive words (*i.e.* episcopate, presbyterate) and their pastorally motivated environments. These two words are inter-connected. The service of the high-priest and the priest are likewise inter-connected, the latter completely dependent upon the former. People can readily see something of the meaning of this during a hierarchical Divine Liturgy. The high-priest, flanked by the priests, stands in the first place. He distributes exclamations to the priests for litanies and other prayers that normally belong to the high-priest, as he shares the priestly responsibility visibly with them. The priests serve always as the extension of the high-priestly service and responsibility. However, many persons have commented that during these hierarchical liturgies priests seem to have little to do, and that the main "workers" in a hierarchical Divine Liturgy are the high-priest and the deacon(s). This comment has substance precisely because the high-priest is himself re-presenting Jesus the Great High-priest, who is the Christ (that is, the Messiah), who is the King of the Universe, as we see in the words of the Apostle Paul :

> *Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man* (Hebrews 8:1-2).

As we see elsewhere in this book, the deacons also have their part in re-presenting more particular aspects of our Saviour and His service.

It is in the context of the pastoral-sacramental character of the high-priest's functions that the following prayers from the service of the ordination of a bishop are pertinent :

> [...] reveal him to be holy, that he may be worthy to ask those things which are for the salvation of the people, and that You will hear him. [...] For us, You instituted teachers who are of like nature with ourselves, to maintain Your Holy Table ; that they may offer to You sacrifice and oblation for all Your people. [...] Make this man also, who has been proclaimed a steward of the episcopal grace, to be an imitator of You, the true Shepherd, who laid down Your life for Your sheep : to be a leader of the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a reprover of the unwise, a teacher of the young, a lamp to the world ; that, having perfected the souls entrusted to him in this present life, he may stand unashamed before Your throne (The Bishop's Service Book, vol. 2).

From seeing the ordination and hearing the words of this service (and of many other liturgical services), it is clear to us that it is the responsibility of the bishop in Christ to renew and to refresh every aspect of life in the Church that is necessary for the continuation of Christian life at every level. Sometimes the arch-pastor may have to bring back into existence some aspect which has fallen away into disuse because of circumstances. We can see the fruits of this responsibility, for instance, in the return of the custom of communal eating after the Divine Liturgy, especially on Sundays. Communal eating is now wide-spread in Canada, and it is also experienced in some places in Europe. This return to a much earlier custom strengthens the bonds of love amongst the faithful, and it also prompts some visitors from abroad to comment

that our gatherings seem to reflect the early Church. In Christ, it is for the bishop to bless/ordain those who have gifts to do particular things, or fulfil particular functions. It is not for him to do everything himself. That is hubris, extreme pride, arrogance.

As we are considering the nature of the Christian high-priesthood, it is useful to recall the Christian New Covenant (sometimes called "Second Covenant") paradox of both discontinuity and continuity with the Old Covenant. There truly is a difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant high-priesthood. The Old Covenant high-priesthood was inherited in the Tribe of Levi through Aaron, primarily. The New Covenant high-priesthood does not limit us to one hierarch for the whole people, although there is only one for each territory. One distinction between the two covenants is provided by Saint John Chrysostom :

> The priests of the Jews had authority to cure leprosy of the body, or rather, not to cure it, but only to certify the cure. [...] But our priests have received authority not over leprosy of the body but over uncleanness of the soul, and not just to certify its cure, but actually to cure it. So people who look down on them are far more execrable than Dathan and his company [...] (Six Books on the Priesthood, p. 73).

Our high-priesthood is not inherited as in the Old Covenant, but rather it is given to persons revealed by the Lord to the Church through a particular process. Nevertheless, there are links between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant high-priesthood (as will be seen in this chapter), just as there are definite links with the Old Covenant in the New Covenant Scriptures and in the services of our Church. On one occasion, our Saviour says to us :

> '*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another*' (John 13:34).

On another occasion (as our Saviour demonstrates in the encounter with "a certain ruler"), the observing of the Commandments still remains active now, meaning both at the time of this personal encounter, and also in our days. When asked : "'*Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*'", our Saviour replied with examples from the Ten Commandments :

> *Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' So Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not bear false witness," "Honour your father and your mother"'* [see 2 Moses [Exodus] 20:12-16 ; 5 Moses [Deuteronomy] 5:16-20]. *And he said, 'All these things I have kept from my youth.' So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, 'You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.' But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, 'How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the Kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.' And those who heard it said, 'Who then can be saved?' But He said, 'The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.' Then Peter said, 'See, we have left all and followed You.' So He said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the Kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life'* (Luke 18:18-30).

It is said that the question : "*What shall I do to inherit eternal life?*" reveals that the ruler was looking for a clear-cut formula to follow. The response was much more radical than he expected. The Lord deals with the heart, not merely with external details. We will surely also recall that on a high hill by the shores of the Sea of Galilee our Saviour said the following words :

> '*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the Kingdom of Heaven'* (Matthew 5:17-20).

These words may seem to be harsh at first glance, but as the Lord looks more deeply, so we follow His example. He is telling us about how His love works, and how His love supersedes the details of the written Law. When one of the Pharisees asked Him what is the great commandment in the Law, our Saviour replied :

> '"*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*" [see 5 Moses 6:5] *This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."* [3 Moses 19:18] *On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets*' (Matthew 22:37-40).

It is possible to see the roots of these two exhortations right at the beginning of creation. To see this, we need only survey the manner in which God addresses our First Parents, their children, and those who follow after. There is a repeating echo of this foundational "prime directive" throughout the Scriptures. The Ten Words (Commandments), which were given in 2 Moses 20:1-17, are a "barometer" which indicates how well and how much we are applying in our lives this "prime directive". The Lord says : "*Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. You shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart, from your whole soul, and from your whole power. So these words I command you today shall be in your heart and in your soul*" (5 Moses 6:4-6). Whether stated or unstated, this exhortation is everywhere. We can see constantly in the words of the Prophets that the Lord expects us to apply this love. Thus, these exhortations about returning the Lord's Love with expressions of our love can be seen as a matrix for all the Law and the Prophets. As our Saviour spoke to the Pharisees, so He speaks to us now : "*You shall love your neighbour as yourself*". The Law and the Prophets are fulfilled in the living out of His love.

The source of the Lord's love is not something based simply on principles, propositions and philosophising. The Lord's love is not something that we think up ourselves alone. Rather, the love of God is alive in each of us, whether we recognise it or accept it or whether we do not. The Lord's love acts, and it acts personally and specifically. The Lord does not only love His creation in general or as a mere principle. He pays close and loving attention personally to each one of us, and to every one of His creatures, just as our Saviour says to us :

> *'Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows*' (Luke 12:6-7).

However, it is one thing to know that the Lord loves us, and that we love Him. It is another thing to act on this knowledge. It is one thing to know that we love and care about the health of the Lord's creation and the welfare of human beings. It is another thing to put this love and care into personal action with the human beings and creatures of God that are all around us. In our well-meaning considerations in assemblies, we write and we speak often and even sincerely about mission ; we finance missionary projects. However, we have difficulty with concretely and practically conveying the Truth, Christ, to the persons set squarely before us : our friends and our neighbours. We do help to relieve the needs of the poor, the hungry, the needy and the disaster-struck abroad, overseas and in other places remote from us, but we forget the difficult one on our daily path. We become distracted, even dazzled by the grandiose, but cannot see the person or the situation that seems to be insignificant or apparently unworthy of our attention. We can dangerously become identified with the wealthy and the privileged, and forget that we, each and all, are primarily responsible for helping ordinary people live ordinary lives. Distinctions between people are very dangerous for Christians to embrace, most particularly the distinctions related to social position, power, money — the having, or the not having.

It was revealed to us from the beginning that the loving relationship with God must come first, and must inform every aspect of life for us. With the Advent of Christ, this priority is reinforced and deepened. There is both continuity and discontinuity between the Old and New Covenants. Although (in and because of Jesus Christ's perfect Sacrifice) animal sacrifices for sin do not continue, the Sacrifice of Praise does continue. This sacrifice is an offering of our lips from our hearts, and it has been primary for us from the beginning, that is, from our creation. It is important to remember here the distinction between the offering of Cain and the offering of the righteous Abel in 1 Moses 4:1-16. It is important also to recall that Cain's sacrifice was not accepted because of the darkness in his heart. What the Lord expects from us (in the manner of Abel) is reflected in the following passages :

> *'Surely I shall not eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of he-goats ? Sacrifice to God a sacrifice of praise, and render your vows to the Most High. In the day of your affliction call upon Me, and I will set you free, and you shall glorify Me'* (Psalm 49:14-15).
>
> *Be well-pleased, then, with the freewill-offerings of my mouth, O Lord ; and teach me Your judgements* (Psalm 118:108).
>
> *Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you became weak through your wrongdoings. Take with you words and turn to the Lord your God. Speak to Him, that you may not receive the reward of unrighteousness, but that you may receive good things. We will render in return the fruit of our lips* (Hosea 14:2-3).
>
> *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God* (Romans 12:1-2).
>
> *Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name* (Hebrews 13:15).

The concern for purity in the life and example of the high-priest that is seen in the Old Covenant remains in many ways in effect in the life of the New Covenant high-priesthood. This

is strikingly noticeable from the following directions about the high-priesthood (and by extension the priesthood) :

> '"*They shall not be defiled by the dead among their people, except for their nearest relatives: their father, mother, sons, daughters, brother, and virgin sister near to him and having no husband; for these he may be defiled. Otherwise, he shall not be unexpectedly defiled and profaned among his people. You shall not shave a bald spot on your head for the dead, nor shall they shave the edges of their beard, nor make any cuttings on their flesh. They shall be holy to their God, and not defile the name of their God, for they offer the sacrifices of the Lord as the gifts of their God; therefore, they shall be holy. They shall not take a wife who is a prostitute and defiled, nor shall they take a woman divorced from her husband; for a priest is holy to the Lord his God.* [...] *The high priest who is great among his brethren, on whose head the anointing oil was poured and who was consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes;* [...] *Moreover, he shall take a wife in her virginity.* [...] *No man of your descendants in succeeding generations who has any defect may approach to offer the gifts of his God.* [...] *The gifts of his God are most holy*"' (3 Moses 21:1-7, 10, 13, 17, 22).

Here, Saint John Chrysostom shares with us this profound reflection :

> The priest, therefore, must be as pure as if he were standing in heaven itself. [...] The symbols which existed before the ministry of Grace were fearful and awe-inspiring : for example, the bells, the pomegranates, the stones on the breastplate, the stones on the ephod, the mitre, the diadem, the long robe, the golden crown, the Holy of Holies, the deep silence within. But if you consider the ministry of Grace, you will find that those fearful and awe-inspiring symbols are only trivial. The statement about the Law is true here also : '*For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels*' [2 Corinthians 3:10]. [...] The priest's soul must be purer than the rays of the sun, in order that the Holy Spirit may never leave him desolate, and that he may be able to say, '*it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me*' [Galatians 2:20]. [...] When he invokes the Holy Spirit and offers that awesome sacrifice and keeps on touching the common Master of us all, tell me, where shall we rank him ? What purity and what piety shall we demand of him ? Consider how spotless should the hands be that administer these things, how holy the tongue that utters these words. Ought anyone to have a purer and holier soul than the one who is to welcome this great Spirit ? At that moment angels attend the priest, and the whole dais and the sanctuary are thronged with heavenly powers in honour of Him who lies there. [...] The soul of the priest ought to blaze like a light illuminating the world (Six Books on the Priesthood, pp. 70, 137, 140, 141).

These concerns about the purity and the example of the high-priest are effective in a somewhat different manner now, in the context of the New Covenant, as indicated by Saint John. This is because of the love of Christ, rather than because of an inherited family duty or obligation. Although I know of families that have had at least one priest in each of more than twenty generations (such as the well-known Glagolev family in the eastern USA), this does not happen because of obligation or inheritance. Although there is for Christians no inherited priesthood in the lineage of Levi and Aaron (as was already noted), in the life of the Church, there still remain a very few examples of a continuous line of generations of priesthood. However, these are rare. The sense of its being a life-time commitment does remain, although not as an inherited family duty. The continuous appearance of the priesthood in a family happens because of the real impact of the love of Christ in the family : Christianity is caught, not

taught. In such families, the love of Christ is very real and alive, indeed. The children encounter Christ through the living and prayerful relationship between the parents and Christ. They are able, in this love, to hear in their hearts that the Lord is calling them to follow Him.

The prescriptions in 3 Moses give clear directions about the spirit in which the Christian high-priesthood and priesthood are to be lived. These are re-worded in various canons of our Christian Tradition, and in the context of the Sacrifice of Praise. There are very many expressions there which reveal our continuity with these Mosaic directions.

Reflecting on the continuities and the discontinuities between the Old and New Covenant priesthood, we are also considering the nature of the Christian high-priesthood and priesthood, the similarities and differences. It may be helpful in our understanding of the relationship between priest and high-priest to recall that until about the sixteenth century the vestments of the high-priest and of the priest were very much more visibly similar than they are now. Before this (as in other ordinations), there were simply additional or adjusted vestments given to show not only the change, but also the relationship, and the addition of responsibility. When a subdeacon is ordained, an *orar* (ὡράριον) is added to the *stikhar* (στιχάριον) he already wears as a reader. The *stikhar* is a long tunic which, with arms out-stretched, looks like the Cross. When a deacon is ordained, cuffs (ἐπιμανίκια, поручи) are added to the *stikhar*, and the *orar* is worn differently. When a bishop, priest, or deacon put on the cuffs, they remember to put their trust in God's strength, not their own. When a priest is ordained, the *orar* is replaced by an *epitrakhil* (ἐπιτραχήλιον). It is actually a different form of the *orar*, sometimes called a stole, and means "on the neck". Then a *phelon* (φελώνιον) (called a chasuble in the West) is added, and a Cross is also given if it is a "Russian" environment. When a bishop is ordained, the *palitsa* is given if it has not already been given (*palitsa=epigonation* (ἐπιγονάτιον), a diamond-shaped item. As the Greek says, it is worn at knee-level, on the right-hand side. In the words of the prayers, it is linked with the sword of faith. Then the *omophor* (ὠμοφόριον) is added. The *enkolpion* (ἐνκόλπιον) comes next. This word is also spelt *engolpion* ; it is a Greek word for something worn upon the bosom. This is an icon of the *Theotokos*, worn suspended from the neck, near the heart. It is sometimes called a *panagia* (παναγία, a Greek word which means "all-holy", and which usually refers to the Mother of God). It was more recently that the *phelon* was replaced by the *sakkos* (σάκκος) (a vestment that looks like a tunic, or a deacon's *stikhar*). The mitre in its present form was added. The mitre is a hat that now looks like the imperial Roman crown (to which it is related). The mitre usually has at least four small icons, and sometimes a cross-shape made of material over the top of the hat. Quite recently, it became customary that a metal Cross stands vertically on top, in the middle of the mitre of all bishops.

These relatively recent changes in the vestments of bishops arose largely because of the implications of the relationship between the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Turkish rulers who arrived with the Islamic conquest of Constantinople in 1453 (Islam means "submission"). The patriarch was compelled to take on civil responsibilities in this new environment. The Muslim sultan, who had taken over the remains of the eastern Roman Empire, forced him to replace the emperor as the head of the Christian Roman peoples now subjected to this sultan. All Orthodox Christians until this day in Turkey and in the Middle-East are called "*Roum-Orthodox*", meaning "Roman Orthodox". Even the Greek-speakers in modern Greece are sometimes called this. So the patriarch was given and had to accept the responsibility of civil discipline and of judgement of civil disputes and concerns regarding the law. This sort of administration of society introduced hundreds of years of sheer survival-mentality, since

Christian education and other natural expressions of Christian care were forbidden. The *sakkos* and the mitre were vestments of the former Roman Emperor in Constantinople that were transferred to the patriarch in this new situation. After some time, by extension, these two vestments began to be worn by all other bishops. This is why, when we are observing a bishop thus attired, he usually seems to us to be dressed as a king. However, it is very important that we recall that he is standing in the place of Christ, who is our real and only King.

It is true that the bells that are part of the bishop's *sakkos* are associated with the bells that were on the vestment of the Old Covenant high-priest. The Old Covenant high-priest had such bells so that the people could hear that he was moving and alive in the Holy of Holies of the Temple. Amongst Christians nowadays, these bells help the people know where the bishop is when he moves about a crowded church during services. Another significant implication can be discerned in the bells of the *sakkos*. The bishop, who re-presents Christ, also stands for the whole flock under his care. This whole flock of Christians is generally considered to be cast out and rejected by those who do not accept Christ. As lepers were likewise out-casts of society, and carried bells to warn others about their presence, so the bishop's bells keep him and the people whom he leads mindful of the consequence of being a Christian, and being identified with Him who identifies Himself with us.

The bishop himself must always keep mindful of this fact, and of the fact that his vestments are not his alone, but they belong to Christ, and also to the people who see them, as their sign of hope in the Kingdom of Heaven. It is useful to remember that the tall hard-hat-and-veil that the bishop wears, and the large-sleeved *riassa* are both contributions to our apparel from the time of the Ottoman Empire, when these items became required of us clergy and are now expected appurtenances. Before 1453, the bishop was dressed more simply both in the Temple and out-of-doors. Out-of-doors, the bishop formerly would have worn the monastic soft head-covering and the veil (which would be similar to what we have now, but without the hard-hat or fez). Today, we may see that some monks, such as some on Mount Athos and in Greece, have themselves returned to wearing this softer head-covering-and-veil.

It may be useful for us all to keep in memory that the manner of serving the Lord in a hierarchical service (the serving together of the bishop, priests, deacons and faithful) is in fact the very foundation of our understanding of how we serve the Lord in worship on every occasion. It is, in fact the pattern from which all other services are formed. The Bishop-Martyr Ignatius of Antioch writes of these things :

> Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] be [...] ("Letter to the Smyrnæans", 8 ; see p. 82, *&c.*).
>
> I exhort you to hasten to do all things in harmony with God, with the bishop presiding in the place of God, and with the presbyters in the place of the assembly of the apostles, along with the deacons [...] ("Letter to the Magnesians", 6).

It is true that most of us may have very infrequent experience of a hierarchical service. The usual experience of people would be services led by a priest in a parish. Such services are not as rich, full and complete as are the services when a bishop is present and serving. Because the priest is not the high-priest, these services are offered more simply. It is the high-priest alone who prays at the Trisagion, "[...] *visit this vine, which Your right hand planted, and establish it*" (Psalm 79:15-16). The priest is the delegate and assistant of the high-priest, and the differences

between how bishops and priests serve show this also. Although a priest and a high-priest have many very similar functions and responsibilities, there are some of these that are blessed for a bishop alone to do. It is the high-priest alone who ordains all the clergy, of all sorts ; who consecrates Holy Tables and holy places ; who consecrates *antimensia* (ἀντιμήνσιον, *antimēnsion*, meaning "instead of the table" : the cloth that gives the written blessing for the Eucharist to be served in specific places by the priests) ; and who consecrates the oil of Holy Chrism (although this is generally now done only by the head of a local Church). The differences don't suggest any division ; but rather, they show us the unity that is in Christ. In Christ everything is complementary and mutually supportive. This is why, despite the differences, it may often seem that there is a blurring of distinction between the responsibility of high-priest and priest. Let us remember that from the earliest days, the life and work of the two distinct orders have been inter-twined. A similarity can be seen in how the new branches of a vine become strong as they take support and life from the main vine by the use of their tendrils, and by being ready to be inter-twined in order to give each other the needed strength both to attach together to an external support, and also to support future fruit. The priests truly serve as an extension of the service of the high-priest when, amongst them (high-priest and priests together), there is truly unity and harmony. Like the vine-branches, the high-priest and the priest support each other. By definition, this unity is expected to be there, although it may require time to be fully established.

Very long ago, when I was a student in an Anglican Theological College, there were debates about the nature of the episcopate. The debate focussed on whether bishops are of the *esse* of the Church, the *bene esse* of the Church, or the *plene esse* of the Church. In Latin, *esse* means "being", and it expresses the understanding that bishops are of the very existence of the life of the Church, and necessary for that existence. *Bene esse* means "well-being", and it expresses the understanding that bishops are for the well-being, or benefit of the life of the Church. *Plene esse* means "full-being", and it expresses the understanding that bishops exist for the fulness of the Church's life. The first of these terms, *esse*, would be comparable to what is written by Saint Ignatius of Antioch about bishops, and what is said about bishops in our canonical Tradition, as we have seen already in his "Letter to the Smyrnæans", 7 to 9, and in Apostolic Canon 39 (see p. 82). There will be other examples also. The other two terms, *bene esse* and *plene esse* (terms which were and are used often by Protestants) express perceptions of the episcopate which are clearly not in harmony with the Orthodox Tradition. Living in harmony with the teaching of the Holy Apostles and of the Fathers, we Orthodox Christians can teach only that the episcopate is necessary for the very existence of the Church. It is only the arch-pastor, the high-priest, who is able to provide all the necessary food for life in the Church, to supply what is lacking, and to renew what may become misplaced. It is his responsibility to do so : to nourish the Church with the living food of Christ. He does this himself where it is feasible and possible. Otherwise, he does this through the priests who serve as the extensions of his presence, authority and pastoral activity. Saint Ignatius of Antioch shows us that besides what they both do, the high-priest, who has been entrusted with the holy of holies (and who re-presents Christ) has yet more responsibility :

> He alone has been entrusted with the hidden things of God. He is the door [see John 10:7, 9] of the Father, through which enter Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and the prophets and the apostles and the Church ("Letter to the Philadelphians", 9).

In addition to all these particular and significant details, it is important always to keep in mind that there remains a priesthood in living and walking in the Christian Way, the source of which is in baptism. By this, I mean that from baptism, tonsure and chrismation, every Christian as a Christ-bearer has a priestly responsibility in the world. The following words by Professor Konstantine Skouteris (†2010) may be of some benefit in understanding this :

> The records of the early Christian tradition leave no doubt that Christian priesthood is not a 'function' necessary for the institutional being of the Church. Nor is it an autonomous, isolated and self sufficient office belonging to the ordained individual. It is rather a ministry related and belonging to the entire ecclesial body. We can think of it as an anaphoral reality which is always in reference to and leads to the saving communion of the Body of Christ. From the very outset of Christian history, priesthood is understood as a living testimony of the constant and continuing presence of Christ in every historic 'now' of the life of the Church. It was viewed as a token of the Paschal fulfilment and parousia, bestowed to all Christians through the power of the Holy Spirit. This means that priesthood was considered as an integral part of the ecclesial reality, related with and proceeding from the pentecostal economy. In order to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the place of priesthood within the Christian community and to estimate its role for the ecclesial unity, it is important to stress its Christological and Pneumatological foundation. Any attempt to approach priesthood from a monistic point of view, i.e. as an autonomous subject, leads to the divergent, altered scholastic interpretations and speculations foreign to the Apostolic tradition. Even a cursory study of the New Testament data reveals the fact that all titles related to ministry and priesthood are rendered to Christ Himself. Christ is '*Apostle and High Priest*' (Hebrews 3:1); He is '*priest*' (Hebrews 8:4), '*Teacher*' and '*Rabbi*' (Matthew 23:7-8); [...] He is '*the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls*' (1 Peter 2:25), *'the Chief Shepherd*' (1 Peter 5:4). Christ is '"*among* [*us*] *as the One who serves*"' (Luke 22:27); He is the '*diakonos*' (Romans 15:8). In His priestly ministry Christ has '*given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma*' (Ephesians 5:2). In the New Testament, Christ is both the victim and the priest who performs the sacrificing action.' [...] *We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified*' (Hebrews 10:10-14). Despite the individual characteristics and significant differences in terms of perspective and style among such writers as Matthew, Paul, Peter and Luke there is nothing more striking than the essential unity amid all diversity. This unity is basically that of a common attitude to Jesus Christ. There is among all New Testament authors a common sense that Christ '*is the head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence*' (Colossians 1:18) ("Christian Priesthood and Ecclesial Unity: Some Theological and Canonical Considerations").

3

The bishop and Tradition

> *For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain* (2 Peter 1:16-18).

In these words from his catholic Epistle, the Apostle Peter writes about how he recognised and understood Christ at the Transfiguration. This personal encounter with the one and the same Jesus Christ is held in common with all the apostles, and with all Christians at all times and in all places. Therefore, adding to our collection of important terms, we may say that this common encounter with Christ, universally experienced at all times and in all places, can be described as "tradition with a capital T".

The bishop is responsible in the diocese he leads for keeping alive and providing for the continuation of the living witness to the living Tradition of the Person of Christ which lives in his own heart. When truly understood, Orthodox Tradition is the Tradition of Christ, so the bishop lives it every day. It is not simply the perpetuating of customs. The solemn questions, answers and declarations reflect this clearly, that is, the ones made at the time when a bishop-to-be is brought to the Holy Synod of Bishops and the head of the Church, just before his ordination. In every case, while standing on the large eagle-rug, the candidate solemnly declares that he will do as all other bishops have done since the time of the apostles. He will perpetuate the experience of the Risen Lord Jesus Christ, which all Christians have in common. He will continue to live, to teach the one Lord Jesus Christ. He will hand on the whole truth about Him who is the Truth. He will do just as the Apostle Paul writes that he is doing : passing on to us what he himself received (1 Corinthians 11:23 ff ; 15:3-8). The Apostle did not invent anything. He simply handed on what he was given. Saint John Chrysostom demonstrates to what an extent the Apostle Paul serves as an important example in this faithful perpetuating of the true Tradition, and in keeping it pure :

> In what did Saint Paul surpass the rest of the Apostles ? [...] Is it not because of the excellence of his Epistles ? By this he has helped and will help and, as long as the human race remains, will never stop helping the faithful not only of his own time but from that day to this and those who shall believe until the coming of Christ. For his writings fortify the churches all over the world like a wall of steel. [...] All this he does by means of those wonderful Epistles he has left us, so full of divine wisdom. His writings are not only useful to us for the refutation of false doctrine and the establishment of the true, but they help us very greatly, too, in living a good life. [...] By them they [liturgical leaders] also ward off the diseases which attack [the Church], and preserve the good health she enjoys. Such is the quality and such the strength of the medicines left us by this man [...] (Six Books on the Priesthood, p. 123).

As the Apostle did not, so we shall not by our own intelligence alter anything about Who is Christ, nor change the manner of serving the Divine Liturgy, nor alter its words (and translators will, of course, be careful to transmit the authentic meanings of these words). All our

ways of worship and service and daily life are inter-connected in living in Christ and witnessing for Christ as He truly is. The Apostle personally encountered the Risen Christ, who revealed Himself to him, and he passes on that personal encounter to all the sheep who are to follow. The Twelve Apostles likewise personally encountered the Risen Christ. Although the bishop is ordained to the responsibility of maintaining and perpetuating this Tradition, he does so along with all the faithful who share this responsibility together. This must be (as it has always been) the context in which the bishop hands over and perpetuates not simply an intellectual assent to an historical event or to a principle, but rather a living, loving and personal relationship with Christ. This faithful continuation of our mutual and historical and living experience of the one Lord Jesus Christ is demonstrated clearly in what is known as "apostolic succession". In Gaul, Saint Irenæus of Lyon wrote these words about this unbroken continuity of harmonious faith and love :

> It is possible, then, for everyone in every Church, who may wish to know the truth, to contemplate the tradition of the Apostles which has been made known throughout the whole world. And we are in a position to enumerate those who were instituted bishops by the Apostles, and their successors to our own times. [...] Polycarp was instructed not only by the Apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna, by the Apostles in Asia. I saw him in my early youth; for he tarried a long time, and when quite old he departed this life in a glorious and most noble martyrdom. He always taught those things which he had learned from the Apostles, and which the Church had handed down, and which are true. To these things all the Churches in Asia bear witness, as do also the successors of Polycarp even to the present time. [...]
>
> It is necessary to obey those who are the presbyters in the Church, those who, as we have shown, have succession from the Apostles; those who have received, with the succession of the episcopate, the sure charism of truth according to the good pleasure of the Father. [...]
>
> The true *gnosis* is the doctrine of the Apostles, and the ancient organisation of the Church throughout the whole world, and the manifestation of the Body of Christ according to the successions of bishops, by which successions the bishops have handed down the Church which is found everywhere; and the very complete tradition of the Scriptures, which have come down to us by being guarded against falsification, and which are received without addition or deletion [...] and the pre-eminent gift of love, which is more precious than knowledge, more glorious than prophecy, and more honoured than all the other charismatic gifts. [...]
>
> The path of those, however, who belong to the Church goes around the whole world; for it has the firm tradition of the Apostles, enabling us to see that the faith of all is one and the same (Detection and Overthrow of the Gnosis falsely so-called [Against Heresies]).

This authentic experience of the Risen Christ has been faithfully continued, lived, and taught from the apostles themselves right up until this present time without a break. The Apostle Paul and others, wherever they went in their missionary journeys, laid hands on men to serve as bishops, just as we read in the Acts of the Apostles. As our faith spread, these bishops in their turn ordained other bishops for the local Church communities. For more than two thousand years now, bishops have been ordained through the laying-on-of hands by other bishops, in a continuous line. This continuous line concerns not only the fact of the laying-on-of hands, but also the continuity of the one and the same Orthodox Catholic faith lived and held by

these bishops from the time when the Holy Apostles lived until now. At and in the beginning, the past, the present and the future, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both the Head and the Foundation. In Christ's love, the bishops remember in their prayers the names of those who ordained them, and their predecessors. The bishops should be able to show that they are aware of this line of predecessors, and know the names of all who have gone before them. The bishops themselves, and every diocese also, have a list of these names, called diptychs. It has this name because it used to be on two connected tablets, one with the names of the living, and the other with the names of the departed. This is a list which aids the faithful in being aware of this living link with the apostles. We certainly do have living examples of bishops who have been able to live up to these responsibilities. One of them is Saint Nektarios of Pentapolis (†1920). This man, in the midst of his life of suffering, nevertheless presented the Church in himself ; he lived out the way of Christ's love in all his actions, and he himself showed us concretely how Christian service can be lived out. He made himself available to the people, and was always ready to help them as he could. This help continues after his repose even until now.

It is important to note that from the Tradition of Christ flows everything. This "everything" includes all the customs of life and worship, which we also call traditions : traditions and customs which always refer to Christ Himself from whom they flow. We receive the Apostle's exhortation on this matter :

> *Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle* (2 Thessalonians 2:15).
>
> *O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust* (1 Timothy 6:20 ; see Titus 2:1).
>
> *And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ* (2 Timothy 2:2-3).

Our whole life is baptised by Him if we are truly Christians. There is not one element of our life that is not motivated by the Gospel. As a consequence, Christ and His blessing influence completely the manner in which we Orthodox Christians live out our daily lives. This daily life necessarily reflects (and should reflect) how we respond to Christ's love, and then how we behave in Him in the context of the specific part of the world in which we subsist (climate, terrain, *&c*.). These factors particularly influence how it is possible to observe the lenten periods. What is eaten in the Mediterranean regions is different from what is possible in tropical areas, and these are both quite different from what is possible in sub-arctic regions. For example, in hotter climates, the periods of abstinence can be easily observed because of the abundance of fruits and vegetables. In sub-arctic regions, where neither of these can grow, people must eat what is available : sometimes only the flesh of animals or fish. In such regions, the manner of observing these fasting-periods requires other measures. Nevertheless, wherever one may travel in the world, the essential "flavour" of the daily life of Orthodox Christians, and the manner in which they worship are both quite similar. When we are travelling, we need not necessarily know the language being used locally in services, because we know the services and their order anyway. By the essential "flavour" we can follow things.

When we are, as missionaries, bringing Christ to the peoples, we do not bring some specific foreign culture to the new one. Rather, we bring only the essential "flavour" of the Christian culture we carry with us, and that is the Gospel itself. In the same manner in which the

Gospel baptised the parent culture, so by the Grace of the Holy Spirit the Gospel baptises the new culture it encounters and embraces. Of course there will be some similarities and also some dissimilarities. Not in Greece, not in Romania, not in Ukraine, not in Russia or Georgia or Serbia or anywhere is there a monolithic way of life and worship for the Orthodox. The essential "flavour" remains the same, because Jesus Christ, the Head, is one and unchanging (see Hebrews 13:8). The experience we all share of Him is constant, as is the response we all offer to Him at every time, always and everywhere. So the Gospel of Christ, bringing Christ Himself, baptises the culture to which it comes. The Gospel does not annihilate that culture, but it gives new and real life to everything that is good and true about it. The parts that are dark and without life generally fade away. The Gospel nurtures the people who live in particular places, in particular climates, and in the context of their particular histories. We do well to depend upon the examples and the prayers of Saints Cyril and Methodius, of Saint Innocent of Moscow, of Saint Nicholas of Japan, of Saint Tikhon of Moscow, and of many others who show us how this is possible, and how in Christ it is done. The Gospel brings to each culture a unique character of life in the context of the Gospel, and in the context of the Church's feasts and fasts.

The Gospel and the Church embrace, form and transform the culture to such a degree that a confusion can arise. In the mentality of more modern persons who read widely in social-science (and of more uninformed persons who read little), it can often be wrongly understood that the Church and Christianity are simply a part of or an element of a culture. Then Christianity becomes merely tribal. In encountering the current western perception of culture, this can produce the mentality (indeed a pagan sense) that all missionary activity is inappropriate because "religion" is connected with the soil. So Christianity becomes a mere option, an alternative, instead of being the Ark of Salvation. For experienced shoppers, Christianity can be taken as just one of the many things offered us on the shop shelves, things of equal content but differing only in brand-name. Over a century ago the Orthodox Church condemned such a "tribal" (or "shopping") mentality as a heresy, although this mentality still shows itself from time to time. The work that faces us all in North America and in other western cultures is, after over two hundred years, still only at its beginning. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ which accomplishes this work. As Jesus Christ never changes, the Gospel also never changes. However, in this changelessness, Jesus Christ and the Gospel are ever dynamic in love.

Jesus Christ remains ever the same in how He is a shepherd, and in how He does the shepherding. This manner is that which we find in the Middle-East, and it is reflected in His arch-pastors everywhere. This particular leading-by-example shepherding remains always and everywhere the same. Liturgically, we may see ways in which the bishop is to be the loving shepherd in every possible situation. At a Resurrectional or Festal Vespers and Matins, it is the bishop (the chief shepherd re-presenting the Chief Shepherd) who blesses the loaves, wheat, wine and oil, and who later personally anoints the faithful with oil, and provides them with the refreshment of bread and wine. At the Divine Liturgy and on other occasions, it is usually the arch-pastor who is feeding the rational sheep with a homily based on the scriptural readings of that service. At the Divine Liturgy, it is usually the arch-pastor who, naming each one, feeds the rational sheep with our Saviour's Body and Blood. Sometimes the arch-pastor is baptising and chrismating. Sometimes the arch-pastor is blessing marriages. Sometimes the arch-pastor is praying for the departed either with the funeral or the memorial prayers. Sometimes the arch-pastor is ordaining new pastors and deacons for the nurturing of the flock. Sometimes the arch-pastor is leading the faithful in blessing new Temples to the glory of God. Sometimes the arch-

pastor is blessing works that the people are undertaking for the glory of God, and also for the well-being of the people. Sometimes the arch-pastor is himself blessing water, homes, fields, vehicles, hospitals, boats, animals, railways, aeroplanes, and almost everything we can think of that we use or do in harmony with our Lord.

At the Divine Liturgy, it is the representatives of the faithful who escort the bishop into the Temple. It is the representatives of the faithful, the subdeacons and readers, who then vest the bishop so that he may lead the worship. In doing this, the people show their acceptance of the leadership of this arch-pastor. They thereby also show their recognition of the connexion between this particular Divine Liturgy and the Liturgy that is constantly served in the Kingdom of Heaven. The liturgical vestments of the bishop (and actually of all the other clergy as well) are not intended to be for the glorification and aggrandisement of these clerics themselves ; but they are, in their beauty, giving the faithful a glimpse into the beauty of the Kingdom of Heaven. The lay-out of the Christian Temple, and the way a Christian Temple is decorated refer us to the beautiful splendour and the joy of the Kingdom of Heaven. The careful way in which services are served with dignity refers us to the beauty, peace and order in the Kingdom of Heaven. The harmoniousness of the singing, and the manner in which all the people sometimes sing together, and the manner in which special choral groups sometimes sing, refer us to the joyful angelic praise of God in the Kingdom of Heaven. The many candles being used always refer us to the Light of Christ in the Kingdom of Heaven. The raising of incense (the offering of burning incense) and its beautiful aroma refer us to the omnipresent Grace of the Holy Spirit and to the sweetness of the worship of God in the Kingdom of Heaven. It is because of all this that it was possible for the emissaries of Saint Vladimir, Prince of Kyiv (†1015) long ago, after their visit to the Hagia Sophia Cathedral in Constantinople (987), to report that they did not know whether they were on earth or in heaven as they worshipped there, as recorded in the Russian Primary Chronicle :

> The Greeks led us to the places where they worshipped their God, and we knew not whether we were in Heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendour or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We know only that God dwells there among men, and the service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty (The Holy Fire, p. 293).

Thus Saint Nestor the Chronicler († *ca*. 1114) tells us that the beauty that so captured these representatives included all the aspects and the environment of the liturgy and worship, including the decoration of the Temple. The Emperor was visibly present, to be sure. In this great Temple, unparalleled mosaic iconography was seen everywhere. The vestments of the clergy were splendid to see. The singing of the chanters was heavenly to hear. The carved work, and the marble fixtures were wonderful to touch. The incense was beautiful to smell, and to be remembered. It was because of this whole experience which embraced all the senses, which revealed to the emissaries the truth about Him who is the Truth, that the people of Rus' were then baptised (988), following the example of their king. In this liturgical beauty the emissaries encountered what is true, beautiful and heavenly. They had experienced worship in beauty and holiness which embraced the whole of life.

In some places and contexts (most particularly where the bishop is well-loved), it is possible for the faithful to approach the bishop to ask for the blessing, or to touch his vestments (remembering the woman with the hæmorrhage in Matthew 9:20-22) whilst he stands, sits or moves about in the nave (the people's part) of the Temple. Sometimes they approach to kiss the

bishop's Cross and *panagia*. Sometimes they touch and/or kiss parts of his vestments. Sometimes they simply take and kiss his hand. Indeed, it is desirable and natural that it be so. It is also the bishop who personally and by name, feeds the flock with the Body and Blood of Christ. The people kiss his hand precisely because of this, out of respect for the Grace that comes from Christ through the work of his hands. It must be remembered : the kissing of the hand of a high-priest or priest is not at all associated with the feudal custom of kissing not the hand but the ring of a person in authority. In the feudal system, this indicated subjugation to the ring-bearer. There is no implication of subjection amongst the Orthodox when hands are kissed. Rather, the respectful kissing of the hand of a bishop or priest (and of any elder or respected person) is something which is quite natural in traditional Orthodox societies. Amongst the bishops themselves, it is traditionally customary that the bishops kiss the right-hand of the bishop who is the chief of their synod, again out of respect for the one who is their father, as it were. Amongst us, the kissing of the right-hand is not at all limited to the clergy. It is simply commonplace that younger people kiss the right-hand of parents, grand-parents, teachers, and anyone to whom respect is due. The former custom in which a man would kiss the hand of a woman was not simply affection, but it also expressed respect for her as a woman.

Nevertheless, in its own manner, the veneration of the hand of the high-priest or priest is somewhat akin to venerating an icon. The veneration is not personal, therefore ; but as with icons, the veneration is passed to Christ Himself, no matter how beloved may be that particular priest or high-priest. Note that there is a liturgical prescription regarding the unvesting of the bishop at the end of the Divine Liturgy. It indicates that after he has been unvested, he should be led through the Temple, through the midst of the flock, to make his exit. The rubrics expect that the faithful have actually been able to remain in the nave until this moment. This is not exactly followed in North America ; however, in most places (again not North America), in the course of these entrances and exits, in the course of the movement of the bishop from one place to another, the faithful rush and/or press forward to the bishop (or bishops if there are more) in order to ask for a blessing, or merely to touch him or them. For example, we have a precedent in the Gospel account of the behaviour of such a crowd at the time when the woman with the hæmorrhage touched our Saviour :

> *Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. For she said, 'If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.' Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, 'Who touched My clothes?' But His disciples said to Him, 'You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, "Who touched Me?"' And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction'* (Mark 5:25-34).

Even nowadays we desire to press close to our Saviour, in the same manner as this woman and all those with her, because we want to be made whole by our Saviour. No doubt there were many other healings ; but this woman was different from the others, and special in her faith, so our Lord singled her out. In a similar manner, then, the faithful press close to the

high-priests and priests. This is because of the central fact that the bishop and the faithful still follow the words and the understanding of Saint Ignatius of Antioch :

> Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] be ; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic Church ("Letter to the Smyrnæans", 8 ; see p. 82, *&c.*).

During the vesting prayers in the middle of the Temple, when the *omophor* is put on him, and as the deacon recites the prayer (see Part C-7), the bishop is plainly reminded that he is himself liturgically and functionally and personally re-presenting Christ. It is plainly evident to him (and to us all with him) that the *omophor* represents the lost sheep that the Good Shepherd finds and carries on His shoulders back again to the Father. He cannot but recall our Saviour's Parable of the Lost Sheep (a parable is a succinct story in prose or verse, which illustrates one or more instructive principles, or lessons, or (sometimes) a normative principle) :

> '*What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!" I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance*' (Luke 15:4-7).

As the shepherd who leads the flock and gathers in the strays, it is the bishop's responsibility to renew the life of the Church, to provide in Christ all that is necessary for the Body of Christ to be healthy and growing. The blessing he gives is the blessing of Christ, not his own. The Grace that flows through him is that of Christ, not his own. It is crucial that each arch-pastor never forget this. It is crucial that all the faithful people never forget this.

There are many ways in which the Divine Liturgy is served by a high-priest (often called the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy), depending on local inherited customs. However, in them all, the bishop stands in the midst of everything and everyone. This manner of serving quite clearly points to Christ. As written previously, it serves as the foundation and standard for all other serving of the Divine Liturgy. By this I mean that it has always been properly understood that serving with the bishop is the standard pattern for all our serving. The manner of serving the Divine Liturgy without a bishop, but rather by presbyters, is a reduction, a shorter form of that standard. The priests serve the Divine Liturgy and all the mysteries (sacraments) as "agents" of the high-priest, and extensions of his authority, but they do not replace him.

It seems to be forgotten or neglected (but I hope not ignored) that there are liturgical principles which involve the reality of the Body of Christ, and the mutual responsibility between high-priest (or priest) and the laity. The main liturgical principle has to do with the practice in some places of reading aloud the *anaphora* (ἀναφορά, *anaphora* is a Greek word meaning "a carrying back", and it refers to the long prayer of the Eucharistic Offering in the Divine Liturgy). The reason that the reading aloud is done at all has to do with the unity and co-working of the people and the liturgical celebrant in making together the Offering to the Lord. The Greek word λειτουργία, *leitourgia* means "work of/for the people", or "serving in public office", and from this, serving religious services. This unity is yet another expression of the unity of Christ and His Body. In other words, when the *anaphora* (or any other prayer) is read aloud by the clergy, this is

done not to "inform" or to "educate" the people, but to include them in the Offering which is being made on their behalf. When the prayers are read aloud, the people are able to join their hearts and their whole being with the prayer of the celebrant, and to support his prayer in unity of heart, just as the prayers of the Divine Liturgy themselves clearly indicate. The people are enabled in their hearts to recognise more easily the connexion there is between the earthly Altar and the heavenly Altar. Indeed, this is exactly what I recall Archbishop Paavali of Finland carefully doing (and not he alone).

I am well aware that there are some clergy who are reading only parts of the *anaphora* aloud, perhaps for the purpose of saving a few minutes of time. Reading these prayers at top speed is sometimes also a factor. To my chagrin, I have sometimes mistakenly done both myself. The trouble with these sorts of so-called short-cuts is that in doing so, the celebrant, in effect, tells the people that they, the people, are secondary, and not necessary to this prayer. This manner of partial and speed-reading also indicates an assumption by the cleric that because most of the people may have open service-books in their hands, not reading the prayers completely doesn't really matter. Behind it can also be the mistaken idea that the purpose of the reading aloud is to educate the people, which it is not. The cleric may believe that the people can read faster than he can read aloud. In doing this, for whatever reasons, the celebrant introduces a division between himself and the assembled faithful. In fact, doing anything that could make a division can actually undermine the attempt to build up a living, life-giving community of lively Orthodox Christians. It can be added that the necessary unity and co-working I am referring to is quite logically connected with the fact that it is even written into the rubrics that no priest or high-priest is to serve the Divine Liturgy unless there is at least one other person present. It is better, therefore, for the real development of a living and mutually-supportive community, that this important element of the reading aloud of the complete *anaphora* be carefully protected (especially when it is the rich *anaphora* of the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great (†379), Bishop of Cæsarea, Cappadocia, in Asia Minor). This *anaphora* can be described as an intricate series of scriptural references and allusions. This *anaphora* is particularly remarkable because of the petition in which we ask the Lord that He make the evil be good, by His own goodness.

A complementary element to the reading aloud of the *anaphora* is the importance of the homily at every Divine Liturgy. Nowadays, it is more usual that a priest or high-priest will give a homily only during the Sunday Liturgy. However, in the context of the feeding of the sheep, it is actually the responsibility of the priest or high-priest to give a homily at every Liturgy, no matter how many or how few are participating with him in the Offering. The bishop is also a teacher, following the example of Christ. It is his responsibility after the reading of the Holy Gospel to feed the sheep with a word (homily) from the Word, and to show the faithful sheep the application to daily life of the day's Gospel-reading(s). It is not necessary to give a thorough exposition of the passage at every Liturgy, but it is important to give some words every time there is a reading. The homily need not be long. When I was in a position of serving the Divine Liturgy daily for many months, it was a challenge to do this. Nevertheless, I found that if I trusted in the Lord, He would, as always, provide something from even the briefest homily that the people could use for their encouragement in persevering in the Christian Way.

Sometimes a cleric may, as I have done, fall into the temptation of demonstrating his education and cleverness in his preaching. Lecturing instead of preaching often ensues. There is an anecdote I heard in my youth, which, because of its existence, reveals that lecturing is frequent. The anecdote is about two parishioners discussing the homily of the day. They agreed

with each other that this homily must have been really very good, and that their pastor must be really very clever, because they didn't understand anything at all. This is dangerous for all concerned. The homily is not a lecture. It need not be a masterpiece of rhetoric or theological exposition. On the contrary, people need constant reminders through the homilies that they are lovable, that they are loved by the Lord and by others, that they have value, that they have gifts to contribute, and that they can therefore have hope in Christ. By simple examples from his own experience in life, a homilist can show the people to whom he speaks how faith in Christ can be applied in practical ways in daily life by anyone. I still do not consider it optional to give a homily. Even the homilist needs the homily (the Lord speaks to him also through the homily).

Throughout history, many of those who bear this responsibility have often been concerned about their own apparent lack of great homiletic ability. However, Saint Cæsarius of Arles, France (†542) shares some encouraging words :

> Perhaps someone will say: I am not eloquent, so I cannot explain anything concerning sacred Scripture. Even if this be true, God does not require of us what we are unable to do. So definite is it that this does not harm priests that, even if some possess worldly eloquence, there is no need of pontifical language, which scarcely reaches the understanding of even a few people. Can anyone reveal or fittingly discuss obscure passages of the Old and New Testament and sound the depths of sacred Scripture? [...] I do not know whether there is any bishop, presbyter, or even a deacon who cannot preach in church or advise everyone everywhere these truths and many others like them. No eloquence or great memory is sought here where a simple admonition in ordinary language is understood to be necessary. If anyone takes away our earthly substance, we presume to bring in the most powerful judges and scholars of rhetoric to intervene with the highest authority, so that we may be able to recover our material possessions from the usurper. [...] Why do we cry out for the land? Because we love the land. Why do we not shout in the church? I have not dared to say it, but the truth compels me not to keep silent. We do not cry out in church because we do not love the people entrusted to our care. [...] If we are truly shepherds, we ought to provide spiritual pastures for the Lord's flock. If we are pilots, we should with God's help direct the ship of the Church in the midst of the waves of this life, vigorously and courageously, so that without any error we may be able to enter the port of paradise in a straight course, after all the waves and storms [...] ("Sermon 1").

In a similar vein, I remember well the effects of the use of the curtain-and-doors. When I was yet a young and "green" priest, and serving in an older parish, I began with opening and closing the curtain-and-doors in the prescribed manner (including during the time of the reception of the Holy Mysteries by the clergy). It was my concern, in the particular parish to which I refer, to bring people into the habit of receiving the Holy Mysteries more frequently. I soon understood that closing curtain-and-doors disconnected the people from the Altar every time, and instantly. As soon as the doors closed, the people sat down and even talked. This was most pronounced during the reception of the Holy Mysteries by the clergy. I tried leaving the curtain open at this time, but with the doors closed (they were otherwise quite "open" doors, with glass). The result was just the same. I have since visited there. The doors are again being closed. Again the people talk. However, when the curtain-and-doors were kept open the whole time (in the manner of the Greeks and Antiochians on this continent), the people remained "connected" with the Altar ; they paid attention ; they even sang along with the singers, and they listened to the readers during the time of waiting for their own reception of the Holy Mysteries. As a result, for the sake of developing a proper Orthodox Christian consciousness and mind

amongst the faithful, I then opened curtain-and-doors at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy, and I closed curtain-and-doors at the end, as was already being done elsewhere in the diocese. I came to understand that although placing a lighted candle before the closed doors may be helpful for the trained hesychast, it does little or nothing to help most lay-persons. I also learned during this time that it is better either that the singers sing hymns related to the particular day, or that a reader read from the eighteenth *kathisma* (session) of psalms, or the *polyeleion* of the nineteenth *kathisma* (Psalms 134, 135). These help the faithful keep their attention on what is being prepared to be given to them. I found it significant that, in my experience, the effect of the use of the curtain-and-doors at Vigil is not the same as it is at the Divine Liturgy. There are good reasons for closing curtain-and-doors at certain times, but in North America, during the Divine Liturgy, we seem to react differently from what is expected. It may help to be aware of this.

The Divine Liturgy, with our participation in the Holy Mystery of the Body and Blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ is the source of all our life and of our unity in Christ. As we shall see again later, our Saviour prays : "'*that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me*'" (John 17:23). The unity expressed here, and in our canonical Tradition, means that the Orthodox Church on every territory must express visibly this divine unity. The bishops in North America, in particular, face the challenge of bringing the Church as a whole into this visible unity. Because of political events during the twentieth century, which were exterior to the Church's life and to North America, our Orthodox Church here has become administratively fragmented along cultural and linguistic lines. These divisions are entirely artificial, the product of our struggle simply to survive the traumatic events that followed World War I and the communist revolution in Russia. Throughout history, the Orthodox Church has always been organised so as to reveal visibly both her unity in Christ, and the unity of the Holy Trinity. This is our responsibility now, to achieve this historical unity, with one bishop per city on a visible territory. In Christ, and with His help and guidance, we must overcome and heal the overlapping situation we now endure. Nowadays, we have to try to live with many bishops per city, and with no clearly defined territorial boundaries on that same territory. It is difficult in North America now, because of the length of time our unity has been broken, and because of the opportunity that has been given for personal interests and politics to interfere and to block the restoration of this unity commanded by Christ. Long ago this sort of obstacle, together with the absolute need for Orthodox co-operation, was recognised by Metropolitan Anthony (Bashir) (†1966) of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese. He therefore was instrumental in the organisation in 1942 of the Federated Orthodox Greek Catholic Primary Jurisdictions in America, and then later its re-organisation into the more effective Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA). Even so, the trouble is that although we ourselves may understand that all Orthodox comprise one Church despite these visible divisions, we do not reveal to our own eyes (or to the eyes of others) the necessary visible unity amongst ourselves which shows our unity in Christ Himself, and His oneness with the Church. The bishops and others do see the need for visible unity, but the way to achieve it still escapes us.

We appear much as Lutherans used to appear, professing the one and the same faith but being distinguished from one another by language. Thus, we are rightly accused of not being seriously faithful to our own Faith. Now, things are sufficiently complicated that this unity can really be achieved only through the supportive prayer and work of the Orthodox faithful believers in North America. It is the faithful themselves who must enable this unity by their own

prayers, and by their own deliberate co-operation and working together with other Orthodox Christians. It is the faithful people who must help the bishops to do what they are called to do and to be. It is entirely possible that the faithful people, enabled by their serious daily prayers for visible unity, may be so inspired by the Holy Spirit in their hearts that they will understand what is necessary to do locally. It is they who will enable a *de facto* unity amongst Orthodox people which the bishops will only have to bless. We cannot say that we have a choice about working towards this, because it is an absolute requirement for living the Orthodox life. The question is whether we all (not only the bishops) are willing to give up our pride and other agendas, and allow our Saviour to achieve this unity amongst us in accordance with His will. This is a matter of prayer and fasting for us all. As monks of the monasteries do on Mount Athos, so it is often done in many cities nowadays : parishioners from parishes of various jurisdictions will join one another for Liturgy and/or some other services on the name-days of the different communities. Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montréal are examples. This has already bridged many a gap. Of course, the template for these co-operative occasions has been found in the imprinted impression already made in combined worship on the Sunday of Orthodoxy and other Lenten Sunday evenings. Very often we are already praying for the special concerns of one another (local or distant) during the Augmented Litany. We could easily enough develop a habit of mentioning before the Lord the names of parishes of other jurisdictions in our areas during the same litany (with the blessing of the bishop, of course).

I am presenting what I perceive to be the correct way in which our lives are to be lived, in harmony with Christ, the Apostles and the Fathers. True, living Tradition is rooted in the Apostles and Fathers, who convey to us the truth about Christ who is the Truth. We thus convey the same to others. We can and do know Him, and we can and do know the Apostles and the Fathers also. Archimandrite Iustin (Pârvu) (†2013) of Petru Voda, Romania, wrote this :

> This Christian Tradition is the link with the past, a strong root that keeps you firm and steadfast, gazing towards heaven, and able to resist present and future trials (Fr. Justin Pârvu: The life and teachings of a confessor, p. 157).

I do not forget the difficulties and deficiencies that come with distractedness, forgetfulness and sin in the life of an arch-pastor. Should the bishop be one who is broken, sick and distorted (arising usually from some form of pride), then he, himself, will not be able to live in this harmony. He may even reject it. He may not feel that he is able to allow the Lord to heal him. Or he may demand that this healing be only through a miracle (because of fear of the consequences in gossip about his seeing a professional). However, it has rightly been understood that the Lord has always been and always is at work through the help of certain professionals. Saints Panteleimon, Cosmas, Damian and others are examples of such professionals, who understand through the Lord's inspiration what He has given us amongst plants and herbs for our well-being. These holy persons brought (and bring) to people the Lord's spiritual and physical healing. Today, our Lord uses medical and other professionals likewise to help us, and these professionals can very well work hand-in-glove with the saints to whom we turn. When the ailing bishop openly does accept the physical, psychological and emotional help of such persons towards healing, he enables the flock also to accept help without fear. If the ailing bishop will not at all accept such help, then he can very well find that the Lord will eventually remove and replace him (since this is the usual consequence). Indeed, this is how some bishops have become Gnostics, Arians or Nestorians, and how some have fallen into being worldly manipulators and power-mongers.

Professor Sergei S Verhovskoy (†1986) explains how this living Tradition is maintained by the Lord in good times and in bad, through the faithful people themselves, who live in the living Tradition :

> One hundred and twenty-three years ago [from 1982, when he wrote], the Patriarch of Constantinople Anthimos VI wrote an encyclical letter to all Orthodox Christians, which was signed by all the patriarchs of the East and twenty-nine bishops. In this letter we find a passage that has deeply impressed both theologians and laity of our Church. It states: 'In our Church, neither patriarchs nor councils could ever introduce any novelty, because the protector of the faith among us is the very body of the Church, that is, our people themselves, who always desire to preserve their faith unchanged and in agreement with the faith of the fathers'. Thus, our patriarchs have recognised the great importance of the laity in preserving the Orthodoxy of our Church. We know that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries our laity indeed, under the guidance of the best hierarchs, saved the Church of Constantinople and South Russia from the Latin Unia, even though many of our hierarchs at the time betrayed the Church. In general, the great majority of heresies was started not by the laity, but by representatives of the hierarchy. The same encyclical contains many ideas directly concerning Orthodoxy. For example, at the end of the letter we read: 'Brothers, our faith is not from man and not through man, but through the revelation of Jesus Christ, preached by the divine apostles, confirmed by the holy ecumenical councils, transmitted by the great and wise teachers of the universe and sealed by the blood of the holy martyrs. Let us keep the confession which we have received in its purity from all these men; let us reject any novelty as a suggestion of the devil. The Orthodox faith is perfect' (The Light of the World, pp. 9-10).

The Church can both survive and even grow in the midst of persecutions, such as in the first three centuries after the Incarnation of the Word. Examples of the stability of this Tradition in Christ through times of persecution, and also through times of rapid renewal and flourishing in Christ in times of freedom, can be seen during two recent periods in the life of the Russian Orthodox Church. These periods to which I refer are the great persecution that followed the communist revolution, and the rightly-called resurrection of the Church which followed at the end of the Soviet era. Throughout both, the Grace of the Holy Spirit has been with the faithful people. Always, the faithful people have taken great care to live their lives in accordance with the Tradition of Christ which they themselves received. In the earlier time of persecution, they remained steadfast in their loyal love for Christ. They kept the Church intact, so that the clergy would be able to feed Christ's flock, despite the great slaughter of many of their brethren. In the more recent period, the faithful people have, in Christ, again risen to the challenge to keep intact the Tradition of Christ in a period of extremely rapid renewal. The result of this prayerful and faithful loyalty to Christ has been the out-pouring of the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and the speedy development of the visible presence and activity of the Church in all levels of society. This is evident in all parts of both the Russian Federation and the other territories of the former Soviet Union. The rate of this growth has been called a resurrection. Indeed, it can be compared to the instant appearance of mushrooms after rain. However, the tempter is active, trying to block and destroy this resurrection. In this resurrection, there is much that is truly beautiful and alive in Christ. However, just as all mushrooms are not life-giving (but can even be deadly), not every part of the renewal is truly healthy or life-giving. As with mushrooms and other plants, things which may appear beautiful may sometimes be deadly. Discernment and understanding are crucial. Human beings are, after all, fallen creatures.

4

Serving as a bishop is a fearful responsibility

'*For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more*' (Luke 12:48).

It is a serious, fearful and difficult thing to undertake the responsibility of being a bishop, as we see from these words of our Saviour. This is so because this service is so directly linked with our Saviour Himself. I mean by this that even though we are all Christ-bearers, it is the bishop who has the most visible, liturgical and theological responsibility to do this, to re-present Christ to the faithful and to the world. Saint John Chrysostom underlines his understanding of the gravity of the episcopal responsibility thus :

> A man who loses sheep through the ravages of wolves or the attacks of robbers or through disease or some other accident, might perhaps meet with a measure of pardon from the owner of the flock. Even if he is called upon to pay compensation, the penalty stops at money. But anyone entrusted with men, the rational flock of Christ, risks a penalty not of money but of his own soul for the loss of the sheep. Moreover, he has a far greater and more difficult struggle (Six Books on the Priesthood, p. 54).

> If it is true that those who are entrusted with civic government subvert their cities and ruin themselves as well, unless they are wise and very watchful, what about the man whose task is to adorn the Bride of Christ ? How much strength in himself and from above do you think he needs to avoid complete failure ? No one loved Christ more than Paul ; no one showed more earnestness than he ; no one was endowed with more Grace. Yet for all that he went in fear and trembling for his authority and those who were under it. He says, '*I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ*' [2 Corinthians 11:3]. And again, '*I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling*' [1 Corinthians 2:3]. Yet he was a man who had been '*caught up to the third heaven*' [2 Corinthians 12:2], and shared in the unspeakable things of God, and endured deaths every day he lived after his conversion. He was a man who did not want to use the authority given him by Christ in case one of the believers should be offended. If, then, one who did more than he was commanded by God and never aimed at any advantage for himself, but only for those under his direction, was always in fear, because he kept in view this magnitude of his responsibility, what will become of us ? [...] I know the importance of that ministry and the great difficulty of it. More billows toss the priest's soul than the gales which trouble the sea (*op. cit.* pp. 75, 77).

The fearfulness of this responsibility is shown through the words of this very Apostle Paul. He repeatedly said that although we must give due deference to civil authorities (see Romans 13:1-7), there should be no distinction amongst us on the basis of appearance, influence, language, money and, for the most part, of gender also. Not conforming to our fallen human society, then, the high-priest or priest must always avoid making distinctions between persons on the basis of anything at all (except for particular functions and God-given gifts), precisely because Christ does not do so. The following six clear, comprehensive statements are excerpts from the Apostle's letters :

> *For there is no partiality with God* (Romans 2:11 ; see 5 Moses 10:17 ; Sirach 35:12, 13).

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him (Romans 10:12).

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:28-29).

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God (Ephesians 2:14-19).

[...] *you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all* (Colossians 3:9-11).

I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality (1 Timothy 5:21).

The Apostle underlines this mutual responsibility and unity in Christ, and the proper ordering of things in Christ by the Grace of the Holy Spirit when he uses the vivid metaphor of the body :

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all. [...] *But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many.* [...] *Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually* (1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11-14, 27).

Membership in Christ produces a unity amongst all the clergy and the faithful of the Church, just as described by the Apostle. We are all one. Therefore, even if any person may be shy or humble, if any person may feel unworthy, if any person may be fearful, it is important that this person be able to approach the high-priest and the priest for the blessing of Christ, and for sacramental refreshment. I mean by this that, in the Holy Spirit, the priest has the responsibility and the gifts to be able to convey this blessing. The person can find healing and reconciliation through confession, and then the nourishment and healing of body and soul that come from frequently receiving the Body and Blood of Christ. This refreshment and nourishment can come through other means, such as through holy anointing, and through prayer. Indeed, in the Greek Orthodox Church, the Mystery of Anointing (Unction) is called *euchelaion*, which means "the oil of prayer". The cleric must be able to encourage the fragile

faithful to approach him ; and sometimes, knowing their weakness, he must approach them. The Apostle Paul says to us that the cleric, therefore, should be as he, "*all things to all men*" :

> *For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the Gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you* (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

Our Orthodox way has always told us that it is a priority to treat each human being as a Christ-bearer, as one akin to being an icon. Therefore, the value of persons is found in who they are, not in what they do ; not in how much they know, or whom they know ; not how attractive they are, or how much they earn. Our Lord has shown us from the beginning that this sort of treatment of human beings is a priority for us. We, as Christ-bearers, are to treat everyone else as a Christ-bearer. We are not to make distinctions. King Solomon understood this well, and long ago. He wrote to other kings, but he addressed his own responsibility before the Lord :

> *For power was given to you from the Lord, and your lordship from the Most High, who will make a careful search of your works and examine closely your plans.* [...] *For the least is pardoned in mercy, but the powerful shall be strongly examined. For the Master of all will not shrink back from anyone's presence, nor respect greatness; because He Himself made both small and great, and cares for all alike. But a strict inquiry is imminent for the mighty* (Wisdom of Solomon 6:3, 6-8).

Therefore, moved by His love, and wishing to imitate Him, we begin anew treating each other with tender, patient, nurturing love, as we would tend delicate flowers and plants in a garden, whose blossoms and fruit we want to encourage. The precious and mutually responsible unity in Christ's love is stressed by the Apostle :

> *For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread* (1 Corinthians 10:17).

It is Christ's love which produces this disposition, and which maintains this very unity and its mutually responsible attitude. Saint Ignatius of Antioch gives further clarification about the unity which concerns us here :

> [...] I will make it obvious to you what I have begun to discuss about the Divine Plan regarding the new person Jesus Christ, in His faith and in His love, in His suffering and Resurrection. I will do this, especially if the Lord reveals to me that by Grace, you all, to a person, one by one, are coming together as one, in one faith, and in Jesus Christ [...] so that you may obey the bishop and the presbytery [...] breaking one bread, which is medicine of immortality, an antidote that prevents us from dying, but always to live in Jesus Christ ("Letter to the Ephesians", 20).

Saint John Chrysostom comments on this unity :

> What is the Bread ? The Body of Christ. And what do they become who partake of it ? The Body of Christ : not many bodies, but one Body. For as the bread consisting of many

> grains is made one, so that the grains are in no way distinguishable ; they exist indeed, but their distinction is not seen because of their conjunction ; so are we conjoined both with each other and with Christ. There is not one body for you, and another for your neighbour to be nourished by, but the very same for all. Therefore also he adds, '*for we all partake of that one bread*' [1 Corinthians 10:17] ("Homily on First Corinthians 10").

The responsibility of being a bishop is fearful because of the multitude of temptations that arise to distort, to distract, and to disable those who are ordained to this order, rank, and responsibility. It is as if we are in the desert with the desert fathers, being ceaselessly tempted by the adversary. In fact, we are in the desert. Those earlier desert fathers and mothers, full of love for Christ, literally went into the desert. By contrast, our desert may be a city full of non-believers, or an aeroplane full of people who have no thought or care for the Lord. Formerly, the primary reason for withdrawing to the desert was, in imitation of Christ, to be in complete and focussed silence, alone with the Lord and in loving communion with Him :

> *So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed* (Luke 5:16).

Our Saviour Himself, making reference to Isaiah 26:20 (Canticle 5 of Matins), further says to us :

> '*But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly*' (Matthew 6:6).

However, we see yet more about our Saviour in the whole of Luke 5. We see throughout the Gospels that He was constantly surrounded by crowds who were looking for healing and for teaching. Of course, He both taught and healed them. Unlike monks, the arch-pastors are called as well to the active aspect of caring for, feeding, teaching and healing the sheep. Taking care of the needs of the sheep in this way, however, requires of anyone a considerable amount of physical energy. The body must rest sometimes, and the heart must be in silence also. Therefore, our Saviour took time in solitude so that there would be balance, and there are many references to His taking such times. Many a holy monk has done likewise, who has been called to heal and teach in a similar manner. Saint Seraphim of Sarov (†1833) is only one of many such monks who did this. However, relatively few monks or others are called to be bishops and to imitate our Saviour so closely both in activity and in solitude. Those who are given this responsibility are almost always first spending many years in solitude with the Lord. Sometimes this solitude is complete. They are in such solitude so as to be in undisturbed communion with the Lord, and to be filled with His love. It is only when they have been thoroughly cleansed, and therefore have Christ's strength, that our Saviour calls them to greater activity. Even then, they withdraw frequently, as did He.

Such periods of solitude need not always be long, but it is better that they be regular. The early desert fathers and mothers also withdrew to the desert in order to confront the powers of darkness. This confrontation was not nearly so much about exterior powers, as about the personal and inner activity of the darkness, which may be called "the passions". This confrontation was not a confrontation of fighting (as we usually understand fighting). Rather, it was one of bringing the life-giving light of Christ into that darkness, so that by means of their co-operation with Him, His light and life would overcome the darkness within ; and, now shining, give life to all who were held in thrall by the darkness. And life did come. Nowadays, the desert we face is the spiritual desert of North America and the West in general. Unlike those fathers

and mothers, few of us are in physical solitude. In our spiritual desert, we have great difficulty ever finding time and space in which to be alone with the Lord, and we are assaulted daily by everything imaginable and beyond imagination. That is why it is important that we take care to imitate Christ's regular withdrawing to be silent and to pray. We do this in order to be with Him, so that we will be able to know Him, to be in communion with Him, and to carry Him with us everywhere and always. Then we will be able to co-operate actively with Him in the midst of all the distractions, tumults and attacks that come with daily life.

Every person in any sort of leadership, who is giving this leadership on the good and true path, is attacked in many different ways. Methods of gossip, slander and denunciation have been, through technology, thoroughly refined and honed. Those who are called by Christ to lead must constantly be calling to Him and to the Mother of God (and also to their friends amongst the saints) for help and protection. A person may well say that the fact that the bishop is blessing with candles is a liturgical expression of his responsibility to bear Christ's light everywhere and at all times. It is not only the bishop's responsibility. The light of those candles expresses to us that the bearing of Christ's light wherever we are is the responsibility of every one of us, as we remember always that the light of Christ illumines the darkness. His light illumines all.

From the time of our baptism, when we put on Christ, we were given spiritual armour with which the Lord protects us from all attacks. However, it is for us deliberately and daily (and even oftener) to take up this armour and put it on. If we wish to live under the shelter of Christ's protection, we must never be without this armour. By having put on this armour, and having kept it on, all the martyrs were able to persevere in Christ unto the end. We have received in the Gospels, the Acts and in the Epistles more than enough examples of how the apostles did this. We have many encouragements about our need always to have on the whole armour of God, that is, Christ Himself, as the Apostle wrote :

> *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints* (Ephesians 6:10-18).

As an admonition to bishops and to us all, Saint Ignatius of Antioch supplements the words of the Apostle :

> Let not one of you be found to be a deserter. Let your baptism remain as your weapons, your faith as a helmet, your love as a spear, your endurance as a complete set of armour ("Letter to Polycarp", 6).

It is a fearful thing to be an arch-pastor in his responsibility to lead the flock, because there is, in general, such an imbalance in our societies nowadays. This imbalance is very

thoroughly penetrating the inner life of our Church. In this case I refer in particular to spirits of extremism and radicalism which, together with protectionism and retribution seem to be active everywhere. These spirits pretend to be protecting and preserving what is true in the Church. They strive to keep pure our Orthodox teachings. The trouble is that this sort of human-centred attitude has the effect of taking away life. We practice taxidermy on the Orthodox Faith. We pickle it. No longer can we share Christ's love and promote the renewal and multiplication of life in Christ because of the brine (or cement). We have lost our direction. In this drive to preserve the truth, we become zealots and grand inquisitors. We forget that it is the Church that saves us, not we that save the Church. There is only one Saviour, Jesus the Christ. It is He, as the one, true Head of the Body of Christ, who has always been saving the Church and saving us.

However, forgetting that this is Christ's Church, with inquisitorial persistence, we strive on our own strength to root out every suspected error, variance, deviation, distortion, fall or flaw. With the present means of instant communication, we also establish digital sites which focus on examining in detail the supposed and usually unproven faults of others. We establish courts of public gossip in which every opinion and every imagination is taken as a fact. Very many people are still surprisingly naïve enough to believe that everything in print (even if it be digital) is therefore true. When we spread all sorts of twisted and often imagined details about the lives of others, we digitally lead crowds, even myriads of people into temptation. In doing this, we become responsible ourselves before the Lord for what we are doing to these gullible persons, and for the consequences. We attack everyone with whom we disagree, and everyone whom we don't like. Liking someone is not a criterion for Christian behaviour. There is no requirement that Christians agree about everything. Both of these ideas are worldly ideas. When we behave in such base and gossipy ways, we abandon our responsibility in Christ to use balanced and truthful discernment based on the criterion of Christ's love :

> '*For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks*' (Luke 6:43-45).

I understand the words of our Saviour about an "evil man" to indicate a person who has been deeply influenced by evil, and who thus produces evil fruit. When we are living by worldly criteria, it seems that we lose our ability to see and to understand what should be obvious. Our Saviour has said here that thorn-bushes do not produce figs, and grapes do not grow on bramble bushes. We should not approach a bramble bush and expect to find grapes, nor should we approach a hawthorn tree and expect to find figs. This is simple, plain logic. He tells us that we ought not to apply any false logic to each other. If we do that, it is certainly not logical, and we may say it is not sane. If a person's life bears the characteristics of the presence and activity of Christ, we must be ready to give thanks to God for this, and support that person in the good. It is deadly for us if we say that such a person is bringing forth evil. How can we rationally accept it uncritically if someone says to us that this fig tree is bearing thorns, or this grape-vine is producing brambles ? However, if we see that a person has fallen away from the truth and is in danger of perishing, it is for us, having recognised this, to help that person come to repentance so that the person can bear good, not evil fruit. The evil fruit comes from a heart that is sick. Christ can heal the sick heart. I remember well that in my childhood I made many rather stupid mistakes (I still do it). My father asked me : "Where are your brains ?" I replied : "I didn't

think". He replied : "That's just the trouble, isn't it. Next time, think first". He was wise, and his words left an impression. Our Lord gave us brains, and it is for us to use them properly, which particularly means that we constantly consult the Lord as we use them.

When we accept to live by the criteria of the world instead of the criterion of Jesus Christ, we live in such a way as to corrupt these words : "*the zeal for Your house has devoured me*" (Psalm 68:10). We focus our attention on these words, and we are blind to the words that immediately follow : "*and the reproaches of those reproaching You have fallen on me*". In all this, we also dangerously forget the words of our Saviour : "'*But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart*'" (Matthew 5:28). These words apply not only to adultery, but also to all dark thoughts. By harbouring dark or evil thoughts towards any other person, we are already enacting them. Being angry with or hating someone can be just the same thing as murder, spiritually. Because we are living in imbalance, then in our aggressive purgings of what we perceive to be wrongs and errors, we can think that we are actually striving for purity in the Church. We tell ourselves that we are following in the foot-steps of Saints Athanasius (†375), Maximus the Confessor (†662) and Mark of Ephesus (†1444). Thus, we can easily then separate ourselves off from the rest of the Church, saying that we are the pure ones, and that all others are impure (or even evil) betrayers. We become schismatics, in fact. We become Orthodox Protestants. The fear-based desire to protect becomes instead a rigid environment of exclusion. We deceive ourselves into thinking that we are doing what is right, but instead we become exactly what we think we are condemning. Thus, in fact, it is we who have been betraying Christ by acting completely without Him and on our own initiative. We have neglected the most important element of Psalm 68:10, which says plainly to us, in effect, that if we are zealous for Christ, we must be equally ready to suffer with Him (and in the same ways). Our Saviour can know who is actually evil, but it is not possible for me to know this, or even to think that I could. I, unlike our Saviour, cannot know the heart of anyone else. Therefore, my responsibility is to intercede for anyone I perceive to be in error, and if possible to help correct the error in Christ's love. My responsibility includes leading such a person to repentance and back to life in the Church, in communion with Christ and the whole flock, as far as that person is willing. Christ's self-emptying love puts the other first.

It is a fearful thing for a bishop, who is himself trying to remain in balance, to attempt to keep leading the flock on a right, true and level path, a path which avoids the spiritual death that comes with any such extremism as just described. There is yet another and strangely perilous area in which a dangerous imbalance can become even deadly. This is in the requests for prayers and intercessory support that are often shared. It is a good thing to intercede for any person, and particularly for a person requesting this prayer. The danger is found in asking for details about the reason for the request. What we know or do not know about any person's situation does not make any difference to the Lord, and our knowing details does not influence the Lord. He knows everything, and far more than we could ever know or understand. It is our pride that leads us to believe that if we know some details we could pray better and thus bring about a good result from the Lord. This is magic-thinking. The mentality behind much that we do in the West at present seems to be that of "technique". In our ego-centric delusion, we think that if we could only find the right technique for one problem or another, we could repair everything ourselves. The unmentioned word behind this attitude is "control". Technique and control are symptoms both of fear, and of trying to be independent of the Lord. That is folly. The Lord is not a cosmic cow that requires a special, secret milking technique from which we could benefit

by knowing the secret. Such ideas are evil and blasphemous. Our love must be properly focussed, not running wild in such a way. We must be careful in the Lord so that our compassion does not move on through empathy to curiosity. The result of this can bring about the fall of a brother or sister.

A monk I once talked with said that he had asked the Christ-loving Elder Paisios (Eznepidis) of Mount Athos (†1994) about the zealotry that we see so much of these days. He responded that the zealots have lost balance, and that they are living in their heads, not in their hearts — that in them the head and the heart are not united. There must be a union and balance between the head and the heart ; and the heart, where Christ resides, must be in the lead. The Elder Paisios, as reported in the book Spiritual Awakening, gives an example, and further instruction. He tells us that in no way must a Christian be either a fanatic or any sort of extremist. Any sort of extremism is, he says, an expression of egotism. Of course, extremism is also the result of some fear or other. He tells of a certain person who had a thorough theological preparation, and who was notorious for being both blunt and penetrating in his correcting comments to people. He tended to crush people, rather than correct them. Father Paisios is said to have told this man that how he corrected people was equivalent to stoning them. He told him that the better Christian way is to give meaningful correction to errors in a gentle, supportive, tolerant and comprehensible manner. We make a correction of a mistake in the context of respecting the other, rather than condemning the other outright along with the mistake. We make a correction from the position of humility, not from egotism. Zeal is good, healthy and life-giving only when it is completely motivated by Christ's self-emptying and selfless love. Using "knowledge" in the sense that it is divinely inspired and from the heart, Saint Nektarios of Ægina, Bishop of Pentapolis, wrote this for our benefit :

> The zealot according to knowledge, motivated by the love of God and his neighbour, does all things with love and self-effacement; he does nothing that might bring sorrow to his neighbour; such a zealot is enlightened by knowledge and nothing prompts him to deviate from what is morally right. The Christian who is inspired by zeal not according to knowledge is a ruinous man who turns the Gospel of Grace and love upside down. His zeal is a seductive fire, a consuming fire. Destruction comes forth from him and desolation follows in his wake. He beseeches God to send down fire from Heaven and to devour all of those who do not embrace his principles and convictions. He is characterised by hatred for those of other religions and confessions, envy and persistent anger, violent resistance to the true spirit of Divine Law, an unreasonable obstinacy in defending his own views, a passionate zeal for prevailing in all things, the love of glory, quarrels, contention, and a love of turmoil (Self-Knowledge).

It is a fearful thing to be a bishop because of the nature of the westernised societies and cultures in which we live. When I use this term "western", I refer to the philosophical and theological back-ground which is based on Aristotelian philosophy and scholastic methods, which are "man-centred", and therefore idolatrous. This is in contrast to our Orthodox eastern/oriental back-ground, whose methods are God-centred. One consequence of this use of western mentality is that the person is reduced to the individual. In the following citation, the Elder Amphilochios of Patmos (†1970) was speaking about Greece, but his words apply to us all nowadays, and especially to bishops :

> Our country is covered with the ice of materialism and of atheism, and we are all called to take part in their defeat. Only when this ice dissipates will we be able to find and to enjoy once again that true earth which the apostolic ploughs cultivated, and which the blood of

> martyrs and the sweat of monastic Saints watered. Only then will the Noëtic Sun warm the Greek soil, which will immediately sprout forth flowers in bloom and will bear fruit, as before, to the glory of God (Precious Vessels of the Holy Spirit, pp. 51-52).

In his book Through the Creation to the Creator, p. 5, Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia writes about his having met the Elder Amphilochios, a spiritual father on Patmos. He describes the elder as an ecologist before the term was well-defined. For instance, when he heard confessions, as a part of the spiritual discipline, he would assign to the penitent the obedience of planting a tree. He walked about the island and watered the seedlings, and the island was transformed and re-forested through this work. He liked to say that the Lord wants us to love the trees. As a complement to these words (and to this living example) are the words of the Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemann in For the Life of the World, pp. 128-130. Father Alexander stresses that secularism, which encompasses the materialism and atheism mentioned by Father Amphilochios, is the declaration by the world of its self-sufficiency and its independence from God. In one of his public talks, he said that secularism is a western phenomenon which belongs to the category of Christian truths that went berserk. He points out that scholastic philosophers began to bifurcate and divide and categorise all that previously, in Christian understanding, had been interwoven parts of one whole. In these western categories, what is mystical and symbolic is not real, and what is real is not symbolic. We Orthodox must keep mindful of the fact that what is a symbol is real, true and even more, in Christ. The rejection of the very concept that holds all together in one is a rejection of the Christian understanding of what is creation and its fundamental sacramental character. From this came the false differentiation between natural and supernatural, in which the sacramental unity given by the Lord is ignored and rejected. By doing this (as we will be reminded later in this text), we lose all sense of balance. We invite and even willingly embrace extremism, to our loss. The end result of this berserkness is an ossification of our faith and of ourselves. We become fossilised.

In testimony of this sad state of affairs of false differentiation, we can observe that the distortion of individualising nowadays begins in infancy, with the baby's being relegated (usually) to a different room (rather than sleeping with the parents). Thus, what should be a living unity is divided up, dissected, separated and compartmentalised. We now distract a child from being engaged with us by giving presents ; and likewise, we keep ourselves at arm's-length from each other by similar adult electronic gadgets. It is usual nowadays that we let everything but worshipping the Lord in the Church and nurturing our life in Christ take precedence. Early in life, parents press their children into extracurricular activities, lessons and sports which take precedence over worship and normal family life and communication. Worship, and consciousness of the Lord are steadily removed from our lives. With this change in attitude come pressures to alter all the customs and regulations which once protected a day of worship (which was also a day of rest). We then have no worship, and we also have no real rest. We produce aching and lonely hearts, and then try to salve this pain with things. Things cannot ever substitute for real love. As a result, we have difficulty engaging each other, and even more difficulty being engaged with the Lord. Our life was given to us for worship of God and for holiness in unity with the Lord and with one another. Instead, our life is dangerously becoming idolatrous, secular, self-indulgent, isolated, and dead. Worshipping the Lord is increasingly replaced by worshipping sports, sports-heroes and trophies of sports. It is, perhaps, replaced even more by shopping.

Of course, it is required that we all live our lives in these societal contexts. At the same time, we somehow must maintain an authentic Orthodox mentality and an Orthodox way of life. This is, in fact, so very difficult for many of us that instead of embracing this truthful reality, we follow the way of the cinema. I mean that we take the escapist path of developing a dream-world. We idealise some supposedly golden or particularly holy age of long ago. We ignore all the reality of the ugliness of that time, and turn it into an imaginary utopia. We try to play "let's pretend" when we go to church ; and even there in strange ways we try to re-construct this so-called utopia as we imagine it to have been (much as phantasy films and modern amusement parks do). However, it is something that never was. We live a dream ; we live a lie.

In the midst of all these distortions, it is extremely difficult for any bishop to keep his balance in Christ, just as it is for every Christian ; and it is difficult for him to lead the flock entrusted to him on an authentic Christian path. This authentic way is expressed by the "golden mean", or "middle way" that is characteristic of the Orthodox in general at all times and in all places. In response to the worldly environment (which is characterised by all sorts of extremes and reflex-reactions, and by fashions and fads that change almost daily), keeping an equilibrium is important for bishops even more than for others, because of their responsibility as leaders and as examples to the flock. A balance must be maintained in their own lives : heart, body, soul and spirit. This maintaining of the middle way, far from extremes, is not only in response to negative environments ; but rather, this balance and this middle way reflect and demonstrate that we live in the stability and the changelessness of God's love. As He is changeless, so we who imitate Him strive to be changeless in this respect. We have come to a state of knowing ourselves honestly and truly in Him ; and in His love, we do not essentially change. We are able in Him always to be the one and the same person. Nevertheless, it is paradoxically true that without changing, we do change : we repent and turn to life and light in Him, as we turn away from darkness and death. We change by the increase of selfless and self-emptying love in Christ.

We are repeatedly exhorted in the Scriptures to be moderate in everything. It is most often not in the extremes but in the middle that truth is to be found. Love, self-emptying love, love like the Saviour's, goes with this "middleness". It sounds strange, but it can actually be a compliment to address someone as "your mediocrity". Indeed, we have truly inherited a Hebraic sense of harmony and unity of body and soul, of the material and spiritual, which influences everything about us, which conveys moderation and balance. This unity of body and soul in ourselves is continued in the unity and harmony of persons in the Body of Christ as well. It is a unity of intertwined importance : of our respect for one another in Christ, of our seeing and honouring Christ in one other, and of our responsibility towards one another in Christ.

It is for each of us to carry this with us by example as we daily step out into an environment that is the opposite of this. This environment is yearning for what we have ; but we, bearers of the Truth, are daily put sharply to the test. Our environment, in its evading the Truth, and in its erecting every sort of supposedly more intelligent and better way, works hard at relativising everything. In such relativism, truth can be considered to be plural. This is actually illogical. As we have seen in John 14:6, He who is the Truth reveals Himself to us, and He reveals that He is the Truth. For us Orthodox, all that is true is related to Him who is the Truth. However, although we may believe, teach and preach the Truth, we do not always follow through in action, and thus we confuse not only others but ourselves also. Nowadays, truth as a word has become so relativised that in general society there is no longer a sense of absolute truth (and for us this term always refers to Christ, of course). In our failure to be faithful and

consistent, we inadvertently support the distorted meaning of truth. Besides this, in the self-idolatry of the secular society in which we subsist, everything is reduced to the shopping mentality. In looking for faith, in looking for hope, in looking for belonging, I can choose what I want and leave what I want, and make my own concoction. Many do. How many so-called churches or denominations now exist in North America ? Tens of thousands is the official answer. Rather than asking God to reveal Himself so that we can know Him and follow Him, many of us tend to tell Him who He is. In the midst of such an attitude, the Christian following the Truth is ridiculed and mocked. The Christian understands that not to follow the Lord, but instead to accept and embrace the world's popular perspectives and values, is not simply like stepping on, but like jumping into quick-sand. Saint Anthony the Great (†356) foresaw this mess :

> Abba [*i.e.* Father] Anthony said, 'A time is coming when men will go mad, and when they see someone who is not mad, they will attack him saying, "You are mad; you are not like us"' (The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, p. 6).

It is possible to follow our Lord, but those who do so are humble enough to "swim against the current" of materialism. Although they live in the world, they are not of the world.

The world is twisting and turning about, trying to find and suggest every possible scheme by which Christ could be understood in a different way, so that if it were possible, Christ could be reduced : God could be boxed in, and He could be manipulated by us. In a world that wants to present the logical absurdity that there can be varieties of truths, it is necessary that we keep our hearts focussed on Him who is the one, the only Truth. In a world that is at once fleeing, and attacking the Truth that is Christ, it is crucial to remember Whom we serve, and to keep alive our personal relationship with Him. Our Saviour is not merely a proposition, not merely a philosopher, not merely a "good guy". Our Saviour is the Word of God become flesh — the Word, who speaks everything into being. Our Saviour is Love Incarnate.

I once read a popular moralising and sentimental article about a scheme proposed by the enemy of our race (the devil) by which to catch us. The plan was that everything possible would be done to help keep us busy. This keeping busy would simply increase and increase. There would be pressures from here, pressures from there, demands from here, demands from there. Technology would escalate, and increase the pace. The purpose of all this was simply to distract us so much that we would no longer have any idea what we are doing, where we are going, or who we are. In the life of most of us, there are so many apparently imperative requirements that there are not enough hours in the day to accomplish what demands attention. Even if the day were doubled, we could more than fill it. Ironically, a bishop's life may suffer even more from this. As we are all aware (and as is often heard in confession), people are driven by fear of the consequences of not being able to do everything that seems in all its immensity to be absolutely demanded.

During my many years of episcopal service, I have lived more and more in this atmosphere of being driven (or at least feeling that I am driven). On the basis of the mistaken principle that all these things must be done ; on the principle that quick communication is of the essence ; on the principle that I must be responsible and always available ; on the principle that I have to show that I'm earning my keep, as it were, I have frequently fallen out of focus. I remember that when I became a bishop (from a certain perspective, it seems not all that long ago), what was available was an old, manual, non-electric typewriter, a filing-cabinet, some

cardboard boxes, pens, pencils, paper, envelopes, stamps, and a regular telephone affixed to the wall by a wire (and to my ear by my hand). It was a big step to add an amazing fax-machine, and then an electric typewriter. Slowly, computers, printers and scanners were added, along with the invention of e-mail. Then came the mobile phone ; and after it, its accompanying e-mail programmes. I finally learnt to turn off the mobile phone at night (well, most of the time). It is now my conviction that "putting on the brakes" is of primary importance. It is not that I had not been told this before, but now I have finally understood. All these so-called necessary conveniences (intended to serve us) have instead become heartless and mindless slave-drivers. We have become willing slaves of these masters. Now we must find in our Lord the way to extricate ourselves from complexity and slavery to materialism, and to keep ourselves in harmony with Him. Our Lord must always be "in the driver's seat". Balance is properly the main characteristic of the normal Christian life. Simplicity is almost its equal, and certainly its complement. Simplicity does not deny technology ; neither does the sense of balance deny it. Rather, the characteristic of simplicity and of balance is that everything is kept in its proper order and place, in proper perspective, and submitted to the will of God through the leading of the Holy Spirit. Saint Gregory the Theologian clarifies for us the importance of balance :

> This, however, I take to be generally admitted — that just as it is not safe for those who walk on a lofty tight-rope to lean to either side, for even though the inclination seems slight, it has no slight consequences, but their safety depends upon their perfect balance : so in the case of one of us, if he leans to either side, whether from vice or ignorance, no slight danger of a fall into sin is incurred, both for himself and those who are led by him. But we must really walk in the King's Highway [4 Moses (Numbers) 20:17], and take care not to turn aside from it either to the right hand or to the left, as the Proverbs say [Proverbs 4:26] ("Defence of the Flight to Pontus").

The middle way is also an essential characteristic of our way of life in Christ. This middle way, indeed, is the condition in which our hearts are most likely to be receptive to the movement and prompting of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, for instance, there is a tendency to make an excess on the side of joyfulness. There is the example of marriages or baptismal celebrations which can become over-exuberant, and sometimes even over-indulgent. The joy of the occasion can actually be undone by excess, particularly because the action of the Grace of God is then easily forgotten, and the recollection of His presence and involvement is neglected. If there is restraint, the real joy will not be spoiled by headaches or other unwelcome symptoms. The joy of the occasion will then not be lost, but it will be able to enrich the days, months and years that follow. Extra vigilance is also needed to be maintained when there is opposition or adversity.

Another aspect of this fearful responsibility of being a bishop is the guiding of the flock given to him as its arch-pastor in the context of a fallen society which is living in an environment of self-deception. Probably the root of this deception is the simple fact that from the time of the Fall our human society has been living in a lie and a distortion. The lie began with our First Parents (see 1 Moses 3), and we have not as a race come away from the context of the lie up to this day. The lie began with accepting alternative suggestions, and accepting the disconnexion of our head from our heart. After the Fall, we could see that we were naked. Then we were immediately afraid of Him who created us, and we stupidly tried to hide ourselves from Him. Then we began to blame each other. Then our now-confused and conflicting thoughts instantly separated us from the Lord. We never said we were sorry. We never asked for forgiveness. We only made excuses. Then we realised that we had broken communion with our Creator. We had

introduced brokenness and forgetfulness to our state of being. It is not as though we ruined what God created as good, but we did cause confusion and darkness which acted on our consciousness as a thick fog, and brought about death as a consequence. It truly was a catastrophe, but the Lord who loves us is always mitigating our disasters. We have to remember that He was protecting us from being further tempted : protecting us from next desiring to eat from the Tree of Life (and actually doing it), which would have put us in a much worse condition. He did not let sin become immortal. Rather, it dies with each person, as we see in words written by Saint Ambrose of Milan (†397) :

> If we meditate on the fact that God did not make death, but only after man fell into the disgrace of guilt and deception did God decree the sentence that earth should return to earth, we shall discover that death is the end of sin; and if we were to live longer our guilt would only be the greater ("Death as a Blessing").

It was we, in fact, who expelled ourselves from the Garden. It is written implicitly in 1 Moses that the Lord our God had already begun to prepare our First Parents by teaching them how to live in the midst of the pure and unfallen creation. In His love, He did not then abandon them in their catastrophic Fall. Rather, He was constantly with them, even clothing them, and teaching Adam and Eve how to live under the new, fallen, circumstances. We see that there were continued conversations between the Lord and our First Parents, and it was He who helped and guided them in preparing their children as well. Even when Cain murdered his brother Abel (see 1 Moses 4:1-16), the Lord continued to speak with him. By the time we come to our present day, however, we have forgotten far more than Cain ever did. Even if the Lord is with us, approaching us to entice us back to the right path, in our forgetfulness, our relationships can remain poisoned by lies and distortions. These are the characteristics of spiritual struggle which face each of us to this very day. If we are to have a healthy relationship with our Lord and Maker, with other human beings, and with all His creation, it is crucial that with His help we remember always these words :

> *Your hands made and fashioned me ; make me understand, and I shall learn Your commandments* (Psalm 118:73).

Nowadays, it is very often suggested that the average human being does live in a healthy relationship with most other people. One who is hearing confessions on a regular basis may well have a different opinion. Do we have healthy relationships with each other, or not ? Human beings prefer to deny the painful reality of their brokenness and their sin, and of their own responsibility for it, until they are forced to admit the truth. This is what has been sometimes called our suffering from an "Egyptian disease" : we live in "de Nile" (denial). Despite such a pun, it is true that since the time of Cain and Abel, the main distortion of human relations has been manipulation and subjugation. We manoeuver and manage and force one another. We beat each other. We abuse each other. We kill each other. Our environment is fear, and our major concern is how to protect ourselves as well as possible. Formed by fear, we are usually expecting something of this manipulation and forcing from others, and especially from anyone in authority. We transfer this also to the clergy. Forgetting the Lord, we tend not to remember to turn to Him. Very often we are stubbornly determined to be self-reliant.

This environment of fear turns us so much in on ourselves that we forget that we are living parts of the Body of Christ. We forget that, as Orthodox Christians, we are all members of Christ and of each other. We forget that going to confession is a communal act, which keeps us

in union with each other. We forget that receiving Holy Communion is a communal act, keeping us in union with Christ and with each other. We dare to think that this is "my" confession, and "my" Communion. As a result, even in the context of our Church's daily life, we tend unknowingly to maintain this worldly mentality rather than a Christ-like mentality. One symptom of this ego-centredness from which we suffer can be seen in how people sometimes react to homilies and sermons. It is not uncommon that a person hearing in a homily words about some sin or other will think that the words are directed at him or her. Because of this, many a priest, after preaching a homily, has often been accused of revealing a person's confession. The hearer often does not realise that the sins of each and all of us are very similar. Most clergy who hear confessions are regularly offering all that they hear to the Lord and forgetting the details (unless the Lord would remind them if the penitent needs a special word later). If there is a similarity, it is because we are all "in the same boat", not because the priest is indiscreet. Indeed, a homelist most often is preaching to himself.

Because we are living in this seductive atmosphere, in every possible way our environment encourages us to get comfortable here in the world ; to satisfy our every desire ; to put "me" first (because "I am number one") ; to forget that we are, instead, pilgrims and care-takers. Regardless of our forgetfulness (and sometimes our unfaithfulness), the Lord is unfailingly faithful to us, and always remembering us. Indeed, were He not to remember us, we would not exist at all. We do well to recall that we are dependent on the Lord for each and every breath.

When we awake in the morning, it is because the Lord has given us the blessing to live another day, and to glorify Him on earth for yet another day, just as we say in our morning prayers. By contrast, the worldly environment encourages us to awake in the morning already thinking about what we might accomplish this day that is to our advantage : the furthering of our personal aims, and our acquisition of wealth and power. Because our hearts and minds are generally out of focus in this way, we are also out of focus in our fundamental attitudes in life itself. The Lord created us to be co-workers, co-gardeners with Him, and to live lives that are filled constantly with thanksgiving and self-emptying service. Instead, we now more often are considering what is to our advantage in any act. Therefore, instead of giving without any conditions to anyone who asks, the general disposition of society without Christ is to look for ways to gain control through the giving : we examine with a condemning disposition the lives of those to whom we might give. Ebenezer Scrooge (of A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens (†1870)) comes to mind. With such a tight-fisted attitude as Scrooge showed before his repentance, we may very well only grudgingly admit that the Scriptures show clearly that the tithe is the normal minimum in giving. After his repentance, Scrooge was joyfully sharing generously with all who were in need. It is important that we be constantly mindful that the world gives us mis-information and dis-information about the true priorities of life. Contrary to what we daily see and hear in the world, the reality is that everything we are and have comes from the Lord with His blessing. It is our responsibility not to try to hoard these gifts for ourselves, but rather to behave as responsible stewards of all these gifts and resources. It is useful to remember the old saying : "You can't take it with you".

Therefore, we are to understand that we are to return to the Lord (in our case to the Church) the first tenth of our income. The tithe, the returning to the Lord of the first-fruits of our labours, has been in the foundation of our lives and our relationship with the Lord from the beginning. We can see this in 1 and 2 Moses, and throughout the Old Covenant. We see it

likewise in the New Covenant Scriptures, and particularly in the Acts. It is less likely that we are willing to accept that the Lord also showed us that we are to give the second tenth of our income to the poor and needy. Others say that we are to live on one-third and give away two-thirds. However, nowadays we tend to give alms with the charitable regulations of Revenue Canada more in mind, and the tax-deductible credits. Therefore, we will not give to a needy person, but only to recognised institutions registered to give charitable receipts for credit. When we turn in on ourselves, satisfy ourselves, shut out others, and relegate the Lord to a minor place in our lives, then we are aimed towards death. Then such an anecdote as the following, about a miserly Scot, applies to us :

> Hamish MacHarg, a Scottish Presbyterian minister, was making his rounds to parish homes to receive their tithes and offerings, as was customary. One of his parishioners did give, but he had a distinctly stingy attitude when he parted with his money without receiving something in return. As he put the offering away, Hamish commented dryly : 'The Good Book says that the Lord loves a cheerful giver ; but the Church of Scotland cannot be so choosy'.

When we remember Christ's commandment to be in the world but not of it (see John 1:10-13 ; 17:6-16 ; Romans 12:2 ; 1 John 3:10-18) ; when we remember to put serving God and neighbour first ; when we keep our concern for ourselves last ; when we, with the Apostle, call ourselves the "*chief of sinners*" (see 1 Timothy 1:15), then we are aimed towards life eternal. If we have the courage to tithe from our gross income, we will notice how the Lord's blessings come to us. Indeed, when we give one tenth or more from the first-fruits, we will not notice that anything is lacking. Rather, we will notice how the Lord provides for us. As it is said, and as it is written, if we give, the Lord will increase our substance and our ability to give. We give, and we are given more to give. For us, Saint John Chrysostom provides a good pastoral direction about how we Christians properly behave when we are motivated by the love of Christ instead of self-love. I am certain that he would encourage us (if we are to be taking a tax-credit, a deduction and a return for charitable giving) to give the whole of this return likewise to the poor and needy as an extra bounty from the Lord to the poor. Saint John says to us :

> Woe to him, it is said, who does not do alms, and if this was the case under the Old Covenant, it is much more under the New. If, where the acquisition of wealth, the enjoyment of it, and the care of it were allowed, provision was made for the care of the poor, how much greater is the New Dispensation where we are commanded to surrender all that we have ! What did they do in olden times ? They gave tithes, and tithes again upon tithes for orphans, widows and strangers. But someone was saying to me, because he was astonished at another person : 'Why, such a one tithes !' What an enormous disgrace this expression implies, since something that was clearly understood by the Jews [our spiritual ancestors] has become a source of amazement to Christians. If there was danger at that time in neglecting the tithe, think how great it must be now ("Homily on Ephesians 2").

We will surely notice that Saint John refers us to the words that our Saviour spoke to the rich young man (see Matthew 19:21). Saint John's concern, however (and the concern of every serious arch-pastor) cannot stop here at the tithe alone as simply a formal requirement or offering. We have been given very much (especially in our western societies), and with this gift comes the responsibility to look around and to see. Most particularly is it our responsibility to remember every day, and to keep in mind our Lord's Parable about the Rich Man (sometimes named Divēs) and Lazarus :

'There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." But Abraham said, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us." Then he said, "I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment." Abraham said to him, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." And he said, "No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent." But he said to him, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead"' (Luke 16:19-31).

This parable is one of many given to us by our Saviour in order that we better understand our way in Him. It is with good reason that we hear this particular parable every Great Lent. Here, Lazarus in his poverty sits at the gate of the Rich Man, who passes him several times every day, but pays him no heed. The Rich Man deliberately disregards Lazarus, even though he knows very well who he is. We see the consequences of this as Lazarus is taken to the Bosom of Abraham, and the Rich Man descends to the torments of Hadēs. Sadly, we can behave in just this same way with members of our own families, with our neighbours, and with our clergy. A bishop has the pain of seeing too frequently how the priests and their families are taken for granted, and treated as if God must send money and means to them by heavenly express.

Many clergy, and sometimes bishops as well, live in poverty (often abject poverty and malnutrition) while parishioners may live in medium to great comfort. When perhaps the clergy alone amongst the parishioners live below the poverty line, it causes great stress and anxiety in the family. Such a situation can make a priest into a beggar. What can such a father and mother understand or hope for when there is no money for sufficient clothes, and no money for dentists and optometrists ? When we do this to the person who is our spiritual leader and to his family, how can we in any way expect the Lord to be blessing us in our constant requests to Him for help ? If we expect our priests to be available to us at all times (as they often are), how can we neglect them in return ? What does this behaviour say to others about how Christians live ? What does it say about the place the Lord has in our hearts and lives ? On the other hand, there are truly faithful Orthodox Christians who generously, open-heartedly, lovingly return to the Lord without hesitation or fear not only the first and second tenths, but even more. These persons, by their generosity, help to overcome this list of woes. Such persons recall the following exhortation of the Apostle, and they live in accordance with it :

Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches (Galatians 6:6).

I am grateful to God for all such persons in all our parishes who, throughout their lives and without fanfare, quietly, with humility and with love, offer sacrificially their gifts. They offer (sometimes in the spirit of the widow who gives all) in order to build and maintain Temples to God's glory, and to witness in hidden, yet effective ways to God's love, and to the presence in them of Jesus Christ. They follow the direction of our Saviour : "'*But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing*'" (Matthew 6:3).

Further distortions that the bishop faces can come, willy-nilly, from the civil environment in which we live. Sometimes they can make for great difficulties, other times not so much. But regardless, it is the Lord who is always "making the evil be good by [His] goodness", as we hear in the *anaphora* of the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great. Some such effects came from the times of the Imperial Ottoman domination. Some such effects came from the times of the Mongol domination. Some such effects came from the oppression of the Soviets in communist times. Nevertheless, it is the Lord who always brings something good from these situations.

For instance, in the times of the Roman Empire, it happened that bishops were considered in society to be equivalent in rank to senators, and this sense continues even until now. This is expressed by the fact that titles now used to describe bishops are equivalent to titles given to dukes, such as "my lord", and "your grace". These lordly appellations have a long history, and to this day it is still possible to see some bishops bearing on their *stikhars* the purple stripes of a Roman senator. It is their custom inherited from the bishops who preceded them, and in continuity with the custom of those still before them ; it is not their own invention. In harmony with this, certain aspects of liturgical processions can be seen to have their origin in senatorial processions of imperial times. For instance, during these liturgical processions a student of the classics who sees the carrying of certain articles might be reminded of the *fasces* carried before senators, or of the signs of office borne before others of another rank. *Fasces* refers to a bundle of wooden sticks with an axe-blade emerging from the top centre, which is an image that traditionally symbolises summary power and jurisdiction, and/or "strength through unity". These public processions of dignitaries came to be imitated after a manner in the development of certain liturgical movements. In the Church, *omophors*, mitres, banners, candles, lanterns, censers (and sometimes umbrellas) were and are carried in processions. Such elements would naturally have arisen in the services in the Cathedral of Hagia Sophia (which is Greek for "Holy Wisdom") in Constantinople between the fourth and fifteenth centuries. They would also naturally have acquired a symbolic significance in linking earthly imperial grandeur with that of the Heavenly Kingdom. The processions there had this solemnity first because of the Holy Mysteries and the Scriptures, and then because of the dignity of the emperor, the patriarch and the bishops. From there, the manner of serving was imitated in other dioceses and parishes.

Properly speaking, when we participate in such processions, we do well to understand that we are thus walking in the foot-steps of Christ, as are the clergy and all others. By our participation in the procession, we are truly walking with Christ, and we are reinforced in our understanding that as we walk with Him, we are walking to work with Him. We can perceive this, for instance, in processions around the exterior of the Temple at feasts and at funerals, and on other occasions. However, participation in some processions does not necessarily mean that we are all actually walking together. In some traditions, processions may pass through our midst, such as at the Great Entrance (offertory) in the Divine Liturgy. During these, we can actively participate by coming close to the clergy in order to take the blessing by touching the

vestments of these clergy. When we do this, Grace comes to us through this contact. By Grace, this contact can reinforce our understanding that we are truly all one in Christ.

As a result of the fall of the Roman Empire, and because of the conditions required by the officials of the Ottoman Empire, bishops began to be required to wear some trappings of the Roman Emperor, namely the *sakkos* and the mitre. A part of the requirements leading to these changes was that the patriarch was forced to serve also as the civil leader of the people entrusted to him. Legal responsibility for judging the questions, problems and crimes of the Christians was forced on the bishops. The non-Christian rulers attempted to make the Christians appear to be one distinct people (which they never are). Such details have become entrenched in the overall life of a bishop. Although one might think that, as in ancient Israel, the bishop could therefore act as a judge such as did the Prophet Samuel, this was not to be the case. No matter what may be imposed by the coercion of civil authorities, it remains a fact that a bishop cannot become a civil authority as such. The bishop was forced to be a political figure in the perception of the rulers, and the number of bishops as compared to faithful people was deliberately greatly reduced. What is too often forgotten (and even deliberately ignored) is that many a bishop in such a situation was put to death by the civil rulers because members of his "nation" were accused of one or another rebellion or disobedience. Distance from the people became inevitable. From this it can be seen how bishops have generally had imposed upon them a reputation for being distant, despotic, autocratic. Some have actually nurtured this reputation by behaving in that way. Bishops have weaknesses, because they are human beings with their own pains. Albeit that is so, the bishop has no excuse for slipping, and saying to a presbyter (as some are reported to have done) : "I am everything, and you are nothing". Since such a fallen and anti-Gospel attitude of worldly power can actually develop into a firmly-held opinion, a gap has been developing, a distance between the high-priesthood and the priesthood, a distance between priesthood and the "royal priesthood" (that is, the laity as a whole ; see 1 Peter 2:9).

Some of these details of habiliment (and attendant confusion with civil authority) may have become rooted in our customs due to the length of time they have had to be borne. Nevertheless, we must always recall that the wielding of worldly power (or any other power), in any manner whatsoever, is not in accordance with the way of the Gospel of Christ. The careful and truly humble bishop will always be watchful to avoid such a distortion in his life. Saint Ignatius of Antioch, the God-bearer, ably illustrates this :

> I am not ordering you as if I were "someone". Even if I have been bound in the Name, I am not yet perfected in Jesus Christ ("Letter to the Ephesians", 3).

It is significant that the bishop does have authority, full hierarchical authority, with which to lead the flock. However, this authority is not exercised in power, that is, coercion, but rather in influence. There is a significant difference. Power is authority implemented by force. Influence is authority enabled by example. One need only look at the life of any one of the bishops presented in Part A to understand how this works. As a reminder, there are canons from the early centuries of the Church that forbid the acquisition of civil authority by any priest or high-priest.

Nevertheless, as "clothes do not make the man", so titles, vestments, honours and processions do not make the bishop. The fact remains that, despite these details, a bishop is not and cannot be a person of civil authority. The bishop is like a shepherd, a father, a gardener, a builder, and more. His work involves sharing in the life-giving work of our Saviour. His work

concerns strengthening unity in bonds of love, pruning sick branches to make a plant healthier and more fruitful, repairing cracked foundations, and retrieving lost sheep. Good fruit can only come from a plant that truly is alive. A building can serve to protect and nurture only when its foundation is intact, and one may even say living. Any other way of serving will not work or last, because it does not have life, nor can it give life. If a bishop were to become involved in matters of civil authority, this would invite confusion, because these are no longer pastoral but legal realms. He would be perceived then as an agent of the state, rather than of the Lord. The reasons for this confusion include the fact that even in Orthodox Christian societies, civil authority is distinguished from the Church. We must always keep in mind that in response to a civil authority (Pontius Pilate), our Saviour Himself plainly said : "'*My Kingdom is not of this world*"' (John 18:36).

We also recall that civil authority is often concerned with the exercise of power by one person or party over another. Our Saviour has spoken to us very directly about this :

> *But Jesus called them to Himself and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many'* (Matthew 20:25-28 ; see Luke 22:25-27).

These words are reinforced by the Apostle as he contrasts those whose sensibilities have limited perspective, with what is the whole perspective :

> *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ* (Philippians 3:18-20).
>
> *For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come* (Hebrews 13:14).

This focus on our citizenship in heaven has always been the attitude of the Church, even when she has been put in situations of subjugation to the state. She is, regardless, first faithful to Christ, and so it is with the bishops. If the bishop or presbyter should become identified with the state, he would no longer be in a position to address these authorities strongly as a person of conscience. He could not very well then bring matters of the Gospel and Christ to the attention of persons in civil authority in a clear manner at those times when they might lose their proper focus. Regardless, even if a high-priest or priest may, in one or another place or time, sometimes make the mistake of becoming civilly entangled, the Church as a whole always remains faithful to Christ first : above all, above everyone, and above everything.

Continuing to consider our heavenly citizenship, it is important (especially for a bishop) to keep in mind the words of our Saviour :

> '*Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head*' (Luke 9:58).

Of course, I believe that most bishops feel a direct personal connexion with these words, largely because their life requires so much travel. A bishop, for instance, is expected to appear liturgically and pastorally every year in every one of the parishes, monasteries and communities under his *omophor*. Although these peregrinations are required because of meetings and pastoral visits, the loving father and shepherd could do nothing other than this in order to know the flock entrusted to him, and to be known by the sheep. A really loving relationship would be expressed in even more presences, because the bishop as a loving father desires to be with his beloved flock as often as possible, and not only because it is required.

In addition to this perception, though, and for those who understand, when the indigenous Alaskans are bringing people to the church for the first time, they always exhort the uninformed person to step over the threshold, not upon it. They tell this person that the threshold is reserved for the Son of Man to lay His head. Such an understanding reveals that the people are acutely aware of the entering of sacred space. This is evidence that these peoples are always conscious of Christ's constant presence, and this gives us hope that we, too, can come to this constant consciousness as well. As a confirmation of this awareness one can see the readiness of Alaskans quickly to take up the responsibility of feeding the sheep of Alaska by accepting ordination to the Holy Priesthood, and continuing the missionary work after Alaska was sold to the USA. Another confirmation is, in my opinion, the ready recognition of holiness in persons where it truly exists, and particularly in the case of Matushka Olga Michael (†1979) (see pp. 156-157).

The bishop's responsibilities are many, fearful, and fraught with dangers. These responsibilities all stem from the main one : to lead in the mission to the whole world (see Matthew 28:18-20), and also to bless others in their work in this mission to baptise all, and to embrace the whole of creation. Nowadays these responsibilities are further complicated by the myriad consequences of the determined denial of the Lord by society as a whole, and by the resultant mindless and lemming-like press towards the precipice that awaits us. We may be likened to the incautious and stubborn child (such as I certainly was) who opens cupboards containing poison or touches very hot stove-tops just because it has become possible. Because we refuse to consult the Lord, and to accept His guidance and direction in the proper, constructive and life-giving use of all our rapidly-growing technological abilities, we wildly and blindly take decisions that very often cause the deaths of other human beings, and could quickly bring about our own deaths. In our mad and extreme self-sufficiency, we have no longer any sense of balance, nor any real sense of distinguishing right from wrong. Indeed, we tell ourselves that what is wrong is simply what inconveniences or offends us.

The way of being a human being is becoming worse than a caricature of humanity ; it is becoming a twisted distortion, and the opposite of real humanity. We are hardened and deadened by self-love instead of living in compassionate, God-given love. Therefore, since there are no Fathers who have had to cope directly with such a situation, and since there are now no clear references to help guide him, the bishop might well offer a prayer similar to that of King Solomon of old, in the confidence that the Lord would similarly bless him in his need for understanding and discernment :

> '*Therefore give Your servant a heart to hear and judge Your people in righteousness, and to discern between good and evil. For who can judge this great people of Yours?*' [...] *So the Lord said to him, 'Because you asked for this, and have not asked for long life for*

> *yourself; nor have you asked for riches, nor for the life of your enemies, but asked understanding for yourself, to understand judgement—behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you an understanding and wise heart.* [...] *If you walk in My ways, and keep My statutes and commandments, as your father David did, then I will multiply your days.'* [...] *Then all Israel heard this judgement the king rendered, and they feared the king; for they saw the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice* (3 Kingdoms [1 Kings] 3:8, 10, 11, 13, 27).

While being wary that we judge or condemn no-one, of course, this prayer can be appropriated to ourselves by each of us.

The bishop is no king, but to be a bishop does require judgement and discernment. He has the responsibility of leading well. He has the responsibility of deciding between persons of strongly differing opinions. He has the responsibility of trying to find the righteous path. He has the responsibility of trying to discern God's direction in the midst of all the things said to him by persons who want only to tell him what they believe he wants to hear (not necessarily the truth), or perhaps who want to tell him only their side of the story. Perhaps they believe that this is what the bishop does want to hear. It is, sadly, far too often that a bishop has to cope with sycophancy (whether from fear, or lust of power), attempts to curry favour with the bishop, and often the showing of two faces to the bishop. For some bishops, such misunderstanding and misuse is a daily experience. For any bishop, sycophancy and lust for power constitute a spiritually dangerous trap, which offers him the lie that he is something that he is not. If he does not know himself properly in daily repentance and, taking the bait, falls into the trap, then it is not only he who falls into the trap. He takes down with him all the sheep that have been entrusted to him.

This is why it is essential that the bishop depend constantly on the Lord's wisdom, wisdom which always comes from Christ, wisdom which is Christ, and which is conveyed by the Holy Spirit. Saint John Chrysostom underlines this :

> The man who accepts this responsibility needs great wisdom and, even before wisdom, the Grace of God in good measure, and an upright character and a pure life, and more than human goodness (Six Books on the Priesthood, p. 76).

It behoves every bishop (and every Christian also) to keep in mind the following description of wisdom :

> *So in herself, wisdom is a spirit that is rational, holy, only-begotten, manifold, subtle, easily moved, clear, undefiled, manifest, invulnerable, loving what is good, keen, unhindered, beneficent, man-loving, steadfast, unfailing, free from worry, all-powerful, all-surveying, and penetrating all spirits that are rational, pure, and most subtle. For wisdom moves from one place to another more easily than motion itself, and because of her purity, she penetrates all things. So she is the exhalation of the power of God and the emanation of the pure glory of the Almighty; therefore nothing defiled enters her. For she is the radiance of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the operative power of God and the image of His goodness. Though she is one, she can do all things; so while remaining in herself, she renews all things; and in every generation, she passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God and prophets. Thus God loves nothing as much as the one who lives with wisdom. For wisdom is more beautiful than the sun and more than every*

> *constellation of stars. Compared with light she is found to be superior, for night succeeds the light, but evil cannot overcome wisdom* (Wisdom of Solomon 7:22-30).

For those who are so moved, in praying for the bishop it might help to refer to these following words. In order to make it a request, the wording may be simply adjusted by using "may" :

> *The Spirit of God shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and godliness. The Spirit of the fear of God shall fill Him. He shall not judge by reputation nor convict by common talk* (Isaiah 11:2-3).

This following petition from our litanies may be prayed by the high-priest himself, and also by anyone who wishes to buoy him up in prayer :

> An angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies, let us ask of the Lord.

In so praying, the high-priest will do well to keep remembering his guardian angel's loving service on his behalf, and to keep his conversation with that angel alive and lively. Any person wishing to support the bishop, will do well to ask the Lord to surround the bishop with angels for protection and for guidance.

For any high-priest who knows and feels the great and fearful responsibility of the episcopate, and who is acutely aware of his own short-comings, Saint Jerome of Bethlehem (†420) has some words of encouragement :

> There is no man, I say, or only a few, who have all of the virtues that are required of a bishop. And yet, if any bishop lacks one or two of the virtues that have been listed (see 1 Timothy 3:2-4), he will not, therefore, be deprived of the title of just, nor will he be condemned for what he does not have, but rather will be crowned for what he does possess ("Against the Pelagians").

5

The bishop as a shepherd

> It is a great matter, beloved, a great matter indeed to preside over a Church. It is a matter needing wisdom and courage as great as what Christ speaks about, that a man should lay down his life for the sheep, and never leave them deserted or naked. Rather, he should nobly stand against the wolf. In this the shepherd differs from the hireling. The hireling always looks to his own safety, not caring for the sheep. The shepherd always seeks the safety of the sheep, neglecting his own (Saint John Chrysostom, "Homily on John 10").

The bishop, generally called "arch-pastor", is by definition a shepherd ("pastor" comes from the Latin word for "shepherd" ; the Greek prefix "arch" means "first"). He is a first-shepherd, following the example of and revealing the ultimate Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ :

> *But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd*. (Matthew 9:36 ; see also Mark 6:34).

> '*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.* [...] *I am the door.* [...] *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.* [...] *I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.* [...] *and I lay down My life for the sheep*' (John 10:1-5, 9, 11, 14, 15).

There is no door nor shepherd other than Jesus Christ. The Apostle emphasises that our Lord Jesus Christ is "*that great Shepherd of the sheep*" (Hebrews 13:20). The Apostle Peter calls Him "*the Chief Shepherd*" (1 Peter 5:4), the one overseeing the flock, which clarifies what he wrote earlier : "*For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer* [*episkopos*] *of your souls*" (1 Peter 2:25). Before His Passion, our Saviour uses the same image of the shepherd. He shows why the shepherd is made the target of evil attack, beginning with Himself :

> '*All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: "I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered*"' [Zechariah 13:7] (Matthew 26:31 ; see also Mark 14:27).

In many places, our Lord has cited the Law and the Prophets who have prepared the way for Him, and whom He read aloud every day. We would do well to imitate our Orthodox spiritual ancestors, such as the Cappadocian Fathers and many much more recent ancestors, who likewise, on a regular, daily basis, read all the Scriptures from 1 Moses to the Apocalypse (Revelation). They did this by reading some portions every day, and upon coming to the end they recommenced. Archimandrite Vasily (Philipoff) of Saint Tikhon's Monastery, who is of thrice-blessed memory, was just such a person. It was reported by his cell-attendant how much he loved to hear the Scriptures read aloud in their entirety, and that he found it thoroughly refreshing to do this time after time. Such persons could easily perceive references like this one

to the Prophet Zechariah because they were, we might say, swimming in the Scriptures. It was their daily exposure, their spiritual food, their natural water. If we follow their example, then, as Saint Seraphim of Sarov did and exhorted, we can do so as well :

> One should nourish the soul with the word of God: for the word of God, as Saint Gregory the Theologian says, is angelic bread, by which are nourished souls that hunger for God. Most of all one should occupy oneself with reading the New Testament and the Psalter, which one should do standing up. From this there occurs an enlightenment in the mind, which is changed by a Divine change. One should habituate oneself in this way so that the mind might as it were swim in the Lord's law; it is under the guidance of this law that one should direct one's life. It is very profitable to occupy oneself with reading the word of God in solitude, and to read the whole Bible intelligently. [...] The reading of the word of God should be performed in solitude, in order that the whole mind of the reader might be plunged into the truths of the Holy Scripture (Little Russian Philokalia, vol. 1, p. 43).

The rôle of a shepherd includes keeping the flock healthy, and headed together in the right direction. Each of the practical aspects concerning regular sheep has a spiritual parallel. The good shepherd keeps the flock together so that wolves or other predators may not so easily devour them (especially one that strays) ; he also keeps watch in case of sneak-attacks. The good pastor protects the rational sheep in his care against the wolf-of-souls. The good shepherd knows where to find the best, healthiest, most nutritious food ; the good pastor feeds the rational sheep with the healthy food and drink (living water) of the Truth of Christ. The good shepherd leads the sheep entrusted to him on the safe and good road, both to the pastures and to the home sheep-fold ; the good pastor likewise leads the rational sheep on the road to their true home, the Heavenly Kingdom. For the bishop and the presbyter in particular, no human being can be reduced to a statistic or a number. Each human being, each rational sheep, is a person created in the image of God. Each is a unique person uniquely known by the good pastor, and personally knowing and trusting the good pastor. He knows the name of each, and calls them by their name. There are other parallels, these being only examples. These words of Saint Ignatius of Antioch are poignant also :

> Therefore, you children of the light of truth, flee division and evil teachings ; but where the shepherd is, there follow as sheep. For there are many wolves that appear worthy of being believed, who, by means of a pernicious pleasure, take captive [2 Timothy 3:6] those that are running towards God ; but in your unity they shall have no place ("Letter to the Philadelphians", 2).

It is the bishop's responsibility as arch-pastor to lead the rational sheep he has been given by Christ into the green pastures of the Kingdom of Heaven. Christ gives to the bishop His own sheep to lead and to feed. Nothing should come before Christ, and nothing should come between Christ and His Church, between the shepherd and the sheep. The shepherd empties himself for the sake of Christ and His flock. He gives his life for the sheep as does our Saviour. Of course, the Lord supplies to him the Grace that is needed in this self-emptying, which sometimes may entail literally laying down his life. From the day he became a patriarch, with the turmoil and persecutions of the Bolshevik Revolution raging all about him, Saint Tikhon of Moscow (see pp. 20 ff) would have had the awareness that each day might be his last day. On one day in 1925, that last day did arrive. Related to this are these three extracts from the words of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, the Bishop-Martyr :

> Being imitators of God, and by the blood of God having rekindled the work we share as a family, you have perfectly accomplished it. For you were eager to see me, since you heard that I was being brought in bonds from Syria because of the common Name and Hope. I was hoping through your prayer to attain to fight with beasts at Rome, that so attaining to this I may become the disciple of Him who has '*given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God*' [Ephesians 5:2] ("Letter to the Ephesians", 1).
>
> I am giving up my life for you, and for those whom, for the honour of God, you have sent to Smyrna [...] ("Letter to the Ephesians", 21).
>
> Pray, then, give me nothing more than to be poured out as a libation to God while the Altar is still prepared ; that, by being a chorus in love, you may sing praise to the Father, in Christ Jesus [...] ("Letter to the Romans", 2).

It is always to be remembered that the bishop, in addition to re-presenting Christ, is, in his manner, also embodying the flock under his *omophor*. The *omophor* signifies not only the lost sheep on the shoulders of our Saviour, but also the protection of our Saviour, and of the Mother of God who extends her protecting veil over us and over our Saviour's agent, the bishop. The arch-pastor is, after all, one of the sheep as well :

> *for He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand* (Psalm 94:7).

The bishop himself needs to be fed with the Holy Mysteries. Like the rest of the flock, he also needs this protection, and this being nourished by the Body and Blood of our Saviour. The Apostle John affirms this relationship in these words :

> '*for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes*' (Apocalypse 7:17).

There is no real or imagined separation in identity between the arch-pastor and the flock, between the bishop and the diocese, between the bishop and his administration. Yes, there are occasions of temptation when differences of opinion and opposing perspectives may appear. However, since divisions are from the enemy of our race, they must be rooted out immediately because they are both disruptive and poisonous. We are to be vigilant about the smallest signs of this insidious activity, addressing them always with Christ's love, healing and reconciliation. In Him there cannot be any real or imagined division or separation. In Christ there is no division :

> *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus* (Galatians 3:28 ; see also Romans 3:22 ; 10:12).

The diocese is a unity, a visible unity, with its head being in reality the one, living Head, Christ Himself. This is the visible expression of that unity of the Body of Christ that the Apostle describes in 1 Corinthians 12. It is the bishop who is given the responsibility of being our Saviour's agent. This is another way of expressing the exhortation by Saint Ignatius of Antioch, that the bishop be as Christ in the diocese, and that the people gather around him (see p. 82, *&c.*). The bishop's responsibility regarding unity goes further than this, also, because the bishop is responsible for maintaining visible unity with the rest of the bishops. The bishops together have a responsibility to ensure that the Church reveals openly and publicly the oneness of Christ in

accordance with the Incarnation and the teaching of the apostles, and also the harmony expressed by our Saviour's prayer :

> '*I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me*' (John 17:20-23).

"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown", Shakespeare wrote in the play Henry IV. This saying can apply precisely to a bishop (especially if he were not to recall that the mitre is not a kingly crown). The uneasy rest stems from several possible sources. One can be from following a fallen, worldly path. Another can be from bearing things that need to be borne in and by the Lord, not ourselves. Indeed, if any one of us thinks it possible to carry things alone, it is a great and egotistical delusion. Saint Basil the Great exhorts us all thus, along with Bishop Amphilochius :

> Do not lament a burden which surpasses your strength. For, if you were the one destined to bear this responsibility alone, it would not be merely heavy but utterly unendurable. But, if the Lord is the One who helps you bear it, '*Cast your care upon the Lord*' [Psalm 54:23], and He Himself will bear it ("Letter to Amphilochius, on his Consecration as Bishop").

Yet another cause of uneasy rest can be from love itself, but a love bearing pain that has yet to be given to and healed by the Lord. With the arch-pastor in the lead (who is still one amongst all the sheep), we all do well constantly to "lay aside all earthly cares" (words from the Cherubic Hymn), laying them aside in the Lord. The divisions, sufferings and pains amongst the sheep which affect a bishop daily cannot be carried by him alone. They must be shared with the Lord, who alone can bring healing and reconciliation in and amongst the sheep. The bishop has very many things to do during the singing of the Cherubic Hymn in the middle of the Divine Liturgy. That the hymn has to be repeated gives him an opportunity somehow to hear and to remember these words. This repetition can, as water over soil and rock, open a way.

Our Saviour has given to us these two related words :

> '*Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light*' (Matthew 11:28-30).

> '*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*' (Matthew 16:24-26 ; see also Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23)

It is helpful for us to understand that the yoke that is mentioned can have two forms. The first is that yoke upon the shoulders from which evenly-balanced loads (such as pails of water) are carried much more easily than simply in each hand. The second is that yoke which joins two animals pulling a load. The two together pull evenly and make it easier for each other. So it is

with us. In fact, in joining ourselves to our Saviour by sharing His yoke, and by taking up the Cross, we are enabling Him to take up for us far more than 50 percent of the burden. He knows the way ; He is the Way, and He opens the way for us.

The Christian leader (who is truly always the shepherd) cannot but suffer pain, because Christian love is always vulnerable, and this love is always able to feel pain. This pain has many sources, but our Lord enables the bearing of it, and the healing of it. Utimately, it must be acknowledged that all who have been baptised into Christ have been baptised into His self-emptying love. In the context of this love, if we are truly to love, there will always be pain. True love (as all who love are aware), always involves some degree of pain. Because this is true, and because we have put on Christ, then the adversary does all he can to divide us from Christ. True love can only exist in the context of forgiveness, forgiveness such as that given freely by our Saviour to the repentant thief on the cross.

The life of the bishop is one of solitude (meaning the state of being or living alone, or of being in seclusion), just as shepherds live a life of solitude as they pasture their flocks. It may be that the bishop may deeply love the people under his care, and be close to them. It may be that the bishop is deeply loved by the people he leads, and that they are close to him. It may be that the bishop's council and officers love him, and are close to him, and that they work in harmony together. It may be that the bishop has a family who love him, and he them. Nevertheless, the bishop's life remains one of solitude. Why ? It is because the arch-pastor alone is the one who, trying to keep prayerfully the mind of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 2:16 ; Philippians 2:5) is ultimately responsible for the health, life, unity and well-being of the flock of Christ, the diocese under his *omophor*.

Although he can very well consult with other bishops, and with his diocesan council, and with other advisors, it is still the bishop alone who has to decide, in Christ, what is to be blessed, and what is not to be blessed. It is he alone who has to give a final judgement in disputes. It is he alone (even with all the various tests and advice) who must, in Christ, decide who is to be ordained to what order, for what service, where, and when, or not to be ordained. It is he alone (even with all the provisions that may be made to provide help) who is responsible for the well-being of the clergy of the diocese. It is to him alone, ultimately, to whom the clergy turn when there is disturbance or distress or need in their communities, most particularly if the regional dean cannot help with the difficulty. It is he alone who is responsible for maintaining personal, honest, and healthy relationships of co-operation and reconciliation in Christ with the other bishops of the Church in his region, with the synod of which he is a part, and with others also. This solitude has nothing to do with "loneliness" in the sense that this is popularly expressed.

This sort of solitude can be said to be an element in the life of every Christian, whether one be aware of it or not. In the case of a bishop, solitude has also to do with the fact that he is truly always a solitary, a monk (μονᾰχός, *monachos* applies to women-monks as well). For us all, solitude has to do with the importance of our life in Christ. Solitude, therefore, is not and cannot be isolation ; instead, it is a different sort of communion. This solitude is life-giving. It nurtures the love of Christ in us. It enables us to draw closer to the Lord. It enables the arch-pastor in his life of tending sheep to receive with hospitality and love all those who constantly come to him with their troubles and sorrows, and yet not to be personally depleted in constant giving. It is rightly said that love given away makes space for yet more love (see 3 Kingdoms 17:8-16 ; see pp. 269 ff). This ever-expanding love is reflected in the liberal use of healing oil by Christians, which

is itself a vehicle of sharing Christ's love. It is not uncommon that a solitary like Saint Seraphim of Sarov would use such oil to console or bring healing to someone who visits. It is solitude which enables the faithful people to behave in the same manner, sometimes as an example and encouragement for the bishop. Solitude, not isolation, is the way in which, at our life's end, we each come personally and alone (yet not truly alone) to encounter the light of the love of Christ.

Although the bishop may seem to be alone, he is never truly alone, as no Christian is truly alone. Rather, he is with Christ as we all are with Christ. The bishop is also with the Mother of God (the real Abbess of every monastery), as we all are with the Mother of God. A living and Christ-loving family will form a life-giving state of being in which no-one is alone in isolation. This applies both to our blood-related family, and to our church-family. Yes, we are each alone responsible before Christ for our life and deeds, but we are not alone without each other standing before Him. This is so with every Christian, and it is so for the arch-pastor with his diocesan family, the flock in his care. Even a person in prison is not in isolation, because our Saviour, knowing the need, is always with that prisoner. The Mother of God is always with that person. The saints are always with that prisoner. The person who visits pastorally in the prisons is given a particular blessing in co-operating with our Saviour's love and bringing hope. Such a pastoral visitor can visit only because of Christian compassion. It is through such visits that the prisoner can come to understand the nearness of our Lord, and take hold of His love and His hope. Such visitors thus alleviate the suffering of those who are incarcerated.

To be able to live with an island of peace in the heart, which is Christ, which is the Kingdom of God within, we do well to recall the experience of the Prophet Elijah (also called Elias or Ilya). On Mount Horeb, he encountered the Lord in the stillness :

> *Then He replied, 'Go out tomorrow and stand on the mountain before the Lord; and behold, the Lord will pass by, and before the Lord, a great and powerful wind will be rending the mountains and shattering the rocks; but the Lord will not be in the wind. After the wind, an earthquake, but the Lord will not be in the earthquake. After the earthquake, there will be a fire, but the Lord will not be in the fire. After the fire, there will be a sound of a gentle breeze, and the Lord will be there'* (3 Kingdoms 19:11-12).

The stillness can develop through the use of many words in prayer, but the ideal of solitude is to come to the point of wordlessness before the Lord. Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia is reported to have often spoken about an old man who used to go daily to the Temple and spend a long time there between the services. His children asked what and how many things he was asking of the Lord or saying to the Lord during all these hours. His response was that he said nothing. He was simply in the presence of the Lord, looking at the Lord. At the same time, the Lord was looking at him, and all was joy. There are other, similar stories, too.

It is difficult for any human being to measure up to the "*stature of the fulness of Christ*", and to reveal Christ the Lover of Man(kind) in a faithful and authentic manner. Writing to the Ephesians, the Apostle addresses the great variety of gifts given to the members of the Body of Christ, gifts which enable these members to nurture and strengthen and edify one another so as to grow up in Christ. He then shows us the purpose of this edification :

> [...] *till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ* (Ephesians 4:13).

Measuring up to Christ is impossible without the Grace of the Holy Spirit. Human beings are fallen. Fallen human beings have a strong tendency to self-centredness and greed. This tendency is so prevalent that it is taken as our characteristic state. Fallen human beings have a tendency to show condemnation and anger. Fallen human beings have a tendency not to be ready and willing to forgive. Fallen human beings have a tendency to take short-cuts, being driven by the tyranny of the urgent. Fallen human beings have a tendency to take matters into their own hands. As a consequence, fallen human beings lead a profane life, not a sacred life, for which they readily make self-justification. This context of life with one's back turned to the Lord (which means rejection of Him), combined with self-justification, is a relative of the condition called "denial". We can deny that we are weak, that we fail, that we are afraid. We therefore pretend ; we make a pretence ; we erect a façade. In this condition, we often live in the context of a complex of lies, and therefore become blind to our own sins.

Forgetting or rejecting the Lord's constant presence and activity in his life as a leader/shepherd can enable this leader to become twisted in mentality. Then the exercise of authority becomes simply the wielding of power. This can happen to us all as well, of course. This twist opens the path towards corruption, fulfilling the saying that power corrupts. Power, manipulation and force are tools that are actively used by such a leader. The environment becomes one of oppression. Fear becomes a main factor in life, along with suspicion, rebelliousness and resentment. Resentment, we must remember, is a form of anger. It serves as a sort of magnet for those in such misery, and it tends to produce gossip-groups. Resentment is long-held anger, a grudge, which pushes away any movement towards forgiveness. In such an environment of fear, the leadership is not life-giving ; rather, in this environment, the leadership becomes disconnected from shepherding, and is poisonous and death-dealing. It is poisonous to the heart, and death-dealing to relationships with others and with the Lord. The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel address the same troubles which undermined spiritual shepherds in their times :

> *'Woe to the shepherds who scatter and destroy the sheep of My pasture!' Therefore thus says the Lord against those who tend My people: 'You have scattered My sheep and driven them out. You did not care for them. Behold, I shall punish you according to your evil practices. I will receive the remnant of My people from every land where I have driven them. I will establish them in their pasture, and they shall increase and be multiplied. I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them. They shall fear no more, nor be terrified,' says the Lord* (Jeremiah 23:1-4).

> *Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to the shepherds, "Thus says the Lord and Master: 'O shepherds of Israel who feed yourselves, should not the shepherds feed the sheep? Behold, you drink the milk and clothe yourselves with the wool. You slay the fatlings, but do not feed My sheep. You have not strengthened the weak, and the sick you have not revived. The broken you have not bandaged, and the misled you have not brought back. The lost you have not sought, and the strong you have not prepared for labour. So my sheep were scattered, because there were no shepherds. So they became food for all the wild animals of the field. My sheep were scattered in all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the face of the earth, and there was no one to seek them or to bring them back.' Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord. 'As I live,' says the Lord and Master, 'because My sheep became as plunder, and as food for all the wild animals of*

> *the plain, because there were no shepherds with them, nor did My shepherds search for My sheep, but fed themselves and not My flock' – because of this, O shepherds, thus says the Lord and Master: 'Behold, I am against the shepherds, and shall require My sheep at their hands* [...]'" (Ezekiel 34:1-10).

These words show how the Lord calls bad and distorted shepherds to account for the consequences of their selfish, irresponsible unfaithfulness. The sheep are abused, plundered and killed. The Lord will call them to account for this, He says. The shepherds may expect appropriate punishment. We may compare and contrast the words from Ezekiel with those of our Saviour :

> '*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep* [...]' (John 10:11).

By falling into the temptation to abuse the sheep, the straying shepherd betrays Christ, and he leads sheep astray and scatters them. There are consequences to this betrayal, as the prophets clearly say.

Leadership which is life-giving and life-changing in the good and righteous way, is a leadership of imitating Christ the Good Shepherd. He, Himself, teaches us and shows us the way on the basis of what He, as the Word, had inspired to be previously written :

> *Know thoroughly the souls of your sheep, and you will set your heart on your flocks* (Proverbs 27:25).

The pastor must regularly visit in the homes of the flock given to his care by Christ. He does this so that he may know the rational sheep, and that the sheep may know their shepherd. He does this so that he can give persons and families the opportunity to share with him their joys and sorrows, and to ask questions. I remember that very long ago, when I was a young priest, I was told by a senior cleric : "The oil of the parish is visiting". The pastor goes visiting out of love, so that he may help the parishioners in any way necessary, and also so that he may guide them before difficulties have time to grow into disasters. It is this oil of the love of Christ which the loving and caring pastor pours upon the troubled waters of the lives of the sheep in his care. It is the oil of the presence of Christ Himself, whom the pastor brings with him on every visit. This oil is the love of Jesus Christ which is carried by the actual blessed oil with which the pastor usually anoints those he visits. This visiting and anointing is very much in the spirit of the apostolic Mission of the Seventy (Luke 10:1-9). Our Saviour directed that they bring peace, and that they bring healing with them, as is shown in the following extract about that mission :

> '*But whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house." And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you.* [...] *And heal the sick there, and say to them, "The Kingdom of God has come near to you"'* (Luke 10:5-6, 9).

If this principle holds true for a parish priest (I have found it certainly to be so), then it holds true for a bishop as well. I have with my own eyes seen its fruits in the work and service of Archbishop Paul of Finland (Part A, pp. 52 ff), and also in that of other such bishops, which, in my opinion, confirms this principle. It was once commented to me that I treat the diocese in the same way I would a parish (implying that to do this is too difficult). However, I have always tried to do this : nurturing the mutual relationship of love in Christ, just as a parish priest would. I have done this precisely because of the importance of nurturing living, personal relationships and nurturing personal contacts between all the clergy and all the people all together. It is

evident by the details of the lives of some of my predecessors presented previously here, that they indeed regularly visited the parishes. I have attempted to do so, following in their foot-steps. My predecessors often stayed in the homes of parishioners and priests, and I have tended to do so as well. I am far from being the only high-priest or priest who has understood the importance of making pastoral rounds in such a manner, regularly visiting parishes, priests and parishioners. Saint John Sergeiev of Kronstadt underlines the importance of such visiting :

> Every priest is an apostle in his village or parish, and ought to go about to the different houses preaching the Kingdom of God, instructing the ignorant, awakening the careless, who are living in the passions and carnal desires, to a Christian life ; encouraging and stimulating, by the hope of future recompense, those who are pious and sober-minded ; strengthening and comforting the discontented (My Life in Christ, p. 544).

The translator uses here "comforting". Throughout this work I am often using the word "comfort" with the current and popular meaning of "ease", or "console". However, the original and most correct meaning of this word is, from Latin and French, to "strengthen greatly". We all would do well to keep this meaning in mind.

As we see, then, visiting is simply an aspect of the real work required in shepherding the sheep, in order to nurture the flock entrusted to the arch-pastor or pastor. Through the visiting, the shepherd and sheep come to know each other and grow a bond of trust. Without this bond of trust, it is very difficult for a parishioner to approach the pastor for confession. Without this bond of trust, repentance and forgiveness have difficulty bearing any fruit. With that bond of trust, the bishop's personal, physical presence can then incarnate Christ. The arch-pastor's loving presence, conveying Christ's love, opens a door, a way out from their environment of crippling fear, a way that enables the people to have the courage therefore to trust our Lord Jesus Christ. When the shepherd is regularly visiting the flock in their homes, then he can quickly know when a sheep is missing from church ; or he can tell when one is ill, and needs help. The shepherd who leads the sheep has a relationship of compassion with them. Not only his ear, but even more his heart will tell him that there is one missing, or that something is amiss. It is for reasons such as these that I have myself given precedence to this visiting over other details (often to the perturbation of others).

The compassionate shepherd certainly is given the Grace to manifest loving-kindness in immediate ways as in Christ he steers a steady course, doing his best to enable the flock to keep its balance during times of turmoil. Through a vigilant life of prayer, in Christ, the bishop is enabled to exercise compassion through the love of our Saviour who, Himself, cared for His confused disciples on the road to Emmaus on the day of His Resurrection (see Luke 24:13-35). While they walked, He quietly listened to their every concern and care and fear. In their confusion, they seem to have forgotten everything our Saviour had said and done, probably because of the pain they were suffering at the time. They did not recognise Him right away because of this pain. However, they felt His compassion, and they opened their hearts to Him. Our Saviour responded to their questions by refreshing their memories and their hearts with citations from the Old Covenant Scriptures. It was when they invited Him in to give Him hospitality, and when He broke bread with them, that they did recognise Him. Here we are to understand how important it is that we high-priests and priests always keep our focus on our Saviour by remembering Him, and by showing His love through being with the sheep, actively listening. Such visits are not the time for sermonising. Instead, we are following our Saviour's example of vigilantly paying attention. This is especially so in times of trouble : being aware of

the situation of the rational sheep, and actively caring for the sheep in their hour of need. Visiting must not have hidden agendas and motives such as money-gathering or politicising. The sheep are wary because of their daily experience in the world, and they are generally waiting to find out what might be "the real reason for this visit". It can take a long time for them to understand that the visit is simply from compassion.

Saint Nikolai (Velimirovič), Bishop of Zhicha (†1956) give us a good example of a compassionate shepherd in his words about Saint Paulinus (†431), Bishop of Nola near Naples, Italy. Although the Athonite compilers of the most recent synaxarion say that this experience (which follows the writing of Saint Gregory the Great) did not happen to this Paulinus but to his successor, I am transmitting it as Saint Gregory presents it :

> Saint Paulinus was deservedly called the Merciful, for he was truly merciful in the fullest Christian meaning of the word. When, at one time, the Vandals were looting Nola, they also took many people into slavery. A certain widow, whose only son the Vandal prince, Rig, had carried away into slavery, came to her bishop and, in tears, sought money of him to buy her son back. Having nothing, the bishop dressed himself in the garments of a poor man and told the widow to take him before the prince and exchange him for her son. The prince returned her son to her and took Paulinus off to Africa, where he served as the prince's gardener until he was freed by the providence of God and returned to Nola with the rest of the slaves (The Prologue from Ochrid, 23 January).

When parishioners are suffering the death of a loved one, their pain may be very intense. I recall being taught long ago by a godly priest that when the pastor goes to them as he ought, he may be able to say nothing at all at the time. He may simply be able to be with them, to make them tea, and to sit with them prayerfully. This prayerful presence bears many fruits. In many such situations, little or nothing will be able to be verbalised, because what is happening in this prayerful silence is happening by the Grace of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and minds of those present at that time. The wordless action can speak volumes, one might say. It might be a very long time before anyone could be able to put into words what has happened on such occasions. This prayerful and pastoral presence is significant also on occasions when a person may be either dying or unconscious. Many such persons have been greatly helped by such a pastoral presence. Many persons returning to consciousness have commented on the encouragement and strength they received from such visits, because although unable to respond, they nevertheless heard the prayers. The hospital environment is particularly one in which such a presence is and has been helpful. It is told that Saint John of San Francisco, being blocked by nurses from visiting a parishioner, nevertheless did manage with God's help to visit her at night. He prayed for her and consoled her, regardless of the regulations. That visit was confirmed also by the person in the next bed (see p. 38).

Sometimes, because of the multitude of things that must be done for the sake of the maintaining and nurturing of life in the Church, the bishop could feel that he is as a queen-bee in her hive, being guided here and there and told to do this and that. The queen-bee is the heart and soul of the bee colony. She is the reason for nearly everything the rest of the colony does. The queen is the only bee without which the rest of the colony cannot survive. A queen-bee of good quality means a strong and productive hive. At the same time, the queen-bee cannot do very much for herself, being even fed by the other bees. Her prime functions are to keep the unity of the hive, and to perpetuate the colony. There may be here some good comparisons to the life of a bishop, some not so good. However, I believe that our Saviour compared us with

sheep for good reason, because it is a yet better metaphor. Sheep are followers, and do not think well for themselves. They do not for the most part separate their thoughts from those of the shepherd, of whom they are always aware, and to whom they look for everything, always. The sheep may support the shepherd in some ways, but they do not manage him as bees do their queen. The sheep have a living and personal relationship with their shepherd. They are not, as with the drones of bees, apparently unimportant and dispensable pawns in a colony. The flock is a living and integrated family. We can say that the sheep and the Shepherd/shepherd are of one mind together.

Westerners generally do not know from any visible experience (unless they have travelled to the Middle-East, or have seen television documentaries) the sort of shepherd referred to in the Scriptures, and particularly by our Saviour (see John 10:4). Western shepherds usually drive their sheep from behind, often with the help of a dog or dogs. The eastern shepherd walks before the sheep, perhaps along with a goat, and shows them the way. This shepherd can be aided in his awareness of the sheep for which he is responsible, because each sheep often has a small bell around its neck. Each bell would have an unique sound, because most bells would be hand-crafted. If one sheep is missing, the shepherd will be quickly aware, and he will search for the missing one (see Luke 15:4-5). The shepherd walks before the sheep, himself leading them, and calling the names of the sheep to be sure they keep together and with him as they follow along. As our Saviour reminds us, this is possible because of a relationship of mutual love and trust between the shepherd and the sheep, which develops over time and experience, of course. Some wilful sheep can choose not to follow, of course. This can be said to be another of the applications of the famous saying : "You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink". Saint John Chrysostom gives us food for thought about this :

> The shepherd of sheep has the flock following him wherever he leads ; or if some turn aside from the direct path and leave the good pasture to graze in barren and precipitous places, it is enough for him to call more loudly, drive them back again, and restore to the flock those which were separated. But if a man wanders away from the right faith, the shepherd needs a lot of concentration, perseverance, and patience. He cannot drag by force or constrain by fear, but must by persuasion lead him back to the true beginning from which he has fallen away. He needs, therefore, a heroic spirit, not to grow despondent or neglect the salvation of the wanderers, but to keep on thinking and saying : 'Perhaps God may give them the knowledge of the truth and they may be freed from the snare of the devil' [see 2 Timothy 2:25-26] (Six Books on the Priesthood, p. 58).

The pastor's responsibility is to lead the rational sheep to the Living Water. It is the responsibility of each person to enter into and to develop a truly loving relationship with Christ, and to drink this Living Water (see John 4:13-15). The bishop's *omophor*, representing the lost sheep on the shoulders of the shepherd (Matthew 18:12-14), has many an implication and application. The lost sheep is characterised also in the words of Saint Ignatius of Antioch :

> It is fitting, then, not only to be called Christians, but also to be so : even as certain persons call him a bishop, but do all things without him. Now such persons seem to me not to be of good conscience, seeing that they are not steadfastly gathered together according to the commandment ("Letter to the Magnesians", 4).

The lost sheep is sought out by our Saviour, and by the Christ-loving arch-pastor and pastor, even when it strays wilfully. The Lord shows us that the economy exercised by the arch-

pastor with the members of the flock entrusted to him is to be on a case-by-case basis. He had inspired the wise Solomon to prepare us with these words :

> *As faces are not like other faces, so neither are the hearts of men* (Proverbs 27:19).

Saint Ignatius of Antioch echoes this true perception. With words that are at the heart of the whole apostolic-canonical Tradition of our Church and its addressing the weaknesses and spiritual illnesses of the rational sheep, he writes :

> Every sort of wound is not healed with the same plaster ("Letter to Polycarp", 2).

"Plaster", here, refers to a bandage soaked with healing ointment and/or medication. In the spiritual plaster, healing ointment is Unction, and medication is Holy Communion. It is wise of the rational sheep to set aside time daily during which to be in silence together with the Shepherd, perhaps using the "Jesus Prayer". There is a cure, the love of Christ, which is applied in different manners to different persons :

> '*Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick*' (Matthew 9:12).

> '*For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost*' (Luke 19:10).

Therefore, in his capacity as a physician, the arch-pastor has the responsibility to bring our Lord's love and healing to each and all, and unstintingly. The arch-pastor is to do exactly the following :

> *He will feed His flock like a shepherd and gather the lambs with His arm; and He will comfort those with young* (Isaiah 40:11).

Saint John Chrysostom contributes his pastoral insight :

> You cannot treat men with the same authority with which the shepherd treats a sheep. Here, too, it is possible to bind and to forbid food and to apply cautery and the knife, but the decision to receive treatment does not lie with the man who administers the medicine but actually with the patient. [...] For Christians, above all men, are forbidden to correct the stumbling of sinners by force. [...] It is necessary to make a man better not by force but by persuasion. [...] For this reason a lot of tact is needed, so that the sick may be persuaded of their own accord to submit to the treatment of the priests, and not only that, but be grateful to them for their cure. [...] Some guess must be made about the disposition of the sinners, for fear that when you want to stitch up what is torn, you should make the tear worse, and in your eagerness to [lift] up the fallen you should cause a worse fall. [...] The shepherd needs great wisdom and a thousand eyes, to examine the soul's condition from every angle. [...] The priest, therefore, must not overlook any of these considerations, but examine them all with care and apply all his remedies appropriately, for fear his care should be in vain (Six Books on the Priesthood, pp. 56, 57, 58).

It can be seen in this following excerpt from his poem that the well-known poet T S Eliot (†1965) understood what Saint John Chrysostom was expressing in the previous passage, that the surgeon knows what to do for the good of the other :

> The wounded surgeon plies the steel
> That questions the distempered part;
> Beneath the bleeding hands we feel
> The sharp compassion of the healer's art
> Resolving the enigma of the fever chart ("The Four Quartets" : Part IV, 'East Coker').

Christ-loving arch-pastors, therefore, go about their service much in the same spirit as the compassionate Saint Abercius, Bishop of Hierapolis († *ca.* 167), and as Saint Lot of Egypt († fourth century) (The Synaxarion, 22 October for both). Saint Abercius did not confine his service of teaching and preaching of Christ to one place. By God's mercy, he delivered people from demonic possession ; he openly contradicted the false teachings of idolaters ; he healed the sick ; he converted many to Christ. Saint Lot of Arsinoë took upon himself the grievous sins of others, and overcame the tempter on behalf of the other. When we are allowing our hearts to be similarly full of the love of Christ, and when we are similarly working the works of Christ's love, then we are standing on the shoulders of very sturdy giants who preceded us, and who each, through their love for the Lord, strengthened the witness and living Tradition of Orthodoxy. By their prayers and support, we are ourselves in Christ becoming giants.

If we as shepherds are expected to reveal to everyone and everything the paternal love of God, then the fact that there are so many weak, absent, fallen, angry, addicted, violent, autocratic, self-righteous fathers (both biological and clerical) in our usual experience makes this revealing very difficult. Before this could happen effectively, some significant time of repentance and forgiveness would first be necessary for a potential priest or high-priest. Such a bishop or bishop-candidate ought to have come to a state of forgiveness towards all his forebears and of all others, so that he pass on no poison. He ought already to have come to such a condition of forgiveness and compassion that he can truly live out the Beatitudes and the Law in his life, and show the fruits of the Holy Spirit. By "Law" I am referring first to the Lord's summary of the Ten Commandments (Matthew 22:37-40 ; see p. 85) regarding the foundation of love, and then to the Commandments themselves, which are all motivated by and founded in God's love. A clear example of the nature of the extent of Christian forgiveness is given to us in the life of Saint Dionysius, the Bishop of Ægina who retired in Zakynthos (see pp. 222-223).

As was suggested in the preamble of Part B of this book, coming to such a necessary state of forgiveness could be helped along by spending a significant amount of time in a monastery on the Holy Mountain, or in some other equally stable and spiritually mature place. It may be quite difficult to find such a monastery, and the potential candidate for the episcopate may not yet have been able in Christ to come to such fulness. Nevertheless, this man is called by our Lord to persevere in the path of love, and to be able truly to forgive. Indeed, before his ordination, it would be best were he already able to forgive all those who, throughout his entire life, have injured him, hurt him, betrayed him. This is but one reason for a life-confession at that time. He will be asked by our Saviour in His love to intercede for the sheep entrusted to him. He will be asked by our Saviour to intercede not only for the sheep entrusted to his immediate care, but also for those sheep that are yet to be joined to the flock, and for those who are straying for whatever reasons. This path is fraught with dangers, because the adversary strives to confuse or destroy the shepherd, much as would a wolf, so as to be able to eat the sheep. The shepherd's best hope for survival is through his own active, constant and daily forgiveness of all. Not by any means do all shepherds survive the attacks of the marauder. This is particularly so in those sad cases in which the shepherd does not accept or believe in the existence of the wolf-of-souls, because of having dangerously fallen into accepting humanistic and philosophical ideas as being superior to Scripture and Tradition. The Apostle Paul gave warning to the elders of the Church of the Ephesians :

'*For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears*' (Acts 20:27-31).

Because it does sometimes happen that clergy themselves, through pride, may be perverted into behaving as wolves who divide the flock and kill the divided ones, it is therefore often repeated that Saint John Chrysostom has said that the road to Hadēs is paved with the skulls of clergy. What he is referring to is what happens in the icon of the Ladder of Saint John Climacus. In this icon, we see that those distracted from Christ both fall off and are pulled off the Ladder of Divine Ascent.

The *omophor* of the bishop, which represents the lost but found sheep carried upon the shoulders of the shepherd, has yet further implications for us to consider. Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) (†2003) preached a homily based on the words of the Apostle : "*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ*" (Galatians 6:2). A copy of this homily was recently forwarded to me by a certain woman, formerly a parishioner in London, England. "Father Anthony", as he was popularly called, said :

> Linking it [*i.e.* Galatians 6:2] with Christ means that we must be prepared to carry the burden of each person, of everyone, whether it is a friend or a foe, whether the burden seems to be great and honourable, or whether it is [as] humiliating to us as it is defiling to the other person. Christ became man and took upon Himself all the weight not only of our creaturely condition, but of the condition of the fallen world. He took upon Himself the weight, the crushing weight of the lives of everyone who came to Him; not only of the sick and the needy, not only of those who were clean and persecuted, but of those who were wallowing in filth, those who were evil, as it seemed to others, at the very core of their being. But through the darkness that blinded people He saw the light at the core; He saw that the divine image was imprinted at the very heart of every person, and it was to this image He addressed Himself; it was this life eternal that was dormant in each that He awoke through a touch, through a word, by His presence. And so, when we hear the words of Paul that we should carry one another's burdens, it is against this background of Christ's readiness never to reject anyone, never to see in anyone a person for whom there was no hope left, that we must turn to our neighbour.

After these words (and after descriptions of how we care for those in need), he added more :

> How much more difficult it is when the burden is laid upon ourselves, and this burden is not one that ennobles us in our own eyes or in the eyes of others, but is simply pure ugly suffering and distress: the dislike of others for us, the hatred of others, slander and calumny, and the various many, many ways in which our neighbour can make our lives almost unbearable. How difficult it is then to think of them not just as the cause of all that destroys our lives, but as people who are blind, who are unaware of what they are doing. We pray in the litanies by saying that we ask God to be merciful to those who hate and wrong us, who devise and do evil against us! How often it is that people devise nothing, mean nothing, but are totally thoughtless. At that moment how difficult it becomes to see this person as someone whom we must take upon ourselves, with all the consequences of it and bring this person before God; to bring before God ugliness, meanness,

> thoughtlessness, unintentional cruelty — bring it before God and say: 'Forgive, Lord! They do not know what they are doing'. […] These words that are so beautiful and so inspiring ("Sermon on Galatians 6:2").

This homily was given in 1991. A different homily (which he preached in 1974 in Cambridge, England) helped my sisters and me to come to Orthodoxy sooner rather than later, partly because we actually saw him and heard him there.

The words of Metropolitan Anthony reflect very clearly our Saviour's words to us in the Beatitudes and in other places about how to behave in the face of the presence and attack of evil. Evil always attacks. Nevertheless, as our Saviour shows us by His own words on the Cross, "Forgive, Lord" must be in the very foundation of our mentality and always ready, at the front of all our reactions. Thus it is that to say, "Forgive, Lord", is to take up and put on the full armour of Christ :

> *Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand* (Ephesians 6:11-13).

This is Christ's way of love. Therefore, when we are seeing the *omophor* of the bishop, whether it be on a bishop before our eyes, or whether it be on a bishop in a photograph or in an icon, it is important that we recall his identification both with our Saviour and with the sheep. This *omophor* is a part of the armour just mentioned, because it has very much to do with Christ's protection of the flock, including the bishop. It is directly related, also, to the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God. Because of all the implications that flow from the bearing of this *omophor*, it is important that we understand that the bishop's pastoral responsibilities are very many. It is essential that we recall that these responsibilities (and especially the ones just described by Metropolitan Anthony) are the responsibilities of us all, as well. In the fulfilling of Christ's law of love, we bear our own burdens, and also the burdens of one another. What Metropolitan Anthony is showing us here (which very much applies to bishops) refers also to those affirmations that are made by a man who is about to be ordained to the Holy Episcopate in Christ. Before the assembled bishops, and surrounded by the faithful people, he first promises that he will guard the flock committed to him in the unity of Christ's truth. He then affirms strongly and clearly his faith in our Saviour Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Trinity. He then adds these words (which we know that Metropolitan Anthony lived out in his life of service in Christ) from the service of the Proclamation of Faith, which is offered before the ordination :

> [...] I promise to visit and watch over the flock, which is now entrusted to me, after the manner of the apostles, so that they remain true to the Faith, and true in the doing of good works. I will show special concern for the priests. I promise to inspect with diligence, to exhort, and to restrain, in order that schisms, superstitions, and unholy venerations may not arise ; and customs contrary to Christian teaching of piety and good morals may not injure the Christian way of life [...].

As the arch-pastor leads and feeds the flock, he recognises his own weakness and sinfulness, and he depends upon the Lord Himself to help him overcome both. At the same time, as he preaches and teaches, he recognises that he is addressing himself with the words of the Gospel before anyone else. In addition to this, the arch-pastor takes upon himself the weaknesses, the

sinfulness, the waywardness, the ignorance, the fear, the anger, the resentment, and any other negative passion borne by the rational sheep he is leading in Christ. He bears this burden in the responsibility of the *omophor*, and he bears it in and with Christ our Saviour. Day after day, night after night, the arch-pastor reveals to the flock the steadfast mercy and the loving-kindness of the Lord who is our Shepherd :

> *What is man and what use is he; what is his good and what is his evil? The number of a man's days is considered great if he is one hundred years old. But like a drop of water from the sea and a grain of sand, so are a few years within a day of eternity. Therefore the Lord is patient with them and pours out His mercy upon them. He sees and knows their end, that it is evil; therefore, He makes full atonement for them. The mercy of a man is upon his neighbour, but the mercy of the Lord is upon all flesh, rebuking, training, and teaching them like a shepherd who returns his flock to the fold* (Wisdom of Sirach 18:7-12).

> If Christ, as He said, gave Himself for us, what excuse or pardon should we deserve, having undertaken the charge of so numerous a people, if we were not ready to do and to suffer anything for the security of those committed into our hands. For if the patriarch Jacob, when in charge of flocks and feeding brute sheep, and having to give account to man, passed sleepless nights, and bore heat and cold, and all the inclemency of the elements, to the end that not one of those animals might perish ; much less does it become us, who preside over those who are not irrational, but spiritual sheep, who are about to give an account for this charge, not to man, but to God, to be slack in any respect, or shrink from anything which might benefit the flock. Besides, in proportion as the latter flock is superior to the former (men to brutes, and God to men), so it behoves us to manifest a greater and more intense anxiety and diligence (Saint John Chrysostom, "Homily Concerning the Statues" 3).

By the Grace of the Holy Spirit, throughout the whole history of the Church there have been, and there will continue to be arch-pastors who will follow closely in the foot-steps of the "*great Shepherd of the sheep*" (Hebrews 13:20). In doing so, they will fulfil the promise of the Lord through the words given to us by the Prophet Jeremiah :

> *I will give you shepherds according to My heart, and they will thoroughly shepherd you with knowledge"* (Jeremiah 3:15).

6

The bishop as a father, and other considerations

> Let everyone respect the deacons as Jesus Christ, and also the bishop, who is the image of the Father ; and let them respect the presbyters as the council of God and the fellowship of the apostles. Apart from these there is no Church ("Letter to the Trallians", 3).

We clearly see here, in this letter of Saint Ignatius, the God-bearer, Bishop of Antioch, the understanding that the bishop should be the father. Saint Epiphanius of Salamis (†403) writes clearly about this sort of episcopal paternity :

> This order (of episcopate) is a begetting of fathers; for it begets fathers to the Church; but the other [of presbyterate], not able to beget fathers, begets children for the Church, through the rebirth of Baptism, but not fathers or teachers (Panacea against all Heresies).

From the life of Saint Pachomius of Tabennesi, the Cœnobiarch (†346), we know that he said :

> Before going up into heaven, He [Jesus Christ] established the apostles as His successors, saying to Peter, '"*Feed My lambs*"', and '"*Tend My sheep*"' [John 21:15, 16]. For this reason there is need now, too, for people who, generation after generation, feed the souls in the Lord, who says, '"*I am with you*"' [Matthew 28:20]. For we know that after the apostles it is the bishops who are the fathers. But all those who listen to Christ who is in them are also their children (The Life of Pachomius).

Let us, then, recall the words of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Himself, about how bishops/arch-pastors/high-priests and presbyters/pastors/priests are to be, and are to behave. In this portion from our Saviour's well-known Parable of the Prodigal Son, it is shown that the loving father is really the focus :

> *Then He said: 'A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me." So he divided to them his livelihood. And not may days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'" And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." And they began to be merry*' (Luke 15:11-24).

The father is continually, and without stopping, searching the horizon for his son. In just this manner, the bishop would be best advised to imitate the father of this son, understanding that this is how the Lord Himself is and behaves in His paternal love towards us all. A further clarification of how such a father shows life-giving and nurturing love is given by our Saviour :

> *'If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!'* (Luke 11:11-13)

Both in His own words, and in the words of His angels who come to us, our Saviour always exhorts us not to fear. Reassuring us, He asks that we consider the Heavenly Father's care for birds and plants, because we are of much greater value to our Heavenly Father than the birds and plants He creates and loves :

> *'And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith? And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. But seek the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom'* (Luke 12:25-32).

In the first chapter of 1 Moses, we see that God created (and still does create) everything to be good and beautiful. When our Saviour is using the example of the lilies of the field, and of the birds, He is describing the beauty and value of each human being in the loving eyes of the Heavenly Father. In the Parable of the Prodical Son, when our Saviour is giving us the example of the loving father, those whose hearts understand and whose ears hear will surely comprehend that this loving father indeed stands for our loving Heavenly Father.

We all have the responsibility to seek first things first. The bishop, being the icon/image of this paternal love, has the responsibility (even more than others) to keep a living, obedient relationship with the Lord as the first priority in his life. He fulfils (and we all fulfil) these words from the Law :

> *'You shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart, from your whole soul, and from your whole power'* (5 Moses 6:5).

On the strength of this living relationship, the arch-pastor will be able to provide the food and tools of life for the flock. Life in Christ is always completely permeated with love, and therefore it is without fear. The reassurance given by our Saviour shows us that the food that is provided through the arch-pastor leads us into the Eternal Kingdom :

> *'Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom'* (Luke 12:32).

Above all, the arch-pastor's responsibility is a spiritual one. He is to offer life-giving food. He is to give indications of how to return to the right path when we fall off : how to turn about (to repent) in order to see God. However, in the spirit of the Incarnation, the responsibility for providing the tools of life for the flock is also a practical responsibility. The scriptural and canonical Tradition of the Orthodox Christian Church does not limit the ministry of paternal provision solely to "spiritual things" :

> We ordain that the bishop have authority over the goods of the Church : for if he is to be entrusted with the precious souls of men, much more are temporal possessions to be entrusted to him. He is therefore to administer them all of his own authority, and supply those who need, through the presbyters and deacons, in the fear of God, and with all reverence. He may also, if need be, take what is required for his own necessary wants, and for the brethren to whom he has to show hospitality so that he may not be in any want. For the law of God has ordained, that they who wait at the Altar should be nourished from the Altar. Neither does any soldier bear arms against an enemy at his own cost (Apostolic Canon 41).
>
> If any bishop or presbyter neglects the clergy or the people, and does not instruct them in the way of godliness, let him be excommunicated ; but if he persists in his negligence and idleness, let him be deposed (Apostolic Canon 58).
>
> If any bishop, presbyter or deacon, when any of the clergy is in want, does not supply him with what he needs, let him be excommunicated ; but if he persists, let him be deposed, as one who has killed his brother (Apostolic Canon 59).

Such a strong statement is given context in the early Fathers, such as Saint Ignatius of Antioch :

> But consider those who are of a different opinion with respect to the Grace of Jesus Christ which has come unto us, how opposed they are to the will of God. They have no regard for love : not for the widow, for the orphan, for the afflicted ; not for the one in chains, or the one set free ; not for the hungry, or for the thirsty ("Letter to the Smyrnæans", 6).
>
> They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they do not confess the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father, in His kindness, raised up. Those, therefore, who speak against this gift of God, perish in the midst of their disputes. It would be better for them to engage in acts of charity [godly love, *agapaō*] that they might also rise up ("Letter to the Smyrnæans", 7).

He is here referring to a situation similar to that which led to the establishment of the Holy Diaconate :

> *Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution* (Acts 6:1).

And the holy Bishop-Martyr Ignatius contributes to our Tradition these words :

> Let not widows be neglected. After the Lord, you shall be the one to take thought for them ("Letter to Polycarp", 4).

In his "Panagyric on Saint Basil", Saint Gregory the Theologian raises up before us the great Cappadocian as someone very worthy to emulate. Saint Gregory tells us how Saint Basil cared for and protected the Church ; how he was bold towards governors and other potentates ; how he constantly supported the poor and needy in spiritual and physical distress ; how he was

generous in his hospitality towards strangers ; how he cared for maidens and helped them find good marriages or good monasteries ; how he nurtured monastic life ; how he benefitted the people in many ways. Then Saint Gregory sets before us the supreme example of Saint Basil's activity during a famine (367), which, he says, was the most severe one until then ever recorded. There was no source of assistance or relief for the city in this calamity. Saint Gregory refers to the many instances in the Scriptures in which the Israelites had been delivered, but he suggests that for Christian believers the solution takes a different form. In this case, Saint Basil spoke in such a way to those who had hoarded supplies that they opened their store-houses and barns. They shared ; and thousands were saved. Woven into Saint Gregory's recounting of this sign and event of compassion are many scriptural precedents, particularly the psalms, and the words of the Mother of God in the *Magnificat*. He then compares Saint Basil to Saint Joseph the Comely, the provider of corn, and also to our Saviour Himself. Himself living in poverty, Saint Basil personally attended to the needs of the poor and the hungry. He distributed food, supplies and medicine. He nourished the hearts and souls of the people with his words and by his example. What better example of pastoral behaviour could we ask for ? In asking this question, one might well respond that a better representation of pastoral behaviour may not be found, but we can perhaps see the equal in a few persons. For instance, there is Saint Nicholas of Myra, who is himself a veritable paradigm of the episcopate in his serving of others in Christ our Saviour.

The great abbot Saint Theodosius the Great, the Cœnobiarch (†529), and his friend and co-worker Saint Sabbas (†532) are shining examples in their Christian service. Both lived in the Judæan wilderness near Bethlehem. They led hundreds of monks in Christ ; they nurtured them and nourished them in the Christian way. These holy monks were healers in Christ, and they cared for the rich, the poor, the sane, the insane, the healthy, the sick, all without distinction. They depended upon the Lord to provide, and He did provide for them. They show us by their own experience that arch-pastors are called by our Lord to feed the sheep with both spiritual and material food. They are called to guide all the sheep on the path of life in Christ. They are called to care for the whole life of the flock, and the whole life of each sheep.

There is also Saint Theophylact († *ca.* 845), who was the Bishop of Nicomedia, the major city of Bithynia in Asia Minor, not far from Constantinople. Saint Theophylact, an arch-pastor who was a beacon of almsgiving and of tender paternal care, along with other bishops, clergy and faithful, suffered greatly from persecution by the Emperor Leo V and the iconoclasts (icon-smashers). Because of his steadfast defence of the icons, he had to endure about thirty years of exile with regular maltreatment and tortures, described as a "bloodless martyrdom". He nevertheless cared for his flock from a distance. About him we read these excerpts :

> [Saint Theophylactus] was not content simply to teach the true Faith and provide a model of evangelical behaviour in his own person, but also undertook with diligence a whole series of charitable works. Like Saint Basil in times past in Cæsarea, he founded in Nicomedia a true city of charity: he had two-storey houses built with everything that was necessary for the welcome and care of the sick; he organised a hospital with doctors and nurses, in which the healing of the soul was as central as the healing of the body, and had a church built nearby, dedicated to the holy Unmercenary Saints Cosmas and Damian. Father of orphans and protector of widows, he presided with compassion over the needs of all his spiritual flock. Following the example of Saint Tarasius [Patriarch of Constantinople (†806)], Saint Theophylactus had registers drawn up, which gave the names of all the indigents of the city, so that a monthly alms could be distributed to them. Each week, at the end of a night-vigil, he offered the sick of his hospitals a warm bath and,

> girded with a towel like Christ, went himself to dry their wounds. [...] Assiduously attending long nightly prayers for the salvation of the people and the confirmation of Orthodoxy, he undertook a vast correspondence in which he exhorted some to renounce the material advantages and vain honours that the iconoclasts were giving, to return to the true Faith and take up their Cross, and he encouraged others to remain faithful unto death during their time of testimony. In one of his letters, Saint Theodore the Stoudite [†826] called him: 'Column of the Truth, Foundation of Orthodoxy, Guardian of Piety and Support of the Church'. In spite of his exile, Saint Theophylactus found out about the needs of the poor and afflicted, in order to come to their aid. Whoever approached him to taste the honey of his words was transformed, and left him giving thanks to God and oblivious of his affliction. (The Synaxarion, 8 March).

We may consider Saint Stephen (†1396), the Bishop of Perm (a city and province near the Ural Mountains). Saint Stephen was, as a priest, the primary missionary to this region. He very boldly confronted the absurdity of idols and idol-worship, and brought throngs of people to Christ through his love and through his clear words. Like Saint Innocent and many others who would follow him in missionary labours, he translated the Scriptures and ecclesiastical texts into the local language. The result of this was that he was chosen to be the first bishop of this region :

> They decided that the Saint himself was the most worthy of the episcopal ministry in that land that he had enlightened by his preaching and translations, and where he had founded the first churches. He was consecrated in 1383 [in Moscow] and, on his return to Perm, where the people welcomed him with joy, went to work with tenfold energy: teaching, baptising, founding churches, ordaining priests and introducing, with wisdom and discernment, the structure and discipline of the Church. He also established monasteries, and became the provider of the poor and consoler of the afflicted. As an attentive pastor, he did not devote all his concern only to the soul, but also nourished the body. During a famine in Perm, he brought wheat from Vologda and organised its free distribution to the people (The Synaxarion, 26 April).

Saint Bessarion I (†1540), Archbishop of Larissa (Thessaly, Greece), grew up as an obedient disciple of Metropolitan Mark of Larissa, and later was himself ordained to the Holy Episcopate. The rational sheep he was given to lead twice refused his leadership, until he succeeded Metropolitan Mark in Larissa. About him, it is written :

> Far from being angry or resentful, Saint Bessarion [...] returned to Larissa, where he took care of the diseases of soul and body of the inhabitants. [...] He followed Christ as a true shepherd, caring for the spiritual needs of his faithful, giving practical help to all who were in affliction or necessity, and ransoming many captives with the help of the Church. He planned and supervised the construction of a bridge over the Aspropotamos, a daring undertaking no one before him had ventured to attempt, and that still stands as a reminder of his labours. (The Synaxarion, 15 September).

I know from what I have been told about him (and to an extent experienced inwardly), that Metropolitan Leonty of New York (see Part A, pp. 30 ff), as others, did not limit only to the clergy the fruits of his responsibility of caring in practical ways for those in need. Like Saint Basil, from his heart, he lived in accordance with the earliest Tradition of the Church, which, with the Apostle Paul, asserted that the bishop is to be "*all things to all men*" :

> *For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the*

law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the Gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

In encountering the early Fathers, it is hardly possible not to meet exhortations by these Fathers about how the bishop in particular is to accomplish this work of winning as many as possible for Christ. We are told time and again that a bishop is God's steward, and that he is to behave as did the apostles from the first (as seen at the beginning of chapter 6 of the Acts of the Apostles). Without making distinctions, the bishop is to reach out a helping hand to all in any need. He is to help the orphans, widows, the friendless, the prisoners, the afflicted, the foreigners. He is to behave towards all as have those who are to be judged as righteous before the Lord at the time of the Judgement :

'*Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?" And the King will answer and say to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me"'* (Matthew 25:37-40).

All these elements also express to some extent the responsibility of the *pater familias* (father of the family) of the Roman Empire. This man was the head of an extended family, which included all dependents : wife, children, other relatives (including those by adoption), clients, freedmen and slaves. He was responsible for their formation into being good citizens of Rome. He was responsible also for their personal well-being, and for the proper organisation of the economy of the family, as well as for all the properties. He even had priestly duties, albeit pagan ones. It would not be out of place to use the term "patriarch" for such a person. In just the same way, the local bishop has always had the same responsibility in his diocesan family. This responsibility is a personal one, and not at all limited to properties and finance. The bishop, as arch-father, is given the responsibility by our Saviour to provide all that the family needs in order to be healthy in Christ. In the same manner that any parent nurtures children in order to raise them up to praise and serve the Lord, so the bishop nurtures the diocesan family. At the same time (as monks learn early on) the bishop must be careful not to have any particular or exclusive relationship with any one person or any one family. As with any parent, all the members of the family must be loved and treated evenly.

It may be said that such a paternal responsibility was not (and is not) confined to the old Roman Empire. Indeed, it is not greatly different from the responsibility of a family father in Hebrew patriarchal times. Such fathers often were loving and kind (although sometimes they were quite the opposite). However, the responsibility of the father was to see to it that each person received what was needed. This is the case today in many parts of the Orient. The responsibility of the bishop is, indeed, quite similar. And this paternal character (and responsibility) is not foreign at all to the Gospel or the Tradition. For reasons of such material/spiritual unity as are given in the Tradition, a person such as Archbishop Pimen of Suçeava (Bukovina, Romania) not only liturgically leads the flock entrusted to him, but he also defends them in the face of short-sighted civil authorities. With his own hands, he personally

helps them to rebuild their homes after floods (and he at the time of this writing is in his mid-eighties). I saw this happening with my own eyes during one of my visits there, after a flood. It showed me that this is a man who reveals to the people the right way of life by living himself in daily repentance. I recall very well being told that at the Putna Dormition Monastery, during a celebration at which the President of Romania was present, the security police attempted to block access to the monastery to a large number of pilgrims who had prayerfully walked more than a hundred kilometres. One small group had walked over five hundred kilometres, from Moldova. Many had to climb the nearby hills to look down over the walls into the monastery. Archbishop Pimen had walked with them during the last part. He vehemently argued with the police, and demanded that the pilgrims be admitted. However, he succeeded only partly. Presidents are presidents ; security is security ; rules are rules.

Yet more is involved in the responsibilities of such a family-head, that is, of such a bishop. This has to do with his responsibility to know the history of his diocesan family from its beginning. This responsibility has its roots in our constantly remembering how God worked in the past with all who have gone before us, and in our trying to understand these acts as well as possible. Our Lord works with us in ways that are not always clear to us. In keeping our hearts so rooted, we may all the better be able to understand, and to co-operate with Him now. In Roman and other families, such a father would be responsible for keeping alive its history from the beginning in the memory of the family. A fatherly bishop does so also ; but he does so in the spirit of recalling all our Lord's loving acts amongst us, and helping us to know that these acts are still effective amongst us. It is for this reason that in all dioceses, the memory of departed bishops and clergy from the beginning of the diocese until now (or as near to the beginning as possible) is kept in prayer at the *Proskomedia*, and also in memorial services. By knowing this history, and particularly the history of local communities, the bishop may be better able to bring a resolution to difficulties that sometimes arise amongst the people. Self-identity of a family, and thus of a parish and of a diocese, requires knowledge also of its history. In such a manner, Serbian families keep the name-day feast of the day on which the first members of the family were baptised. For some, this was about a thousand years ago. Amongst such families, the whole family has a "patron" saint, or rather, a family friend amongst the saints. In addition, a person may also have a personal saint-name, which implies a saint with whom there is a personal friendly relationship. In our individualised society, we have a tendency in our self-obsession to forget our context and our history. Indeed, it is telling that very often at times when the sanctity of a person is being discussed, the conversation follows, rather, a line of political, philosophical, sociological consideration, rather than the evidence of the Lord's activity in that person. Therefore, the Serbian custom is an antidote for which we can be grateful.

God, our loving Father, is to be reflected in the life of the bishop. We see a reflection of such a God-loving father-bishop in the man who sent labourers into his vineyard :

> *'For the Kingdom of Heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. Now when he had agreed with the labourers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and said to them, "You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you." So they went. Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, "Why have you been standing here idle all day?" They said to him, "Because no one hired us." He said to them, "You also go into the*

vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive." So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, "Call the labourers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first." And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius. And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner, saying, "These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day." But he answered one of them and said, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?" So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen' (Matthew 20:1-16).

In this parable, we see a person who cares equally for each and every one. Moreover, it is not so written, but it can well be understood, that some of the labourers were not hired by others because they were in some ways incapacitated. This land-owner, by contrast, sees the ability, sees the strength, sees the stamina, sees the weaknesses, and hires the person in accordance with his perception of the ability of the person, whether the work be much or little. He does not leave out the weaker one. Each is compensated equally because they are each loved and respected equally. The employer recognises and gives to each one his personal dignity as a human being created by God. Who, then, could be reckoned as less worthy, and why ?

Our Saviour gave this preceding parable to bishops in particular, because the arch-pastor's responsibility towards the flock he leads is not only similar to that employer's, but it is even deeper. Particularly in our days, this concern about equal-treatment, or perhaps equity (in the sense of fairness) needs to be applied to the service of lay-persons, and especially of women in the Church. It may perhaps seem strange to have such concerns treated here, but they must be addressed. For whatever reason, there has been an increasing trend towards clericalism in our parish communities and in our diocesan families. By this I mean that it is often said that by virtue of the full hierarchical authority of the bishop, and (by extension) the similar authority of the presbyter, each of them is "boss" of the diocese or parish. When we fall into this boss-mentality, we fall into control-mentality ; we fall, in fact, into evil-thinking, and we fall out of being fathers and shepherds. We become manipulators and oppressors instead. Taking his responsibility as an excuse, a bishop could appropriate to himself all decision-making. When he falls into this mentality (or if any one of us does), he no longer hears the Grace of the Holy Spirit speaking through the lay-people ; and he deprives them of the exercise of the many gifts they are given by the Holy Spirit for the edification and up-building of the Church.

Indeed, as I have travelled abroad, I have often seen the many gifts, abilities and talents of lay-persons of either gender being put to good and productive use. I have seen competent women serving as secretary, treasurer, or chancellor to bishops, and I have seen women serving in such positions even with heads of autocephalous Churches, and to good effect. Even here in Canada, I saw that a very traditional bishop had a female lawyer as his chancellor for many years, and this arrangement seemed to be very productive. It is important for us all always to remember that the desire to control comes from fear, and that this fear produces oppression. Instead of bringing life, we bring the opposite. We become like the child who wishes to bring beautiful wild-flowers to his mother, and who picks them and holds them very tightly. By the

time they reach the mother, they are wilted, dead remnants. Similarly, a child, fearful of dropping an animal, can very easily hold it too tightly, and can risk killing it.

We are not children. We are also not in league with fear. We must resist any fear that inhibits our service and our good shepherding. We must resist any fear-driven tendency to control. We must allow Christ to act freely in and through us. It is very important that we, as shepherds and fathers, recall the environment of our Saviour Himself, an environment that has been repeated constantly in our history. Our Saviour was surrounded by the Myrrh-bearing Women, with their labour, witness and service, right to and through the end. Of course, also, there is the support of His Most Holy Mother, who has now become the Champion Leader of the Triumphant Hosts. One of these women, Saint Mary Magdalene, is known to us as Equal-to-the-Apostles. There have always been men who have the same disposition and faithfulness as these great women. From apostolic times until now, there have always been faithful persons of both genders who have been supporting, praying for, and protecting the leadership of Christ's Church. There are some persons who have been given this responsibility by our Lord in a more particular way. Everyone may do this as a matter of course in liturgical services during the litanies. The intercessions of all help the leadership to be faithful in their leadership, and effective in bringing Christ's loving protection to all the sheep. It would not be right to have written these things unless I included these details which are associated with the crucifixion of Christ :

> *There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem* (Mark 15:40-41).

Another aspect of paternal responsibility is given by our Saviour :

> *'I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples'* (John 15:1-8).

Our Saviour says that He is the vine, and that His Father is the vine-dresser. He says that branches of the vine that do not bear fruit are pruned away by the Father-vine-dresser. The non-fruit-bearing branches to be pruned are those that have already died, and they are pruned in order to protect the living branches from corruption and disease. Pruning a dead branch is not a punishment. Rather, it is more like a surgery which removes life-threatening tissue (such as in gangrene). Pruning happens simply because of the recognition of a fact. It is usual that new growth appears in the pruned spot, sometimes multiple growth. The vine-dresser does everything possible to keep alive what is alive. Likewise, the bishop, in his responsibility as father, has the responsibility to keep the flock healthy by exercising discipline, which means

applying compassion, good judgement and encouragement, as well as words of correction. Words of correction are not punishment ; rather, they are leadership and support. It is a loving application of authority. Nevertheless, in whatever manner authority may be involved, it must not be coercive power. Saint Nikolai (Velimirovič) elaborates on this for us :

> '*Be angry, but do not sin*' [Psalm 4:5]. [...] Be angry with your friends when they sin, but let your anger be directed towards turning them back and not to driving them into further evil. The anger of a friend towards his friend, of a parent towards his child and — dare I say it? — of God towards men, is not a storm that roots up trees but a wind that makes the tree stronger, making the rotten fruit fall so that the good fruit may be even better and finer. Control your anger, that it may heal and not poison. To have this control, keep God before you in your anger. Anger can have no stronger dam or lock than God. All anger that is not in the name of God and His righteousness is sin. Do not be angry for nothing, but be angry at that at which God is angered. If your will is set firmly in God's Law, you will always be able to be angry when anger is needed, and to the measure to which it is needed. This cannot all be spelled out in words and explained to the ignorant. Anger in its place acts as mercy does in its (The Prologue, 4 October).

Free-will is one of the attributes the Lord has given us which most mirrors the activity of His life-giving love. Free-will gives us the choice to love, or not to love. It is important to keep in mind always what is loving, and what is not loving. Judgement in the sense of punishment is not for the bishop, or for any one of us to apply. This is for the Lord to do. Of course, some persons disagree, and aver that punishment is appropriate. I very much disagree with this attitude. In my experience, it is counter-productive. Correction is a direct relative of repentance and of forgiveness, but it is not punishment. Punishment is the application of force. Correction is showing that one way is destructive and even deadly, while another way is constructive and life-giving. Correction serves as a warning-sign and a good direction-sign.

In this vein, it is for good reason that an arch-pastor, serving the Divine Liturgy in the hierarchical manner, includes the blessing of the flock in the midst of the Trisagion with these words from the psalms :

> *O God of Powers, turn about, now ; look attentively from Heaven, and see : visit this vine, which Your right hand planted, and establish it* (Psalm 79:15-16).

In the liturgical text, the words are slightly adjusted from this citation. Here, the request is that the Lord turn to us in a paternal and pastoral manner. We ask that He pay attention to us as a gardener pays attention to, and cares for the things he has planted. In this psalm-verse, our hearts should quickly make the connexion with the Parable of the Vine and the Branches (see p. 150). As the Lord turns about, as it were, in a paternal manner to nurture His living vine, so we in response turn about towards Him. In freedom in His love, we co-operate with His blessing, with His love, with His life. In fact, this means that we repent, and we turn about in order to pay similar close and loving attention to His will for us.

During the Trisagion, as the bishop addresses the God of Powers with the words from Psalm 79, he shows us clearly the unity of Heaven and earth. He further reveals to us that the heavenly, seraphic, thrice-holy hymn which is sung in Heaven before God's throne is made present at this Liturgy, and that this Liturgy is made present in Heaven. This term "Powers" means "an army, or armies, ready for war". This Greek word δύνᾶμις, *dynamis* translates the Hebrew *sabaoth*, meaning "of powers". Generally, the armies are considered to be the angelic

forces. The term "Lord of Powers" is used as a substitute for the Divine Name — see the footnote on Psalm 23 in The Psalter According to the Seventy. While worshipping, the following texts would well be kept in mind in this regard at the singing of the thrice-holy hymn :

> *In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up. The house was full of His glory. Around Him stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory'* (Isaiah 6:1-3).
>
> *The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!'* (Apocalypse 4:8)

The Church, the Body of Christ, is the living vine which is planted here by the Lord. It is visibly present here and now in the Divine Liturgy. The Church sings this thrice-holy hymn along with the angels. With the words of Psalm 79, and in his life and service, the bishop makes for us the links between the Incarnation of Christ and the visibility of the Body of Christ, which is this living vine, which is also each one of us.

The following words of the Apostle Paul are significant as he speaks to his spiritual children about his own personal experience, using words that every bishop might wish to use together with him when speaking to his own spiritual children :

> *You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own Kingdom and glory* (1 Thessalonians 2:10-12).
>
> *I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me* (1 Corinthians 4:14-16 ; see Philippians 2:22 ; Philemon 10).

These words do not apply only to bishops, however. In our unity, in our spiritual life, as members of the Body of Christ, much of what applies to a bishop can be applied to each and every person. It is important to understand the difference in meaning between "instructors" and "fathers" as given by the Apostle. The word "instruction" in the time of the Apostle (and indeed until very recently) implied the use of a stick. The student was struck with it when mistakes were made, so that the memory would have a clear impression of what is correct. The father that the Apostle has in mind is not behaving as an instructor would. This father remembers that he has co-operated with the Grace of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel by bringing this spiritual child into a living relationship with the Living God, with Life eternal. He exhorts his spiritual children to imitate him in how he bears Christ, how he serves Christ, how he keeps Christ in the forefront of his whole life. In short, he exhorts us therefore to imitate Christ, as he is imitating Christ.

The Apostle is demonstrating throughout his life and writings that he does indeed understand what it means to be a parent. The truly loving and nurturing parent loves every member of the family equally, and in accordance with the particular personality and gifts of each member. The parent loves each member of the family without having any one as a favourite. In

a family, children are often tempted to accuse a parent of favouring one child over another, but the child that is so tempted is then shown carefully by the parent that the different ways in which love is shown do not in any way mean that any particular child is a favourite. It is an important consideration also, because the bishop in his diocesan family cannot have any particular friendships. If he is friends with any one person, then he is friends with every person.

In this same context, the fact that the heads of the main autocephalous Churches have, for many centuries, been called "patriarch" (meaning "first-father", not "ruler") is indicative in itself of the nature of the responsibility of any bishop.

There is yet another aspect to the paternal responsibility of the bishop, and that is the maternal aspect. The bishop must, within his personal ability and his co-operation with Grace, be able to express also the maternal characteristics of the Lord's disposition towards us. This may be said to express clearly the pastoral care that is characteristic of the bishop's service. There are some references from the New Testament to consider at this time :

> '*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!*' (Matthew 23:37 ; see also Luke 13:34)
>
> *My little children, for whom I labour in birth again until Christ is formed in you* [...] (Galatians 4:19).
>
> *We were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us* (1 Thessalonians 2:7-8).

The hen's gathering of her chicks (or "her brood") under her wings is not for one purpose only. The hen does this in order to keep the little ones warm, to be sure. With her wings, she also protects them from the elements, and from predators. More important still, it is well known that if there is a fire, the mother hen gathers the chicks under her wings to protect the little ones from the flames. Many are the stories of such hens who thus perished in the fire, but who nevertheless managed to save the lives of the chicks under their bodies. Similarly, in the ruins of Pompeii, the bodies of many children and babies were found beneath those of their protecting mothers (see Isaiah 66:13). By extension, we understand that a bishop is to be ready, as very many have done, to lay down his life for the flock entrusted to him by Christ.

The father-and-mother images and responsibilities seem to be paradoxical : a father and mother at the same time ? a mother, and a *pater familias* ? Let us recall our beginnings in answering these questions, as we keep in mind the following words from 1 Moses, the book of beginnings. Here, we are given the divine decision :

> *Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of heaven, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that moves on the earth.' So God made man; in the image of God He made him; male and female He made them. Then God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of heaven, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.' Then God said, 'Behold, I have given you every seed-bearing herb that sows seed on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it*

> *shall be for food. I also give every green plant as food for all the wild animals of the earth, for all the birds of heaven, and for everything that creeps on the earth in which is the breath of life.' It was so. Then God saw everything He had made, and indeed, it was very good* (1 Moses 1:26-31).

That the human race is made in God's Image in accordance with His Likeness, and that the human race consists from the beginning of male and female, suggest clearly that there are, indeed, feminine or maternal characteristics along with the masculine in the Holy Trinity (although God is far beyond gender as such). The creation of our First Parents, created in God's love, enabled a visible reflection of the Holy Trinity. Although the following details are not directly involved with this consideration, they are worth considering parenthetically. In the icon of the Three Angels Visiting Abraham by the great iconographer Saint Andrei Rublev, it is notable that the faces of two of the angels (amidst the similarities of the three) do not express particularly masculine or feminine characteristics. Although the face of the third angel is greatly similar, in this case the robes are more deeply coloured (as in most of the icons of Christ) which suggests to us that this angel is the Word. This slight difference suggests a reference to the Incarnation.

Further witnesses to the maternal characteristic are found in the following commentary by Saint John Chrysostom, and also in the canonical commentary from The *Pedalion* (also called "The Rudder", a book of many canons that was collected and codified by Saint Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain (†1809) in the eighteenth century and published in 1800) :

> Saint John Chrysostom expands on these words. He says that, in the manner of a loving mother, the Lord's indescribable loving-kindness and boundless goodness exhort us who are forgetful of God to understand that what is needed is a change in the way of life in order to be pulled out of evil. This loving exhortation to repentance shows that the way leading to salvation is found in glorifying God (Foot-note on Psalm 49:22-23, in The Psalter According to the Seventy).

> The name metropolitan is given to a bishop, according to what Gabriel of Philadelphia says in his treatise concerning priesthood, because he is like a mother of his city, which he ought to nourish spiritually with his religious teachings and life and holy manners and with the produce of his territory (The Pedalion ; see also in Apostolic Canons 58 and 59).

It is reported that after his long experience with meetings involving bishops, the late Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemann is reported to have said that from the nature of these meetings he could clearly see that one of the functions of a bishop is to protect. In my opinion he was, of course, right. The compassionate Saint Seraphim of Sarov told one abbot that he should submit to the Lord's will in everything ; but that while he was being strict with himself, he should "be a mother, and not a father, to the brethren, and in general be merciful to all, and humble" (An Extraordinary Peace, p. 232). Saint Silouan of Mount Athos (†1938) gives us this prayer :

> 'O Lord, set us right, as a tender mother corrects her little children. Give every soul to know the joy of Thy coming, the power of Thy help. Refresh the suffering souls of Thy people, and teach us all to know Thee in the Holy Spirit [...]' (Saint Silouan the Athonite, p. 307).

Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov) (†1993) adds :

> God provides with mathematical precision for His creation down to the smallest detail. As Father and Friend, He delivers us. He comforts the soul like a mother. He shares closely in the whole history of mankind, in the life of every man (*op. cit.,* p. 176).
>
> His love is humble — He loves us not condescendingly but tenderly, as a mother aches over her sick baby. When we open our heart to Him, we have an irresistible feeling that He is our 'kin', and the soul melts in worship (On Prayer, p. 14).

Yet another expression of this sort of maternal care may be discerned in the words of our Saviour, as He hung upon the Cross, and spoke to His Mother and to the Apostle John :

> *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother!' And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home* (John 19:25-27).

That Christ thus gives His Mother, the *Theotokos*, and His disciple John to each other is an expression of such maternal care. Bereft of husband and child, the *Theotokos* seems otherwise to have had no place to live at that moment, and no place in society, despite the extended family. Women without family and resources in those days became beggars at best. The young apostle would also benefit from her maternal care for him, and this lasted to the end of her earthly sojourn. The practical expressions of love, which are always demonstrated by our Saviour, are likewise the expressions of our love in and for Him as we meet the real needs of each other.

At this moment, I will give an example of such a practical application of Christ's love. In Russia, Father Nikolai Stremskoi and his wife (acquaintances of one of our priests in Canada) were assigned by Metropolitan Leonty of Orenburg and Buzuluk to the village of Saraktash (by the Sakmara River, a tributary to the Ural River) in 1990. This diocese is at the southern end of the Ural Mountains, on the border with Kazakhstan, and at the transition from Europe to Asia. It was the responsibility of Father Nikolai and his wife to strengthen the existing community of believers, and to rebuild the Temple in this village, which had been several times ruined by the communists. In the course of their working to accomplish this, they could not, because of their Christian compassion, neglect those in visible need. There were, and there are, many. As a result, before long this young couple began to adopt children from the local state orphanage to be their own children. Let us recall that in state-run orphanages there, children are turned out on their own on the streets at age 16. Adoption involves a permanent commitment, a life-long relationship with the children. Over some years, their family grew to 53 adopted children. After they had adopted 49, they had their own biological child, the first of several. By the end of 1990, an Orthodox parish school was established, which soon became a high-school (*gymnasium*). In 1991, the parish established the Holy Trinity-Saint Simeon House of Mercy to help those in need, and then monks arrived to live and work there. All this work is accomplished under the protection of Saints Nicholas and Panteleimon. By 1995, the House of Mercy had expanded to include a home for 25 elderly people in need of care, persons who were also included within the Stremskoi family. The House of Mercy added as well a small bakery, a sewing workshop, and a part-time farm with domestic animals. Now, in Saraktash, there has been established a monastery of women as well ; and many Temples have been re-built or newly-built to God's glory. From the beginning of this undertaking and until his death after 2000, Metropolitan Leonty of Orenburg was supporting and blessing these developments. By 2010, the Stremskoi

family numbered 70 children, and in Saraktash, the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity was consecrated. For more than a decade during the earlier years of this development, one of our Canadian parishes sent many tonnes of clothing, medical and other supplies to Saraktash in order to help. All this work of compassion in Christ's love continues until now to flourish with the help of God. Other such works occur in other countries.

In our day and in our places, we may not always be called by compassion to take in the homeless and the destitute ; but we will be called to meet the needs in practical ways of those who are in pain, in sorrow, in loss, those who are hungry, those who are ill. In my long-term experience, it has been the women who have voluntarily banded together to pay attention to these very needs, and also to watch over the development of the children who have been received into the Church by Holy Baptism. Sometimes this sort of care has been life-saving. Real care is expressed not only by blood-relatives.

This was precisely the disposition and activity of Matushka Olga Michael of Kwethluk, Alaska. This holy woman was the wife of the Archpriest Nikolai O Michael, who served in the Alaskan village of Kwethluk (a village of fewer than 200 households) and many other villages in the delta region. The village of Kwethluk is in the Yukon River delta, at the juncture of the Kuskokwim and Kwethluk rivers. Matushka Olga served with her husband until his death. As did others, she knew by heart the hymns of many feasts and feast-days, including the whole of Holy Week and Pascha. She sang, baked prosphora, and sewed vestments. Iconographically, Matushka Olga is represented as holding a basin of water, and a towel. This represents first that she acted as a midwife at child-birth. It represents also the imitation of our Saviour in washing the feet. It points towards the basin and towel used by subdeacons to wash the hands of the bishop. It demonstrates that every Christian is, in Christ, a servant. She, herself, gave birth to and raised eight children to maturity. Some of them were delivered without a midwife. But she did not only deliver babies, she nurtured little children, watched over them, and cared for them in a very dignified manner. I mean that she guarded the personal dignity of the children. When they were in need, she would knit socks and mitts for them, sew boots and gloves for them, and she would leave freshly prepared food for them in places where they would find it. They would not have to beg, because she could see the need. She would comfort and console the children whenever she was aware of their needing it.

There was, in the village and the area around, considerable abuse arising from excessive alcohol consumption. It is said that Matushka Olga always kept herself aware of those who were too infirm to clean their own houses. She herself would do this instead, and she would even leave warm food for the invalid. In addition, she taught children to do the same by taking them with her, so that they would learn how to do this by imitation. Then, when they were old enough, she would send them on their own to care for those in need in the same practical ways. In doing so, she was certainly expressing a maternal disposition (which may be enacted in the same way by men), and she embodied that diaconate which is the foundation of the life of every Christian. She prayed ; she loved ; she acted. It is known that neighbours (and also people near and quite far away) would be supplied with boots and gloves sewn by her without request or charge. After her death, her presence and help have been especially felt by those (particularly women) who have been abused and marginalised. It is possible that she had known such pain in her own early years. In an article about her, the Archpriest John Shimchick made this following comment :

> Perhaps it is in this role as an advocate for those who have been abused, particularly sexually, that God will continue to use Matushka Olga in drawing 'straight with crooked lines', His work of 'creating beauty from complete desolation and nothingness' (Jacob's Well, Spring/Summer 1997).

When the now-retired Metropolitan Jonah, along with Bishop Benjamin served a memorial service at her grave, they and all others around were very strongly aware of the bright sense of the immediate presence of love in Christ. At the end, all spontaneously began singing Paschal hymns.

Service has many facets and many ways in which it is expressed. It penetrates the whole life of the Christian. The desire to serve is indeed inspired by the love of Christ given to us by the activity of the Holy Spirit. This serving is related also to the way in which a husband and wife live together. They serve each other, and together they serve Christ in worship and in hospitality. Indeed, in the earliest times, a bishop might have been married, as is reflected in what the Apostle Paul writes to Timothy, his bishop-disciple in Ephesus :

> *If a man desires the position of a bishop* [*episkopos*, overseer], *he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife* [...] (1 Timothy 3:1-2).

It is a fact that, in the earliest times, bishops would come to the episcopate mostly in advanced age, after the maturity of any possible children (of course there were exceptions, and some were ordained younger). However, as the number of believers quickly multiplied, so the responsibilities of each bishop dramatically increased in terms both of the number of believers and of the number of communities and also the breadth of territory. It became a practical impossibility to care for the needs of such a flock and at the same time to maintain a family. If the demands of so many rational sheep are inevitably overwhelmingly insistent, then the married bishop would also be faced with the real possibility of neglecting his wife, albeit unintentionally (this happens to parish priests, sometimes). A bishop or presbyter might lose his sense of balance and priority in such a context, and an unintentional neglect may appear. Every husband must remember always that his wife is not merely a possession or a thing. Rather, she is a living part of her husband. If this neglect were to progress, then the results might well become malignant and could seriously endanger the marriage. Such a malignancy need not become mortal if the cleric concerned would turn to the resources that are available to him, beginning with the Lord, resources offered by his fellow clergy, friends, competent professionals, the Fathers, and other writers. It cannot be left unsaid that the Scriptures are an essential resource in themselves. A related matter to this is the disposition of property. There cannot be confusion about properties that belong to the whole Church : they must be clearly distinct from any private property and private funds a bishop may have. The provisions for keeping these distinctions clear were developed very early in the Church's history precisely because there had been some cases of confusion about what property rightfully belonged to whom. Partly because of the scandals that arose from the confusion between the bishop's personal property and the diocesan properties, there is a canon of the Quinisext Council of 692 which forbids bishops to be married. From that time, bishops were taken only from amongst the monks, or sometimes from the celibate clergy. Nowadays, it is taken for granted that a celibate cleric would be tonsured to be a monk before being ordained to be a bishop.

Nevertheless, the bishop does still have a wife : the diocese itself is his wife. It is only that he does not have a wife as other men may have. This also can be considered a sort of natural

development in terms of how the bishop re-presents Christ in the diocese under his *omophor*. In these present circumstances, it is necessary that the bishop maintain his sense of responsibility and orientation so as to keep everything properly directed (beginning with himself). It is important that he recall that his life is, after all, patterned after Christ Himself. Christ did not have a wife as such ; but, as the Apostle Paul teaches us, His Bride is the Church. So it is with the bishop. As the Apostle reminds us, the way of our Saviour is that of self-emptying, self-sacrificing love, and of constant care for the other. In other words, the following comments of the Apostle Paul (which apply also to us) regarding the marriage-relationship naturally come to apply to the bishop and the diocese he leads :

> *For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the Church; and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore, just as the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the Church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.* [...] *This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church* (Ephesians 5:23-30, 32).

Following from this, it happens always that when a bishop falls asleep in the Lord, the diocese is then styled as "widowed". There is a suitable mourning period (that is, a period of at least forty days after the repose) and then the new bishop, or "husband" of the diocese is to be chosen.

The reality about the husband-wife characteristic of the relationship between the bishop and the diocese is poorly understood by us, and sometimes it is even resisted. Often this may be because of the fact that many of us have been greatly abused in our lives, and therefore have a very negative attitude about ourselves (and sometimes about others), and particularly about marriage relationships and relationships with parents. This is the undeniable state of how we truly are these days. This can be also because of a too-frequent popular misunderstanding of some words of the Apostle Paul about marriage and mutual obedience in marriage. Besides this, in western societies, the wife and even the children could be treated as things, as furniture or land. For instance, in the marriage service in the West, the father gives his daughter to the husband-to-be as he would give goods or a possession. However, the wife is not a thing (or chattel) ; the children are not things (or chattels). By contrast, in the East, the couple arrive for the blessing of the marriage together (although it is understood that the civil requirements had first been fulfilled). The wife is a valuable and precious person, and a living part of the husband, just as the Apostle writes. The husband, who in Christ loves his wife, does so as he loves his own life ; and because of this love, he does everything for her support and welfare and life.

Every one of the images that we have received from the Lord in the Scriptures regarding life in the Church and regarding bishops, has to do with human life and relationships in the context of God's love. Therefore, I repeat : although we might distort it for earthly reasons, the husband-wife sort of relationship described by the Apostle is reflected in that of the bishop-and-diocese. We can see a quite recent and good example of the meaning of this statement in the words of the 1898 Inaugural Address of Bishop Tikhon, as he began to serve in North America :

> 'And now by the will of God, I, albeit unworthy, am called to this apostolic ministry, and "*I will call them My people, who were not My people, and her beloved who was not beloved*." [Romans 9:25 ; see Hosea 2:23] Until this day we have, you and I, been strangers to one another and did not know one another. From this day forth the Lord Himself establishes a close bond of union between us, places us into the mutual relation of bishop to flock and flock to bishop. In the writings of the Fathers this relation is likened to the conjugal relation — the bishop being as the bridegroom and the flock as the bride. And as the husband bears his wife such love that he, for her sake, leaves father and mother and cleaves unto her, becomes as of one kin and lives one life with her, even such love must a bishop bear to his flock. And as a wife is obedient to her husband, for he is her head and her protector, even so a flock must be obedient to its bishop. Understanding thus the relation of a bishop to his flock and being betrothed to the Aleutian flock, I left my beloved native land, my aged mother, my friends, all near and dear to my heart and made my way to a far distant land, to you, men to me unknown, in order that you might henceforth become "my people and my beloved." From this day on, to you and to your welfare, I direct my thoughts and my care; my strength and my faculties I dedicate to ministering to you. With love I come to you, brethren; I pray, receive me with love also. My love will find its expression in caring for you, in serving you; you are to show yours in obeying me, trusting me, cooperating with me' (Orthodox America 1794-1976, p. 90).

One implication of both marriage and parenting is permanence. Because of this same permanence, the responsibility of a bishop cannot be considered to be a mere occupation, career or job. The bishop's responsibility in the diocese is a way of life, and a life-commitment. The historical attitude from the earliest times concerning the episcopate, then, has been that the commitment made by the bishop to the diocese is both personal and permanent. This relationship and responsibility is a life-commitment, in the same way that marriage is a life-commitment. It is permanent in the same way that a member of a body is permanently a part of the body. In other words, retirement as such is not a part of the usual possibilities or considerations in the life of a bishop. Because of love, a parent never stops being a parent, and a spouse is always a spouse. There are some modern distortions in which bishops are moved. Nevertheless, in just this parental and spousal way (in accordance with Tradition), the bishop is always the bishop of the diocese/flock/family wherever he lives, and he cannot be removed except for some departure from the true faith, or for some gross infraction of canon law.

This does not mean that retirement does not occur. Sometimes it does, for one reason or another. Usually, however, were this to happen, the bishop would then withdraw to a monastery or suitable institution such as a nursing-home. There cannot be opportunities for confusion about who is truly the father in the family, as to who is truly the shepherd of the flock. This is very much the case when there is one or more vicar-bishop(s) serving along with the diocesan bishop. The vicar-bishops must be at all times of one heart and mind with the diocesan bishop so that his paternal leadership is always clear. However, sometimes it may happen that an irreconcilable personality difference may arise, which results in the need for the bishop either to move to another diocese or to retire, for the sake of the health and welfare of the diocese. Such an occurrence does not happen very often, but it does require being kept in mind. Human beings have limitations and weaknesses. The Church has long experience of these weaknesses and their effects ; and inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Church has long ago learnt how to cope with such situations. Glory to God that this is so, because it is of primary importance that the flock of Christ be kept healthy and united in Christ.

7

The bishop as a servant

> *And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.' But Jesus said to them, 'They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.' And they said to Him, 'We have here only five loaves and two fish.' He said, 'Bring them here to Me.' Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children* (Matthew 14:14-21).

As we have seen in these words from Matthew, our Saviour feeds the multitudes (see also Matthew 15:32-38 ; Mark 6:34-44 ; 8:1-9 ; Luke 9:10-17 ; John 6:5-14). The life of service of a bishop, in following in the foot-steps of our Saviour, may be discerned in the underlying implications of the life and service of our Saviour Himself, of which this citation is but one clear example. In a homily given by the Vicar-Bishop Irénée (Rochon) of Québec in 2012, it was explained that a situation such as this could easily happen. Our Saviour was teaching the people at that time, and He was healing their sick. The people, with rapt attention, would have been so focussed on His words and actions that no-one, not even the disciples, would have noticed the passing of time. With thousands of people lacking any food because no-one had thought about it, our Saviour, as always, provided. I have been told by others that sometimes a Divine Liturgy or other service can be so focussed, peaceful and joyful that the passing of several hours feels like a few minutes. I have often had such an experience myself.

In this pericope of the feeding of the five thousand, our Saviour is working as a servant as He teaches, heals, delivers and feeds. Complementary implications are found in the washing of the feet of the apostles in John 13:3-17 (see p. 168). In washing the feet, He again works as a servant (that is a slave) who normally would wash the feet of all the guests as they arrive. How great is the significance of this act. God the Word empties Himself in such a manner :

> Today, the Father's perfect Image, marked with the stamp of His eternity, has taken the form of a servant (Vespers, Nativity of Christ, Lord I have cried, Tone 2).
>
> At '*the voice of one crying in the wilderness : "Prepare the way of the Lord"*' [Isaiah 40:3 ; Matthew 3:3], You have come, O Lord, '*taking the form of a bond-servant*' [Philippians 2:7], and You, that knew not sin, asked for baptism (The Great Blessing of Water, Theophany).
>
> You have clothed Yourself in our poor and infirm nature, and have submitted Yourself to servitude, You that are King of all ; and moreover, You accepted to be baptised in the Jordan by the hand of a servant (The Great Blessing of Water, Theophany).

Moreover, we have the words of the following ancient hymn about this kenosis (self-emptying) and its implications, a hymn already in use in the days of the Apostle Paul :

> *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father* (Philippians 2:5-11).

We are not greater than He. The rôle of the servant is very important to keep in mind, and also the fact that this rôle belongs to all Christians. This is shown from the first sign (miracle, wonder), when our Saviour turns water into wine at the marriage at Cana, and there shows His identification with servants (slaves, that is). Water was not usually drunk in those days as we drink it now, because it often was not clean enough to be safe for drinking. Water in quantity was available on such an occasion for washing the feet of the guests. It was this water that our Saviour turned into wine. Although others tasted the result, this, His first miracle, was observed in its happening only by the lowest of the low, that is, the household slaves. This was also not by accident, because the Lord's care for and closeness to the poor and needy is seen everywhere in the Gospels. It was to the shepherds in a field that the angels made the glorious proclamation in the middle of the night at the time of our Saviour's birth. Of course, the shepherds in Bethlehem immediately proclaimed the wonderful acts of God to the villagers (see Luke 2:17). At the time of the marriage in the village of Cana, the whole village would almost instantly have been made aware of the miracle by those who witnessed the miracle of the wine, and the telling would certainly have been supplemented by all those who had tasted this marvellous wine. Naturally, they proclaimed the wonderful acts of God. Now, just as the servants in Cana, so we all, His servants, have been proclaiming our Lord's love and His wonderful acts amongst us until this very day.

Our Saviour says to us that when we have done what we are commanded to do, we should always remember that we are servants (that is "bond-servants", or "slaves"), and simply say :

> '"*We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do*"' (see the context in Luke 17:7-10).

The environment of our service is always that of love and of thanksgiving to the Lord, not expecting gratitude or praise for what we do. This is what the Apostle means when he writes :

> *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you* (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

We refer everything that we are and that we do to the Lord. We do not ourselves take credit for our acts of service. If we dare to do so, we are stealing from the Lord what is rightfully His. This is why it is so usual that when we are thanked, we respond : "Glory be to God". If we are bond-servants of the Lord, it is because we freely choose to be bond-servants of His life-giving love. It is important, then, whenever we do something that is merciful and right to be done (and especially if people thank us), that we remember these important words of our Saviour, and give glory to God. This giving of glory can be expressed interiorly or verbally, perhaps accompanied by a heavenward gesture. In this context, I recall that in my youth it was common to say "Thank

God" under such circumstances, and it was understood as a statement or exclamation. Now, to my surprise and disappointment, people regularly receive this expression as if I were giving them an order to thank God. This is, of course, very different from what I tried to say. I have had to try to change my way of speaking so as to be understood. Nevertheless, we can see this humility and gratitude in the exchange with the sinful woman in Luke 7:36-50. Here, the sinful woman, weeping, washes the feet of our Saviour with her tears of repentance, anoints His feet with aromatic oil and wipes them with her hair. In His words about this, our Lord connects forgiveness with love.

The bishop may be described as having "full hierarchical authority". This does not, however, mean that he may coerce or force anyone. This does not mean that he may convince himself that "authority" means "coercive power". It does not. In twenty-first century societies, the understanding of priesthood is often distorted by people to imply that a priest, simply by being a priest and serving as a priest, has coercive power over his parishioners, and likewise a bishop over the diocese. The ability to declare the forgiveness of sins is an element that contributes to this mis-perception. It is crucially important that every priest and every high-priest avoid any use of so-called power or coercion. If he does use power or coercion, he contributes to the distortion of the pure re-presentation of Christ to those he encounters. In reinforcing the distortion, he makes it believable. Instead, he is supposed to be showing Who is Christ the Servant. Included in this is the fact that when anyone puts down anyone else, it is for the purpose of exalting himself. Denigrating anyone is yielding to an element of deadly pride. It gives injury to the one who is put down, belittled and thrown away. If anyone (and especially the high-priest) is truly showing in himself Christ the Servant, then through his words and deeds it must be clearly revealed to all that our Saviour does not coerce us. He does not force us. In Christ's love there is only life-giving freedom. Emphasising our freedom in love together with our responsibility, the Apostle Paul elaborates on this quite clearly :

> *For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'* [3 Moses 19:18]. *But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another* (Galatians 5:13-15).

Too many times people are saddened by violence, corruption, war and destruction in the world, and they ask why God does not just stop it all. However, our Lord created us in His Image, and this includes free choice without any coercion. Either we choose to live in ugliness, or we choose to live in imitation of Him. He does not force us, because He loves us, and we have freedom in this love. In our loving Christ, this love must be as freely returned to Him by us as it is freely given by Him to us. Yet we blame Him for everything that is wrong and ugly instead of co-operating with Him in the healing of what is sick and broken. If we hope to see change in the world for the better, it is for us to initiate that change by beginning with ourselves. It is not for us to withdraw from the Good and from the doing of good, even when evil seems to be rampant. It is important that we admit our own responsibility in contributing to the activity of evil anywhere and everywhere by our own daily sins and betrayals. Nothing is done in isolation. I have heard repeatedly that scientists tell us that the flapping of the wings of a butterfly in a forest in China can, though a chain of events, influence the weather in North America. If this is true, then the actions and behaviours of human beings can be considered in accordance with the difference in our size and mass. In the relationship of love with Christ comes a great liberty, a liberty we neglect to our peril. This liberty was once well-described by Archimandrite Sophrony

(Sakharov) as our having freedom not to be inclined to impose our will on others, and, at the same time, our having freedom not to feel bound (through fear) to the hold others seem to have on us (see His Life is Mine, p. 73). In such liberty is joy. It means that we have grown in Christ enough to know the difference between imposing our own will, and living in and doing His life-giving will. We have in Christ grown to live in the freedom of humility.

On the subject of servant-leadership, I would like to relate here a study about the history of Chinese society, which was done by a Canadian parishioner, Dr. Wee-Chong Tan, an Orthodox Christian and founder of the Canadian College for Chinese Studies in Victoria, BC. This study has something to say about the importance of the correct focus in Christian leadership, and even more pertinently about civil leadership on this continent nowadays. Leadership is always to be understood in the context of service. In recent years, he has made an intensive study of the classics of Chinese literature, with reference to the spiritual/religious implications. He demonstrates in his writings and lectures that monotheism existed in China long before polytheism, and before the Taoist and Buddhist philosophies appeared. These philosophies almost completely buried any consciousness of the root-belief. He shows that, from the earliest times, the ruling dynasties rose and fell according to whether or not the primary motivations or directives were being lived out. These were, simply, that the society must be primarily agrarian, and that the first responsibility of the Emperor of China was to provide for, and to feed the people (the echo of this for the Christian leader would easily be found in the feeding of the five thousand in Matthew 14:14-21 which introduced this section). Dr. Wee-Chong Tan also demonstrates that every time business interests took precedence over these principles, then division, power-struggles and war ensued. Unless the rulers repented and returned to the prescribed system, the dynasty would fall, and be replaced in due time by rulers who would follow that system. The collapse would come about, in part, because the needy people, having become desperate, would begin to take for themselves what they needed.

Although a bishop is not an emperor, nor in any way an earthly ruler, and although we do not (for the most part) live in a Chinese society, this does not reduce the significance of this observation, of these cycles, and of the principles involved. We may well see such cycles in other societies, too. The leader in any society has a personal responsibility towards the society s/he leads. This perception (found in the roots of the historical formation of China) under-scores what our Lord has shown us Christians, and what our Tradition repeats : Christian leadership requires responsibility towards those being led, and this clearly entails the providing of nourishment, both physical and spiritual. Christian leadership (and particularly episcopal leadership) does not involve coercion, and it certainly does not involve oppression, for if it does, it becomes a blasphemy. It certainly does involve loving encouragement. Worldly oppression and coercion must not be amongst us, as our Saviour shows us explicitly :

> '*The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called "benefactors* [i.e. well-doers]." *But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves*' (Luke 22:25-27).

As we are considering the basis of the Christian way, it is important now to recall that from the beginning, Christians were not called "Christians". Rather, they understood that they

were participants in The Way (see Acts 9:2 ; 19:9 ; 22:4 ; 24:14). This is in direct connexion with and reference to the words of our Saviour :

> '*I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life*' (John 14:6).

Of course, we are all aware that it was nevertheless early on that we came to be called Christians (see Acts 11:26). Being a member of the living Body of Christ is properly understood as not being a participant in a "religion". Being a Christian is not simply about ritual observance, nor is it a system, nor is it an obligation, nor is it a philosophy. Rather, a Christian is someone who has a personal relationship in the communion of love with the Lord. This is our response to the fact that the Lord God has appeared to us all, and all together, and He has revealed Himself as Love. Everything about the Christian life flows from this communion of love with Christ :

> *The Lord is God, and has appeared to us* (Psalm 117:27).
>
> *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.* [...] *Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgement; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us* (1 John 4:7-11, 17-19).

"*God is love*" writes the Apostle John. When he reminds us of this, he is clearly reminding us that we are not considering some abstract principle, but rather a reality. When we, along with this apostle, say, "*God is love*", we are first of all referring to the one God, the Most Holy Trinity. God is one, but one in three Persons. Later on (in Part C-6 "Four Creeds"), there is a more precise consideration of the meaning of this in the four Symbols of Faith. However, let us just now accept that we understand that God is One-in-Three (Trinity). This is sometimes called Tri-unity. Following a certain logic, then, if God were one and alone, where would be the true love, the love revealed in Christ in the Gospels ? Such solitude suggests that God simply *is* ; and it could be inferred that He, being alone, would therefore be self-centred. There would then not be any motivation to create, either. If God were two Persons only, and if the two Persons were bound by love, this love would be exclusive. The two Persons would love each other. There would still not be motivation to create. Two is, in a way, stagnant. Three Persons make a true community of love. This love is dynamic and life-giving because of the nature of the relationship amongst the three Persons, who are each distinct in person but completely united in every thought and action. There is logic in this, but this logic is not humanly self-generated. This logic comes to us from the Logos. Such things can be said and understood because it comes about through God's self-revelation in Christ, in the Gospels, and throughout history. God has shown Himself to us to be this Holy Trinity, this community of the Three-in-One. The Apostle John shows us the source of the words of the *tropar* of the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord :

> *This is He who came by water and blood — Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these*

three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one (1 John 5:6-8).

Our Lord has shown us that He is love — love which is more dynamic than we can ever comprehend. This love gives life to everything that is. This love is bringing into being the whole of creation, the whole universe. From the unimaginably immense universe to the unimaginably minute, smallest particles, the love of God brings everything from non-being into being. Love creates in the beginning, and Love creates anew when there is destruction and damage. Love heals all that is broken. Love does so because God, Love, the Giver of Life, wills it.

We of The Way (that is, we Christians) live in a communion of love with this God. Everything develops as a consequence and as an expression of this experience. We are, in fact, best likened to a living organism. The inspired Apostle rightly and wisely calls us the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12). We live in a communion of love with the Holy Trinity by our participation through baptism in the Body of Christ. The Head of the Body of Christ is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ. As members of this Body, we are persons who have ourselves all experienced the consequences of fear in our lives. It is our responsibility and our joy to live as embodiments of Christ's love, to bring this love to those bound by all sorts of fears, and to bring His freedom in love to all such persons. Fear, which brings death, must always be weeded out from amongst us. Christ's life-giving love must always be nurtured amongst us. It is the character of any healthy body that all the parts and all the cells work together harmoniously, nurturing each other in harmony with and under the guidance of the head. So it is with the Body of Christ. So it is with us, each and all.

In all periods of the Church's history, it has been the living and transfiguring character of Jesus Christ's love that has enabled the working of wonders, and enabled life-giving martyrdom, even in the worst times of persecution. It is out of love for Christ that Christians have been from the beginning ready to die, rather than to betray Him for the sake of a little more time on this earth. There are many stories about experiences of such martyrdoms during the Soviet period. During this period many imposters were imposed on the clergy and the faithful by the state's secret police. Through various nefarious means, the secret police deviously placed their agents amongst the clergy in order to try to discover the secrets, the weak points and the vulnerabilities of people in order to gain influence and power by terror. Persons were often forced through threats and tortures to become agents with such an assignment. Nevertheless, by the Grace of the Holy Spirit, people would be able to discern which cleric was "pretending", and which cleric was true. Moreover, there are many examples of those who at first "pretended", and who were later overcome by their living experience of the love of Christ. Thus, the false became true.

There is change, and at the same time there is no change in the life of the Church. So it is that (in contrast to the glib phrase about "changing with the times") both in the Church and in her episcopate, there is no fundamental change at all. What may appear to be a change (such as addressing with certain adaptations the societal and linguistic contexts in which the Church subsists) is not, in fact, a change at all ; rather, it expresses a readiness and a willingness to be faithful. Some details of the life of the Church under the domination of both the Soviets and Islam can appear to have been change, but this is not the case. There was no fundamental change. It is true that we do make jokes about our not changing (and especially about bishops' not knowing the meaning of the word "change"), but the joke deals with the misunderstanding

and the misperception, not with the reality. However, I hope that it shows that we are healthy enough to laugh at ourselves when we may be out of focus.

It is not the culture which forms the Church or her episcopate. It is, nevertheless, inevitable that we embrace the struggles associated with the society in which we live. We swim in this water as fish, as it were, and it is extraordinarily difficult not to become infected or poisoned by this water. However, the school of fish of which we are a part does not exist only to swim in this water, but it exists for the purpose of cleansing this water. Its purpose is to transform this water. Perhaps we could also be compared with snails, which do this sort of work, since we generally move so slowly about it. Regardless, the possibility of transforming the water is real. There have been scientific studies in Russia and in Japan about the cleansing activity of blessed water which demonstrate that this truly does occur.

It is always the Church-and-episcopate which must be living yeast in the contextual society, salt giving life and flavour to all round about, and a lamp shining with the light of the Truth of Love — revealing Jesus Christ to the peoples :

> '*You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavour, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven*' (Matthew 5:13-16).
>
> *Another parable He spoke to them: 'The Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened'* (Matthew 13:33).
>
> Put aside the bad yeast, grown old and become sour, and be changed into the new yeast, which is Jesus Christ. Be salted in Him, lest any one among you become corrupted ; since you will be shown up for what you are by your smell (Saint Ignatius of Antioch, "Letter to the Magnesians", 10).

Recalling what the Apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12, being light and yeast is accomplished through the practical application of the particular talents given to each and every Christian person. These gifts, he says, include such things as preaching, teaching, healing, visiting and serving. However, there are many other gifts not even included in his list, such as generosity and hospitality. Each of them is a visible, practical application of Christ's life-giving love by the Grace of the Holy Spirit. Although, in the first place, these gifts of the Holy Spirit are present and active for the building up and strengthening of the Body of Christ, the Church, these gifts are also given for touching the lives of those in need who are beyond this Body. It is Christ Himself who is present and active, in unity with the Holy Spirit, in all and every case in which these gifts are active. Christ is present and acting when these gifts are brought to bear on the life and lives of human beings and other creatures in need of the Lord's love. He, Himself, is thus revealed to those who are giving and receiving the touch of love. He is just as present through the ministrations of us, His bond-servants, as He was when He personally met the needs of the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21-28), the Samaritan woman (John 4:7-42), the Gadarene Demoniac (Mark 5:1-20), the Grateful Leper (Luke 17:11-19), and many others whom we meet in the Gospels. Although the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37) is a parable, it is still appropriate to mention it here. Some say it is historical. Our Lord Himself still meets needs, but He often also

does it through us who are members of His Body. We are His agents of love and compassion (see Psalm 145:7-9). Our Lord, who loves us infinitely, does all that He says.

The foundation of our correct attitude as Christians is that we are living in the world, but not of it (see pp. 70, 114, 117, 118, 166, 200). In other words, we try, by our love, to reveal Christ by doing our best to act as Christ Himself acts. When He sends out the twelve apostles, our Saviour shows us this directive very clearly. His words are most particularly significant with regard to the responsibility of bishops and their service :

> *These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: 'Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food. Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. And when you go into a household, greet it. If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgement than for that city!'* (Matthew 10:5-15)

It was not yet the time for reaching out openly to the Gentiles. First, the Christ (the Messiah) had to be offered to the children of Israel. Through the example of the Twelve, our Saviour directs us, likewise, to feed the sheep by preaching about the Kingdom of Heaven and its nearness, and also by bringing Christ's peace and healing to all those who are in need. Up to this very day, it is the custom amongst pious, believing Christians that whenever they enter any home, they first pray for the Lord's peace upon the home. They also immediately go to greet the icons before greeting the occupants themselves. I saw with my own eyes that this was the constant habit of Archbishop Paul of Finland (see pp. 53-54).

The Lord shows us very clearly that all healing and deliverance and teaching must be offered free of charge. He says : "*Freely you have received, freely give*" (Matthew 10:8). Grace is given freely to us (each and all) by the Lord. Our Saviour shows us that those who bear this Grace may nevertheless be supported by simple and normal and loving hospitality. When such a grace-bearer spends time in the home of an ordinary person (perhaps one who has little), the Grace of God is poured out on such hosts, much in the manner in which the widow of Zarephath (Sarepta) (see p. 269) was sustained. We all depend on the Lord our God. It is important that the arch-pastor lead the sheep properly by showing his own confidence in the Lord's blessing, protection, and sustenance. All this is emphasised by our Saviour Jesus Christ, who says :

> '*He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward*' (Matthew 10:40-42).

Our Saviour is very direct with us. He does not simply provide hypotheses ; He says, in effect, *do what I do*. I refer in particular to His serious direction to us about behaving, in Him, as servants :

> *Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, 'Lord, are You washing my feet?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.' Peter said to Him, 'You shall never wash my feet!' Jesus answered him, 'If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.' Simon Peter said to Him, 'Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!' Jesus said to him, 'He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.' For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, 'You are not all clean.' So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them'* (John 13:3-17).

When He is washing the feet, our Saviour says something important that applies to everything He has been doing up until this time, and would be doing over the next days :

> '*What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this*' (John 13:7).

The apostles would later on gain some understanding of "*what I am doing*", not only during the forty days of His Presence with the apostles after the Resurrection, but later also by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They would begin to understand something about Christ's ineffable, self-emptying and eternally patient love.

Amongst those things which were recalled and understood later are these words of our Saviour :

> *'For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master* [...]' (John 13:15-16).

These words clarify the phrase "following in the foot-steps of our Saviour" which is used about a bishop's life of service at the beginning of this section (see p. 160). There are, then, two particular ways in which a bishop follows in our Saviour's foot-steps. First, he imitates our Saviour's work in every way possible and blessed by God. Second, in everything he does, the bishop remembers that, as Christ serves as a servant (see Luke 12:37 ; 22:27), he likewise serves as a servant. The apostles will have well-understood that when our Saviour says : '*you should do as I have done to you*', He does not mean simply washing the feet of each other. His word to them helps them to understand that His self-emptying (kenotic) love is shared with them, and that He enables them to accomplish everything in accordance with this same self-emptying love. They, knowers of the Scriptures, would understand that this love is replenished in their hearts much in the same

manner as were the flour and the oil of the widow in the time of the Prophet Elijah (see 3 Kingdoms 17:8-16 ; see p. 269). The apostles would also see that to do as our Saviour does means that we are to be as much as possible like Him. They would comprehend that their responsibility is to reveal Jesus Christ to everyone they encounter.

Our Saviour asks us to understand that we are servants (slaves). It is only in this self-perception that we can really know the joy of serving. From the beginning of helping in the Holy Altar, from the first rank of acolyte, each one understands that he is serving. "Serving" is the word that is always used. Serving is what patriarchs do, and it is the term used for what they do. Serving is, in fact, what we all do. We serve the Lord in our worship and in our life. In every aspect, this serving is accompanied by, and reinforces joy. One knows that all is truly in order in the Altar area when joy is visible and felt. Such joy in serving is well-demonstrated in the person of Saint John of Shanghai, who is rather widely known to have been lifted up into a state of joy in Christ, especially during his serving of the Divine Liturgy. In fact, knowing that we are servants is a protective garment for us ; it is the white garment bestowed on us at our baptism. To do or to be otherwise would be to behave as the emperor in the fairy-tale of "The Emperor's New Clothes" by Hans Christian Andersen.

Recalling the Parable of the Wedding-feast and Guests (see Matthew 22:1-14), we can understand that the provided wedding-garments are a metaphor for God's protection. We wear the garment, and we live in His protection. The giving of these new wedding-garments (which is still done in some societies) serves to show that all those present are equal in the sight of the host and of each other. If we were to accept other criteria, if we were to insist on dressing ourselves with our own things, then instead of being greater or more glorious, we would ultimately find ourselves naked, shamed and exiled, altogether lacking the Lord's protection. Only He can truly protect us. It would be blasphemous fakery to trust in ourselves. This could lead some to think that the cleric had some sort of magical power. This could further lead those thus diverted to doubt that they are truly given the Body and Blood of Christ, not perceiving that this is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The words of our Saviour Jesus Christ show us His humility, which we emulate because of love, and in love :

> '*You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many*' (Mark 10:42-45 ; see also Matthew 20:25-28).

This self-emptying and self-denying love produces in us at the same time a true self-confidence, which is rooted in His pure love, not in our ego. With this humility, a certain boldness can arise, which at the same time does not express the self-motivated ego, but only Christ's love and God's will. This humility is expressed precisely by the work and serving that the deacons do. Their work is first in the liturgical services. Even more importantly, their work is in their daily life as they see to the practical needs of others (see Acts 6:1-3). The service of the deacons shows us visibly, liturgically and practically how we, too, can daily live a life of service, in response to our Saviour's example and direction.

Saint John Chrysostom points out to us that our Saviour has asked us to do as He has done and to wash the feet of each other. However, we must keep in mind that there is a notable difference — our Saviour is our Lord and Master, whereas we are fellow-servants of one another:

> School-masters write the letters very beautifully for children, so that they may imitate them [this beautiful writing], albeit in an inferior manner. Where, then, are those who spit on their fellow-servants ? Where are those demanding honours ? Christ washed the feet of the traitor, the sacrilegious, the thief ; and that, just before the actual betrayal. He made the one who was in fact incurable to be a partaker of His Table. Are you high-minded, do you raise your eye-brows ? [...] He is our Lord ; but even if we do it [wash the feet of others], we do it to our fellow-servants. He Himself implied this, as He said, "'*If I then, your Lord and Master* [...] *so you also ought* [to do]"' [John 13:14]. He could have said, 'How much more should you do this to your fellow-servants', but He left this to the conscience of us who hear His words ("Homily on John 13").

We see that Saint John Chrysostom repeats the exhortation of our Saviour about the washing of the feet by saying, as it were, "then you do this also". It is for just this reason that it is prescribed that every year on Great Thursday, after the Divine Liturgy, the bishop is liturgically to wash the feet of twelve persons (a prescription which Canadians seem to resist). The bishop needs the service as a practical reminder. The people also need the reminder, because this work of foot-washing is to be done by us all. What is done on Great Thursday is to be lived out by the bishop, all the clergy and all the faithful in every way on a daily basis throughout the year, even if it is not literal foot-washing. The people do this as being a part of the "royal priesthood", which is the rôle and responsibility of every baptised person. For instance, when seeing a distraught person at a funeral, the giving of a comforting, silent embrace can be as effective as a sacrament (which means that a visible action carries unseen Grace from God). The healing, loving, comforting Presence of Christ Himself is there at such a moment, and He acts. This parallels, in fact, His own words from the Cross to His Mother and to the Apostle John, when He gave each into the other's care.

A continuation of this understanding of the responsibility of a bishop as servant in doing the work of Christ (particularly in the work of healing) may be found in connexion with a passage such as this :

> *And He* [Jesus] *came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all* (Luke 6:17-19).

It is important to take note that the Evangelist writes "*and healed them all*". We see this everywhere in the Gospels, and in the witness of the service of the apostles. Our Saviour does not place conditions before healing. He simply heals the people who come to Him (nor does He expose their sins before others). This work is, for bishops, the continuing of the apostolic ministry. Indeed, from apostolic days, and for many centuries, healing was considered to be a regular part of Christian living. As reflected in the Canons of Saint Hippolytus, it was the norm that the deacons would inform the bishop about persons who were unwell. At least one of the deacons would also accompany the bishop on his consequent visit to the ill person, and support

him whilst he would pray for the person. It was not at all unusual that people would get better when the bishop would thus visit, just as was the case with our Saviour, and with the apostles.

Certain bishops are, to this day, careful to offer to our Lord the Service of Anointing for the people on a regular basis (certain monasteries offer this even weekly). It is one of the more important pastoral acts which a bishop may provide. When a bishop does offer this anointing for healing, it is usual that the maximum number of priests available participate. The number seven is provided in the rubrics to show that it should be a gathering of the whole community of the faithful (it may be fewer or more in number who gather, depending on the nature of the community). When a bishop is not able to be present, the presbyters truly ought to offer this service regularly, regardless. This particular service is not at present very widely or regularly available to the people. Nevertheless, to offer this service is to follow the example of our Saviour. When there is such an assembly for the service of healing, there are usually many ready to participate. It is obvious to those who come to receive the Mystery of Healing that the whole community assembled does in fact care about the ones in need of such prayer. Many are, in fact, healed, and sometimes also delivered from evil during the course of such services.

A person who is moved by God's love to follow in Christ's foot-steps and to be a servant-leader of Christ's flock will be ready to bring the Grace of God to this flock using such means. That person has accepted the Lord's call and motivation to embrace this life of service, and his whole life will reveal the activity of the Holy Spirit and the fruits of this activity. Therefore, the Apostle Paul writes to his disciple in Ephesus about the qualifications for the episcopate, showing how such a person comes to have a purified desire to serve, and the implicit involvement of the Holy Spirit in this prompting of purified desire :

> *If a man* [literally "someone"] *desires the position of a bishop* [overseer], *he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behaviour, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the Church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil* (1 Timothy 3:1-7).

Let us not misunderstand these words. The Apostle is not writing about a career-choice. As we see, he introduces the comment on "desires" with the word "someone". Thus the Apostle shows that although he is here speaking about the preparation for episcopate, the very same principle can refer to that desire given to any person in the Church to do the work which the Lord plants in the heart to do. The Apostle Paul makes a distinction. This first appearance of the verb "desires" (in Greek ὀρέγεται, *oregetai*, in the present-middle form) means "he aspires to", "he strives for". The second appearance of "desires" (in Greek ἐπιθυμεῖ, *epithymei*, in the present-active form) means "he is desirous of". It is best that we understand in this context that it is the Lord who instils the desire in the heart. In response comes the aspiration to fulfil the God-given desire : he responds in obedient harmony to God's will. This desire is like a life-giving craving, a whole-hearted devotion to serve the Lord completely with all his being. This will not be the man's initiative alone. The yearning to love God and to serve His people is placed in the heart of the man by the Lord.

The word "desire", which we have been considering, may have either life-giving or death-producing qualities. The death-producing craving is in the context of self-serving, self-interested craving for something or someone, for power, for recognition. When indulged, this craving brings spiritual death, and death of inter-personal relationships. Sometimes, this may involve careers which are pursued apart from God. The life-giving yearning to serve is in the context of responding to the Lord's leading.

The desire must be recognised and confirmed by the Church (the faithful, not a mere institution), which is one of the purposes of the shouting and singing of *Axios !* (he is worthy) many times at an ordination. We can see from Acts 6:1-7, for instance, that when there is a need, the Church recognises and confirms God's blessing of each person to serve. The Canons direct that God's call and blessing be confirmed by the Church. In a monastery, a need within the community is recognised, and the abbot and the brethren together appoint someone to fulfil the need on their behalf, and it is accepted as an obedience. In the following passages, we can see indications of the dependence on witnesses and confirmation :

> *And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, 'Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.'* [...] *And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, 'You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.' And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles* (Acts 1:15-17, 23-26).
>
> *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses* (1 Timothy 6:12).

Even though it is a fact that the Apostle Timothy was young when he was ordained (it is suggested that he was about forty years old at the time), Grace nevertheless is given by the Holy Spirit at the time of episcopal ordination, which would compensate for any lack of experience. The Apostle gives these words of direction to his disciple Timothy, some words of which are inscribed (in the Russian custom) on the pectoral cross of a newly-ordained presbyter :

> *Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you* (1 Timothy 4:12-16).

Further, as he is directing the appointing of elders in every city of Crete, the Apostle Paul writes to his disciple Titus :

> *For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is*

> *good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain* (Titus 1:7-11).

In response to these words to Titus, and motivated by love, the arch-pastor has to know the condition of the flock entrusted to him, both what is good, and what is disturbing to them. When the Apostle uses the word "convict", he may be understood to be implying here that it is the Holy Spirit who acts with Titus. The Holy Spirit touches and softens the hearts of those contradictors who are themselves going astray. In convicting, He brings the possibility of repentance.

It must be noted that it can happen that someone may stray from the God-given desire into the temptation of manoeuvering to achieve the episcopate. Should he achieve it, such a person, because of pride, is doomed to damage the flock rather than to increase it. Saint John Chrysostom comments :

> There are many other qualities [...] which a priest ought to have and which I lack. And the first of all is that he must purify his soul entirely of ambition for the office. For if he is strongly attracted to this office, when he gets it he will add fuel to the fire and, being mastered by ambition, he will tolerate all kinds of evil to secure his hold upon it, [...] for it is indeed a terrible temptation to covet this honour. [...] I think a man must rid his mind of this ambition with all possible care, and not for a moment let it be governed by it, in order that he may always act with freedom. For if he does not want to achieve fame in this position of authority, he will not dread its loss either. And if he does not fear this, he can always act with the freedom which befits Christian men. [...] So we must be thoroughly on our guard against ambition and examine ourselves carefully to prevent a spark of it from smouldering anywhere unseen. It is much to be desired that those who at first were free from this infection should be able to keep clear of it when they have entered office. But if anyone nurtures within himself this terrible, savage beast before attaining office, there is no telling what a furnace he will fling himself into, after he has attained it (Six Books on the Priesthood, pp. 80, 81, 82).

As Saint John writes, the person who would become a bishop must come without personal ambition to this responsibility. Rather, his desire must be unalloyed, arising from a pure heart. It behoves him to remember and to put into practice what the Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians about the apostles being "*your bondservants for Jesus' sake*" (2 Corinthians 4:5), and "*servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God*" (1 Corinthians 4:1). His godly desire must be to serve in Christ, and to feed the sheep of Christ. His godly desire to be pleasing to our Lord and to do His Will, must be such as can indicate to the sheep the path to the Kingdom of Heaven. Saint Ambrose of Optina (†1891) warns us about those who are tempted to manipulate and manoeuver :

> 'I know from experience that the heavy cross of leadership becomes twice as heavy for those who desired to be leaders, and it is altogether difficult to bear for those who wilfully obtained it' (Elder Ambrose of Optina, p. 273).

The high-priests (not only the priests) may, as compassionate fathers, make home-visits to persons who have become distracted by some distortion or confused by contradictory

arguments that they hear (or that they read on the internet). The arch-pastor can then gently help the person or persons to come back to the truth. After all, falling into gossip or falsehood is rooted in pain. The prudent pastor will pray before, during and after such a visit. He will do all he can to help to discover the source of this pain which invites such vulnerability, and he will help to bring our Lord's healing.

Moreover, imitating the example of the Mission of the Seventy (see Luke 10:1-24), it is even more prudent that a second person accompany this careful pastor on the visit. This second person is not there to participate in the exchange, but to be quiet and to pray supportively, and to be a witness to what is said and done. Thus, this intercessor is also an extension of the Lord's protection on all who are present. Whenever a confessional situation arises in such an encounter, the witness who is present and interceding about the encounter, can recede to a discreet distance so as not to hear what is then said, but not so distant as not to be able to see the exchange. Again, this witnessing is a key element in the protection of all concerned. The careful pastor will have brought an *epitrakhil* (stole) with him in a bag just in case of need, and which in itself shows how the Church comes personally to the vulnerable person. Then the official prayer of forgiveness (absolution) releases the repentant one from any grip of fear or guilt, and enables the person to return in freedom and without fear to the assembly of the faithful in the Church.

So the bishop, as a steward of the health of the flock, is doing everything possible to keep the flock united. He is always ready in his heart for those unexpected occasions when a person will suddenly begin to open his/her heart in confession. Such a thing often happens in trains, planes, automobiles, in parking-lots, hospitals, homes, or anywhere. When the Lord touches the heart of a person, the arch-pastor or pastor is always to be ready to hear, and to bring our Saviour's healing words of correction, consolation and forgiveness. In doing this, in behaving in this way, the bishop is truly fulfilling his service in and with Christ. He personally conveys and expresses in his life the meaning of the providence of God, which is that God is constantly caring for us and guiding us. The Lord is therefore always serving us, always vigilant about our cares, our needs and our protection. Saint John Chrysostom writes :

> The providence of God is clearer than the sun and its rays. On every occasion and in every place you will see clear and abundant evidence of this providence — in the desert, on cultivated and uncultivated land, on land and sea, wherever you go. This evidence is old and new. [...] God's proclamation [...] reveals not only His providence but also His abundant love for us; for He does not merely take thought for us but is also our lover, and He loves us boundlessly with an inconceivable love. It is a love that knows no emotion, but it is most warm and intense, noble, insoluble, unquenchable ("Divine Providence and Human Suffering").

8

The bishop as a builder

> *'Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall'* (Matthew 7:24-27).

Every apostle, wherever he went, was laying a firm foundation in Christ, by the Grace of the Holy Spirit. Every bishop from the time of the apostles has been a builder, who has continued the construction of the building. These bishops extended the foundations, and they built super-structures. These words all refer to spiritual construction, of course. The whole construction is in and of Christ. We do well to remember that when we are constructing anything, this construction is generally best undertaken in company with others, in concert with others. Even when we may appear to be alone, we are not alone at all, because we are members of the Body of Christ. We are one with Christ. We are one with each other. If an apostle or a bishop may be described as a builder, then, by the Grace of the Holy Spirit, his work of building is a work undertaken and accomplished with others working together with him, in harmony with him, and all in harmony with Christ. A retired psychiatric nurse, a grandmother I used to know, who was a very active Christian, used to say to me often as we discussed plans for some project : "Two heads are better than one, even if one is a sheep's head". She was humble ; she was practical ; she was usually right. It was better to listen to her than to go ahead in pride and then have to re-do something. Although there might be a strong difference of opinion, it is my experience that in such conversations there may be seen a middle-way compromise, which often proves to be the most right.

Speaking to the Corinthians about the preparation for Christ that the Lord wrought with His chosen people Israel, the Apostle Paul clearly names the only Rock upon which a lasting construction may be built (and to which our Saviour Himself referred in the previous citation). The apostles and the bishops ordained by them would have been well aware of the truth which is expressed here :

> *Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ* (1 Corinthians 10:1-4).

Christ our Rock is the only foundation. Foundations may be extended from and on the original foundation, making a larger and larger "foot-print". Nevertheless, they remain foundations that are still simply an integral part of the one foundation, Christ our Rock. Only on Him who is the Truth can anything be built which can last and resist any and every attack. Saint Ignatius, the God-bearer, Martyr-Bishop of Antioch, broadens the metaphor by showing that Christ Himself is a part of the construction-equipment, and that we are living stones used by our Lord to build the living Temple :

> You are stones of the temple of the Father, stones prepared for the building of God the Father : stones carried up on high by the crane of Jesus Christ (which is the Cross), by means of the Holy Spirit as a cable. Your faith is the means of ascent, and your love the way bringing you up to God ("Letter to the Ephesians", 9).

The Apostle Paul also metaphorically calls us God's building. Firmly founded on Christ the Rock, we are each one of us the Temple of God (see 2 Corinthians 6:16), and we are together the living stones that make up the Temple of God (see 1 Peter 2:5). The stones are necessarily united with the foundation, Christ the Rock. The Lord is building ; the bishops are building : building with human beings, building with human hearts. Saint John Chrysostom writes about how these, our hearts, are to be cemented to this Rock, Christ, who supports the whole edifice :

> His [the Apostle's] meaning is this : I have preached Christ ; I have delivered unto you the foundation. Take heed how you build upon it, lest perhaps it be in vainglory, lest perhaps it be so as to draw away the disciples. [...] '*For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ*' [1 Corinthians 3:11]. Upon this, then, let us build ; and as a foundation let us cleave to it, as a branch to a vine. Let there be no interval between us and Christ. For if there be any interval, immediately we perish. For the branch, by its adherence, draws in the fatness ; and the building stands because it is cemented together. Since, if it [the branch or the building-components] stands apart it perishes, having nothing upon which to support itself. Let us not then merely hold onto Christ, but let us be cemented to Him ; for if we stand apart, we perish. [...] Let us cleave, then, unto Him, and let us cleave by our works. [...] There are many images whereby He brings us into union. Thus if you pay attention to it, He is the Head ; we are the body. Can there be any empty interval between the head and the body ? He is the Foundation and we are the building [...] ("Homily on 1 Corinthians 3").

> Pay attention to how he knits it all together, and at one time represents Him as holding down the whole body from above, and welding it together ; and at another time as supporting the building from below and being, as it were, a root or base. [...] Whether you speak of the roof, or of the walls, or of any other part whatsoever, it is He that supports the whole ("Homily on Ephesians 2").

In the following words of the Apostle, to which Saint John has just referred, we can see the importance of co-operating with the Lord so that all that is built is done in harmony with Him, and in accordance with His will :

> *For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are* (1 Corinthians 3:9-17).

The Apostle, writing to the Ephesians, shows us that the bishop, together with all his co-workers, is a builder. Building is the root of all that he is and does. Precisely because it is the work of the bishop to bless, it is the arch-pastor who has the responsibility to discern who amongst the sheep has the God-given gifts for which purposes. It is then for the arch-pastor to bless each person in the exercise of the gift or gifts for the glory of God and for the good of all :

> *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love* (Ephesians 4:11-16).

It is very helpful that we all recall that the word "edifying" in the translation of this previous passage does not imply what is nowadays the usual primary dictionary meaning of this word (instructing or benefitting, especially morally or spiritually ; uplifting). Such abstractions are not at all intended by the writers of the Scriptures. The meaning of the word is truly more related to the word "edifice". The Latin root of both words "edifice" and "edify" means "building". The Greek word for "edifying" in the scriptural text is οἰκοδομή, *oikodomē*, "the act of building". This compound word includes the word for "house". As a child, I knew by heart this phrase from Ephesians as "building up the Body of Christ". I knew vaguely what construction was about, but I was not aware of the concrete meaning of building as such. Much less did I yet understand how the Body of Christ would be built up. That took until adolescence. Regardless, I did come to understand that we each are to do our part by the Grace of the Holy Spirit in building up the Body of Christ. This building up, this edification, is expressed thus by another of the Apostle's exhortations :

> *Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another* (Romans 14:19).

Edification of the other is the responsibility of us all, under the blessing of the bishop.

The work of building includes quite clearly the work of establishing and maintaining unity in Christ. In Christ all is held together in one. To be certain that we understand, the Apostle uses the metaphors of the body, the field and the building. In each case, the same unity is stressed from different aspects so that more might comprehend. The result of the blessing that the bishop gives is the same : we become in Christ one solid, firm unity :

> *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit* (Ephesians 2:19-22).

The metaphor of the Body of Christ in some ways helps us more, because we refer to a living body. To most people, a building seems to be something static and lifeless, so the image of a living body is better understood. The following words from the Apostle Paul remind us that our first purpose is to build up the community of the Christian people. It is their godly desire to gather to worship the Lord. This brings about the building of places in which this worship may occur. It is crucial that we keep in mind the following words about the living Body of Christ :

> *For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many*. [...] *But now indeed there are many members, yet one body*. [...] *Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually* (1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 20, 27).

It is for us all to remember this as we daily serve Christ ; and, as the Apostle exhorts us, we go about serving Him in others, always holding fast to Christ who is our Head, and from whom all life flows :

> [...] *from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God* (Colossians 2:19).

The metaphor which the Apostle gives about the unity of the body is not given as an abstraction or as some simple principle. What he describes is, and always has been, the fundamental understanding of Orthodox Christians : as a human body is visible, tangible and clearly one unit, so it is with the Church of Christ. In each place where the Church exists, there the Church is one visible unit led by one father, the one arch-pastor who is given to lead this one flock in Christ. He does this, together with all the faithful under his paternal leadership. Together, they always keep in mind that the Body of Christ is inclusive of all human beings who are united with this Body, and this without any distinction or partiality. This is the gist of the apostolic words to the Corinthians. It is our responsibility, therefore, to resist anything that could bring any sort of division amongst us : fear, suspicion, rumours, jealousy, envy, anger, language, culture, historical events, political events, money, skin-colour, race, or anything at all. The flock of Christ lives in unity and in complete mutual forgiveness and mutual support.

Truly, it is essential that we construct places where we may gather together in order to worship the Lord. Above all, these places serve as shelters for the Holy Table. This Table is the focus of the purpose of our gathering together, which is, of course, the Offering of the Divine Liturgy. This, our service to the Lord, is a priority which we are not to neglect :

> *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching* (Hebrews 10:23-25).

Our gathering together is helped greatly when there is a regular, usual place in which to do this, hence the Temples we build. In harmony with our Offering of the Divine Liturgy, just as the Apostle wrote, our assembling together also includes the elements of our nurturing and strengthening each other in living a Christ-pleasing life. We support each other in exercising the gifts given to us by the Grace of the Holy Spirit, for the good and welfare of all those round about

us. Hence, the communities in these Temples grow, and they multiply into other communities and other Temples ; and yet, all remain as one in Christ.

We gather together to worship the Lord, and to be fed by Him. We do this weekly and even daily. We are careful not to lose this habit and custom because we love our Saviour. Apostolic Canon 9 (see p. 46) describes the seriousness with which we ought to approach receiving the Holy Mysteries :

> All the faithful who come in and hear the Scriptures, but do not stay for the prayers and the Holy Communion, are to be excommunicated, as causing disorder in the Church.

The great God-bearer Saint Ignatius of Antioch wrote the following words (even before the time of these Canons) :

> Be keen, therefore, to come together more often to give thanks [that is, to celebrate the Eucharist] and to give glory [to God]. For when you frequently become as one, the powers of Satan are destroyed, and his destructive aim is vanquished by the harmony of your faith ("Letter to the Ephesians", 13).

In the early days, it was understood that the people would communicate in the Holy Mysteries every Sunday at the minimum. Obviously, the reason for this is that our Saviour indicated that we receive the Holy Mysteries for the healing of our souls and bodies. From the time of the Holy Apostles, it is clear that all the believers were participating in the Holy Mysteries weekly at the least. In a letter, Saint Basil the Great shows us what was the case for him in the fourth century :

> Now, to receive Communion daily, thus to partake of the holy Body and Blood of Christ, is an excellent and advantageous practice; for Christ Himself says clearly: '"*Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life*"' [John 6:54]. Who doubts that to share continually in the life is nothing else than to have a manifold life? We ourselves, of course, receive Communion four times a week: on Sundays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and also on other days, if there is a commemoration of some saint. As to the question concerning a person being compelled to receive Communion by his own hand in times of persecution, when there is no priest or minister present, it is superfluous to show that the act is in no way offensive, since long-continued custom has confirmed this practice because of the circumstances themselves ("To the Patrician Cæsaria, about Communion").

In reading lives of saints in <u>The Synaxarion</u>, we see described cases in which people were receiving the Holy Mysteries in this manner in such times of persecution. Further, this has sometimes happened even in the more recent persecutions. There have developed many local customs in the life of the Church which encourage people to prepare themselves to receive the Holy Mysteries only during the four major periods of abstinence. In some places, people will receive even less frequently. Such a reticence to approach the Holy Chalice and the Life-giving Food has to do largely with a person's having the feeling that there is a need to prepare, and to become worthy. This sense and feeling can be good. However, the word "worthy" is dangerous, especially if we ever come to think that we can actually do something to make ourselves worthy : something which, besides repentance, could be followed like a recipe or a formula or a programme (this implies that we could accurately measure ourselves). This is accomplished not simply by our deeds, but by the Grace of the Lord, who is working with and through them. His Grace is not bought ; but rather, it is given freely. By this I mean that there is

nothing that we can do to make the Lord love us more, and there is nothing that we can do to make Him love us less. He loves without conditions.

Our prayers of preparation and thanksgiving show us that what we are doing is foundational for us : we are repeatedly asking our Saviour to make us worthy to receive Him, and thanking Him for giving us the gift of having been able to receive Him. Only He can, in the form of a gift, make us worthy, because only He is worthy. This is why the preparation prayers are so helpful, and health-ful for us. They keep us mindful of such facts ; they stir up sorrow for sin ; they increase our desire to be more like our Saviour. Knowing that we are not worthy, we approach Him ; but we trust in His compassion, and we approach Him as did the Wise Thief on his cross, and we say with him : "*Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom*" (Luke 23:42). When the Wise Thief said these words, he was not necessarily aware that to be remembered by the Lord is to live. Our Lord responded : "*Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise*" (Luke 23:43). Remembrance, as we well understand, means that we live because the Lord remembers us. The Wise Thief lives because the Lord lives, loves and remembers the Wise Thief. So it is with us all. I well remember being taught in my teen years that everything that is, exists because God, who is Love, remembers each and all in His creation, from sub-atomic particles to myriads of galaxies. He loves, and gives everyone the opportunity to repent. The Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemann said, "To love is to remember" (see p. 11). These simple words remind us that the more we progress in love for Christ, the more near and dear to our hearts are those whom we love, both living and departed. Even our enemies can become near and dear. We constantly keep them in our hearts before the Lord, who remembers us all. Praying without ceasing (which includes giving thanks) produces eternal joy, which leads to eternal memory in eternal life. Our love for our Saviour embraces all and everything. When the Apostle writes to the Corinthians, he recalls our Lord's own words, and expands on them :

> *For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me'* (1 Corinthians 11:23-25).

When we receive His life-giving Food at the Divine Liturgy, we are present with Him and the apostles at the time He gave this Divine Liturgy and these Holy Mysteries to us all. He is present with us now in His Body and Blood, giving us life and healing of body and soul. Our Lord, in His self-emptying humility, became a human being at the Incarnation. For us, He visibly and concretely identified Himself with us. This continues every time He gives Himself to us in His Body and Blood. We have our very life — we exist — because He loves us and He remembers us. When we remember Him, we accept and co-operate with His life-giving, self-emptying love. We accept His life, and we understand that He wills to be at one with us. The high-priest (or priest) has been ordained by the Lord to provide for us the Food of Life. Every time he serves the Divine Liturgy, he is able to give us this Food of Life, because it is our Saviour Himself who, through this man, gives Himself to us. This is why it is very important to be ready always to accept His invitation, and to receive Him. Thus, we can see and understand that all this has nothing to do with our "worthiness", but that it has everything to do with His freely-given gift to us. All this is expressed for us in the prayer that the priest says just at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy, during the "Liturgy of Preparation", also called the *Proskomedia* :

> O God, our God, who sent the heavenly Bread, the Food of the whole world, our Lord, and God, Jesus Christ, to be our Saviour, Redeemer, and Benefactor, blessing and sanctifying us : bless this Offering, and accept it upon Your heavenly Altar. Remember those who offered it, and those for whom it was offered ; for You are good, and love Man(kind). Preserve us blameless in the celebration of Your divine Mysteries ; for sanctified and glorified is Your most honourable and majestic Name : of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

The love of Christ unites and nourishes us all. The building up of the Body of Christ requires that the stronger members be aware of the limitations of the weak, and that they be ready to support and encourage and correct the weaker ones. This is understood in the context of the invincible foundation of Christ. Each small or large part of the whole building must be in constant communion with the foundation and with each other part, so that every part will hold together solidly and firmly. For such reasons, the Apostle Paul wrote the following :

> *We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbour for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, 'The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me'* [Psalm 68:10]. *For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope* (Romans 15:1-4).

We are building each other up in the Body of Christ. So it is, that at the Prayer of the bowing of the heads after the "Our Father" in the Divine Liturgy (just before the time for receiving the Holy Mysteries), the high-priest (or priest) prays to the Lord on our behalf :

> Therefore, O Master, make smooth our path for good, through what lies before us, according to the need of each : sail with those who sail, by sea, and by air ; travel with those who travel by land ; heal the sick, You that are the physician of our souls and bodies.

On behalf of all present (and even those not present), the high-priest (or priest) asks the Lord to do all these things. We all understand that as the Lord does them, He is accomplishing much of this through the help of each and all of us. Our Lord is building up His Body, and we are His co-builders. All such builders in Christ will surely always recall the words from the psalms :

> *Unless the Lord build the house, in futility did they labour — those building it. Unless the Lord watch over the city, in futility did he keep vigil — the one keeping guard* (Psalm 126:1).

The arch-pastor gives the lead under Christ's blessing. Through Christ's blessing, he blesses the endeavours of all the others who share this work with Christ. The arch-pastor is responsible for increasing and strengthening unity in Christ. Upon this unity, Christ Himself builds. On the basis of such an understanding there came the countless fruits of illustrious bishops in North America : Metropolitan Saint Innocent, Patriarch Saint Tikhon, Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas, Archbishop Arseny of Winnipeg, Saint John of San Francisco and others besides. I would like to include Patriarch Aleksy II of Moscow because, during his two visits to North America, he drew the Orthodox peoples together ; he gathered us around the Lord's Holy Table to receive together the Holy Mysteries as one, and he urged us all to work towards overcoming divisions. We can well say the same about Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople during his visits to North America, which followed after those of Patriarch

Aleksy II. These bishops could well bear the epithet "the Builder" as did the twelfth-century Holy King David IV Bagration of Georgia (†1130), who united his Orthodox Christian Georgian nation. Likewise this understanding of unity in Christ has enabled the blessed rapid expansion of the Church in Africa, Asia and elsewhere. It has enabled the rapid revival, reconstruction and spread of the Orthodox faith on the territories of the former Soviet Union. The Grace of the Holy Spirit is, and has been, always active.

9

The bishop as a teacher

And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes (Matthew 7:28-29).

Jesus said to him, 'I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me' (John 14:6).

Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice' (John 18:37).

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!' (Romans 10:14-15 [see Isaiah 52:7 ; Nahum 2:1])

These four pericopes refer to aspects of that responsibility to teach which falls to every arch-pastor and, in fact, to every presbyter. However, we do well to notice that in the first citation, we hear our Saviour referred to as one teaching with authority, unlike the others. Others who taught would very often have taught on the basis of their own theories, systems and philosophies. Our Saviour was teaching with authority because, as Truth, He came to us to bear witness to the Truth. Of course, we also remember in this context the truth of what He said : *"I and My Father are one"* (John 10:30). Those who bear the responsibility of teaching can, in Christ, likewise bear it with authority. However, this authority is not our own, but it is Christ's. Therefore, this authority comes from our being in loving unity with our Saviour and transmitting clearly by word and deed the experience of our personal encounter with our Saviour.

To teach is not simply to give lectures. Sometimes teaching occurs during a homily or a sermon. Teaching certainly involves words, but it is not limited to words. Teaching often happens without the use of any words. Although the responsibility of teaching is being treated with a separate focus here, this particular responsibility of the arch-pastor is a thread of understanding which is to be found throughout this writing. Each of the aspects of the life and work of a bishop is connected with all the others : they are all interwoven and interlinked with each other. It is dangerous to take any one aspect of episcopal or presbyteral responsibility and then consider it in isolation from all the others. The result would be imbalance, distortion and misunderstanding.

Here, we will consider some particularities about the teaching responsibility ; but we must keep in mind that a good and profitable example is far more effective than simply saying : "Do what I say, but don't do what I do", or "Because I said so", or "Because I went to seminary ; I have a degree, so I know better". How demeaning it is for a teacher to slip into such a response. Such an attitude reveals disrespect for the other person, and a great deal of egotism on the part of

the teacher. Teaching is not just saying something ; it is being something. We are told this by our Saviour :

> '*You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you*' (John 13:13-15).

Our Saviour shows us by His own words and deeds that truly good words are confirmed by matching good works. We can see how this is lived in the life of Saint Anthony the Great :

> Three Fathers used to go and visit blessed Anthony every year and two of them used to discuss their thoughts and the salvation of their souls with him, but the third always remained silent and did not ask him anything. After a long time, Abba Anthony said to him, 'You often come here to see me, but you never ask me anything,' and the other replied, 'It is enough for me to see you, Father' (The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, p. 7).

This is the environment in which monks (male and female) have most often been formed. A new person is given to share a cell with an experienced monk. The novice simply watches the experienced monk, and imitates the example. This sort of apprenticeship is appropriate at all levels for forming Christians as well. I know it from my own experience, as may be attested by what I wrote earlier about bishops who are influencing me (now, long after their repose in many cases).

Not long ago, words seemed to have had relatively stable meanings, and it could be said that a person was "as good as his word". It is useful for the allegorically-inclined mind to keep recalling the Chronicles of Narnia by C S Lewis (†1963), in which Aslan sings things into being. Saint John Sergeiev of Kronstadt explains the importance of the word for us :

> You are a being endowed with speech. Remember that you derive your origin from the Word of the Creator of all things, and that in union (through faith) with the creative Word, by means of faith, you can yourself be a material and spiritual creator. Believe that by your faith in the creative Word of the Father, your own word, too, shall not return to you vain, powerless (when, for instance, you pray to God, the Benefactor, in accordance with the holy Church's direction or the Lord's guidance), but it shall bring you the gift necessary for good deeds ; believe that through faith in the creative Word you will not be unsuccessful in teaching people either in the temple during Divine service, or during the celebration of the sacraments in private houses ; neither shall your teaching in schools be unsuccessful, but it shall rouse up the minds and hearts of those listening to you. Remember that the possibility of the deed is contained in the word itself ; it is only necessary to have faith in the power of the word in its creative faculty. With the Lord the deed is inseparable from the word. Not a single word addressed to Him shall return void : '"*For with God nothing will be impossible*"' [Luke 1:37]. [...] The Word of the Lord '*shall not return unto Him void*' [Isaiah 55:11], but, like rain or snow, it shall water the earth of our hearts, and shall give seed (the fulfilment) to the sower. Even of men people say : 'His word has extraordinary power.' You see, therefore, that the word is power, spirit, life.
>
> The word of God is the same as God Himself ; therefore undoubtingly believe every word of the Lord. The word of God is deed, and your own word should be deed. (My Life in Christ, pp. 360-361 ; p. 513).

In our days words have fallen on hard times. Meanings of words have come to resemble the shiftiness of mercury, and it is much more difficult for us to communicate clearly with one

another. As we live our lives, we are expected to give a good account for our hope (see 1 Peter 3:15). However, giving this good account is more difficult in our days, because words as such are now shifting in their meanings, and shifting quickly. People often have a hard time hearing them, perceiving them, understanding them. Under these circumstances, it is our Hope, Himself, who must speak. Our life itself must witness not just by glib words, but by factual acts, to Him who is our Hope, and to what is the meaning of His love.

Despite the confused modern environment in which words now must subsist, the word is still very much effective, because of our Saviour's love. Our Saviour Himself says to us : "*My Father has been working until now, and I have been working*" (John 5:17). The unity of word and work is confirmed by the prayer of the Apostles Peter and John after their release from prison :

> '*Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus*' (Acts 4:29-30).

We have this example from Saint John Chrysostom about the true potency of words :

> What a marvel! He [Jesus Christ] convinced those who crucified Him to bow down in worship; those who mocked and blasphemed, those addicted to idol worship He taught to let their souls yield to His will. This transformation, you see, was not of the apostles' doing but done by Him who led the way before them and moved their spirit. I mean, how could a fisherman or a builder have so changed the world had not the words of this Person cleared all these obstacles? Sorcerers and tyrants and demagogues and philosophers and all their opponents they scared away like grains of dust and dissipated like smoke. In this way they spread the light of truth, employing not weapons or abundance of wealth but simple speech — or, rather, the speech was not simple but more potent than any action. So how? They called on the name of the Crucified, and death skulked away; demons were put to flight; diseases were cured; bodily disfigurement righted; wickedness dispelled; dangers dissipated and the elements transformed. [...] He it was who removed the obstacles as He went before them; He Himself smoothed out problems and made difficult things easy. And yet everything was beset by conflicts, everything with snares and hazards, no foothold or places to stand firm, all havens obstructed, every house shut, the ears of all stopped. Nevertheless, as soon as they [the apostles] entered and spoke, all strongholds of the enemy fell, with the result that they even surrendered their souls and then withstood countless dangers for the sake of what they had been told ("Commentary on Psalm 46").

More than a century ago (even before his arrival in the United States) the then Igumen Arseny (Chahovtsov) of Winnipeg understood the difficulty of preaching and teaching in a place where the spiritual soil does not easily receive the living seed. It was in the USA that he would begin his missionary work, and there that he would establish Saint Tikhon's Monastery and the orphanage that accompanied its witness and service. Igumen Arseny had been made aware of what was awaiting him in North America. Before he left Ukraine, he said this (see p. 24) :

> 'Now I go to the New World, with a cross and a Gospel and begin the work of my calling; where reason will prove useless, where a word will become ineffective, there I will open my heart and fulfil all with love. But I know that this road is not going to be easy [...]' (Archbishop Arseny: a Vita, p. 35).

He understood that the word, carried by the Grace of the Holy Spirit, is still, and always shall be truly effective. What he understood and what he said echoes the very words of the great

missionary, Saint Nicholas (Kasatkin) (†1912), Archbishop of Tokyo, Japan, as cited by the Archpriest Serafim Gan :

> 'First one must conquer with love, and only then spread the word' (Article on the 100th anniversary of the repose).

This is why the Apostle exhorts his disciple-bishop of Ephesus thus :

> *And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth* (2 Timothy 2:24-25).

> *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.* [...] *But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry* (2 Timothy 4:2, 5).

He encourages his disciple to follow him and his own example :

> *Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the Gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles* (2 Timothy 1:8-11).

About both the Apostles Paul and Timothy, together with all the apostles and all those who have followed faithfully in Christ in their path of love and obedience, it can truly be said :

> *Their sound has gone out unto all the earth, and their utterances unto the ends of the world* (Psalm 18:5).

This dissemination of the utterances is possible because all those who proclaim the evangelical words are living in accordance with the previous exhortations to Timothy by the Apostle, and also in accordance with the following apostolic words :

> Therefore, receive anyone who comes and teaches you all that has been said before [keeping the commandments, being faithful to the Tradition]. However, should the teacher himself turn away and teach another doctrine to the destruction of these things, do not listen to him ; but [if he teaches] so as to increase righteousness and knowledge of the Lord, then receive him as the Lord. [...] Every prophet who teaches the truth, if he does not do what he himself teaches, is a false prophet (The Didachē, 11).

In his re-presentation of Christ as a teacher, it is crucially important that every bishop (and indeed everyone who is a teacher) keep in mind that he must live the truth about Him who is the Truth. As always, what is said must be lived in action. In his catholic epistle, the Apostle James (†62), the first Bishop of Jerusalem and Brother of the Lord, gives us the following clear caution :

> *My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgement. For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a*

perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh. Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. [...] *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace* (James 3:1-13, 17-18).

This exhortation which we have just encountered is a very serious warning to those who are teachers. It is most significant, especially for those who are high-priests, because teaching is one of a bishop's principal responsibilities. The Apostle James knew himself to be both a bishop and a teacher, and included himself in these words, using "we". This admonition is implied during every Divine Liturgy as we ask that the Lord enable the bishops rightly to divide the word of His truth (see 2 Timothy 2:15). To teach aright, they must themselves hold tightly to the Lord in order to remain in His truth. The Apostle James points out the consequences of being lax with ourselves or unfaithful to Christ. However, undergirding his words of caution are parallel words of confidence. He shows us that it is truly possible to be faithful (and even to be perfect) because of living in complete harmony with our Lord. Our Saviour is with us. If we use all our faculties in harmony with Christ's love ; if we put into practice what we teach and preach ; and if our lives are one harmonious whole in His love, then He will pour out in abundance to and through us all joy, peace, goodness, long-suffering and dynamic power in the Holy Spirit. Saint Ignatius writes more about this :

> It is good to teach, if the one speaking also acts. There is one Teacher who spoke, and it came to pass [see Psalm 32:9] ("Letter to the Ephesians", 15).

These words are amplified by the comments of Saint Seraphim of Sarov about this responsibility. He uses a metaphor to remind those who teach about its importance and its difficulties. He says that teaching could be compared with the "ease" of dropping stones from the top of a cathedral (in his days, usually the tallest building available). It is easy enough to *speak* about theological principles and Christian living. It is easy enough to drop stones from a great height. The complement to teaching, however, is the *doing*, the enacting of the principles. Similarly, in order to drop the stones, they all must first be hauled up labouriously to the top. This part of the work Saint Seraphim likens to the enacting of what is taught and preached. Speaking is easy enough. Living by the words is not so easy.

In the biography of the Elder Cleopa (Ilie) of Sihastria, Romania (†1998), the elder refers to himself as a fruit-tree that bears only leaves. In this context, he is reported as having said that Saint Isaac the Syrian had commented :

> 'The word without works is like a man who depicts water on walls and can die of thirst next to it' (Shepherd of Souls, p. 167).

The Elder Cleopa speaks as does many another person of similar truly fruitful and loving humility. In his words written down by others, he compares himself to a barren cow. Similarly, in the writings of the Schema-Igumen John (Alexeev) (†1958) of Valaam (New Valamo), we find him insisting that the teaching and the doing must go together for those who teach :

> A certain staretz said: 'If the soul has only words but no deeds, it is like a tree which has blossoms but no fruit'. [...] It is the same with those who speak: when they 'speak from deeds', their words fall on the heart like a plaster on a wound. But if a person speaks from instruction, one feels that his words are only in his head. Water and vinegar are the same colour, but the throat knows which to drink (Christ is in our Midst, p. 118).

The context of all these cautions is, of course, that of the Middle-Eastern shepherd which is encountered often in these pages. As we see in John 10 (see pp. 126, 133, 247, 321), the crucial relationship between the shepherd and the sheep is based on love and inter-personal knowledge and trust. The sheep know the voice of the shepherd, and the shepherd knows each of the sheep by name. The shepherd loves the sheep ; the sheep love the shepherd ; they know his name. As the shepherd leads the sheep, he trusts that the sheep will follow him. The sheep trust the shepherd, because they know that he loves them, and cares for them. They follow him. They know that he will keep them safe. When they are in the sheep-fold, it is only to him that they answer, even if they are amongst a great number of other sheep which belong to other shepherds. The sheep and the shepherd know each other personally. Anyone who pretends to teach, and who cannot manage this sort of relationship is, in the end, classified as "a hireling", a technician. One can teach facts ; but in isolation from the context of the whole of life, they are not truly facts, but bits of information out of context. Teaching the Christian Way has to be not only about imparting simple information. It must be about personally showing the way. Sheep cannot be made to go where the shepherd is not himself first going. True, in the West, dogs are used to help the shepherd drive the sheep from behind and from the sides, but the result is very different. The sheep seem to wander all about, not knowing where they are intended to go. The dogs (responding to signals from the shepherd behind the flock) nip at the heels of the sheep in order to direct them. The sheep move with fear, not with loving confidence.

Saint Spyridon, Bishop of Tremythus, Cyprus (†348) is a prominent example of a simple person who, as a shepherd, lived and practiced daily his Orthodox faith. Although he taught by preaching and speaking, he also very clearly taught by his actions :

> While living the quiet life of a shepherd, the saint developed the practice of offering help to anyone in need. He used his own limited finances to give rest to travellers and food to the hungry, in obedience to the Gospel command and the true spirit of Christianity. It was during this time, while he was living an obscure life in a remote region, serving God and his neighbour, that we begin to hear of miracles being worked through him (Saint Spyridon's Life).

When the time came, Saint Spyridon responded to the summons of the Emperor Saint Constantine the Great to the First Council of Nicæa in order, with the other bishops, to address the Arian heresy :

> [He] made his way to Nicæa, dressed in his simple shepherd's coat, in order to bear witness to Truth along with the holy bishops and confessors and the most illustrious personages of the time (The Synaxarion, 12 December).

During the proceedings, he refuted an Arian philosopher and brought him to the truth of Christ in this manner :

> The humble shepherd from Cyprus then came forward and, to the amazement of all, demolished his opponent's specious arguments and logical subtleties by the simplicity and authority of his Spirit-bearing words. At a loss for an answer, the philosopher admitted that he was convinced; he embraced the Orthodox faith with sincerity, and he called upon the other followers of Arius, in their turn, to abandon the deceptive pathways of human wisdom in order to find in the Church the springs of Living Water and the power of the Spirit (The Synaxarion, 12 December).

There are other accounts of the manner in which the philosopher was convinced. All are founded on the simplicity and authority of Saint Spyridon's "Spirit-bearing words". However, one or another account includes also a visible and practical demonstration of the Holy Trinity through the water, fire and clay which make up a clay pot or a brick. If we do not ourselves have the particular gifts given to Saint Spyridon, we all have the capability, by the Grace of the Holy Spirit, to live in a simple and straightforward manner in Christ. This would enable us to speak the truth in the manner needed at any moment, as our Saviour assures us, and as we have seen fulfilled in the lives of many :

> *'Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say'* (Luke 12:11-12 ; see also Mark 13:11).

> *Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one* (Colossians 4:6).

> Saint Spyridon proved to be such a vessel for God's works, for he lived in accordance with the words of Saint Paul, '[...] *it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me*' (Galatians 2:20) (Saint Spyridon's Life).

From the earliest times of the Church Fathers, our Lord has given us great leaders and teachers. Ignatius of Antioch, Irenæus of Lyon, Cyprian of Carthage, Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose of Milan, Athanasius of Alexandria, Cyril of Alexandria, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory the Theologian, Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, Nicholas of Myra, and Spyridon of Tremythus are only a very small number of the multitude. These, and a host of other faithful persons, have left us evidence of their faithful lives in Christ, evidence of their faithful keeping, preaching and teaching the whole truth of Christ, evidence of their writings, all of which sustain us to this very day. We need only read about Saint Gregory the Theologian in The Synaxarion in order to see this :

> Read and learnt by heart like holy Scripture, the works of Saint Gregory are an icon, directing heavenward and initiating into mysteries beyond utterance. His language is of

such perfection as to render otiose every other expression, leading the lover of the Word quite naturally to silent prayer.

Unyielding in all that concerns the Faith, Saint Gregory was very gentle in dealing with sinners and others who had gone astray. He brought people back to the right path through the example he gave of a completely unworldly Christian life, distinguished by austere ascesis and patience in trials and illnesses. As a result, a large number of those who had heard him speak were completely converted when they saw how he lived. However, his success soon attracted lively opposition from the sects, and jealous opponents spread vile slanders about him; but those who wronged him did not succeed in overcoming his patience and his meekness. On Easter night 379, some Apollinarian heretics, whom he had brilliantly refuted, stormed into the church of Saint Anastasia, spread panic among the congregation and began to stone Gregory — although they failed to deliver the mortal blow which the Saint would have welcomed in order to finish his course with the palm of martyrdom.

After this tribulation he was, in addition, arraigned as a malefactor, but emerged victorious — whereupon he exhorted his friends to be forgiving. The moderation, charity and fairness shown by this perfect disciple of Christ had, in the end, brought upon him the hostility both of malevolent heretics and of over-zealous Orthodox (The Synaxarion, 25 January).

I remember that when I was in the seminary long ago, Professor Sergei S Verhovskoy would express the opinion during patristic lectures that, in their writings, only one of all the Fathers could be called 100% Orthodox (he meant that there were no detectable errors in his writings), and that was Saint Gregory the Theologian. Professor Verhovskoy said that, in his opinion, some were as little as 60% correct in their writings. Yet, he said, these men are all universally-recognised saints, undeniably holy men. It is not that the writings of any person must be absolutely correct. It is the wholeness of their faithfulness to Christ, and their correct example of Christian living, loving, and forgiving which is significant. How they died is also a strong testimony. The Lord has demonstrated clearly that their lives, service and deaths have been pleasing to Him in that posthumously there is continual evidence of their intercession on our behalf. When people turn to them and ask for their prayers, the clear answers to these requests indicate that they do intercede for us, and that the Lord blesses this intercession.

Saint John Chrysostom is a person whose whole life, words and writings radiate the love of Jesus Christ. This Confessor of the Orthodox Faith is emphatic that the one who teaches and preaches must practice what he preaches and teaches. The leader and teacher must do this if he wishes to lead the flock to the life-giving food in our Lord's green pasture :

'"*Whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great*"' [Matthew 5:19]. For not to ourselves alone should we be profitable, but to others also ; since the reward is not as great for him who guides himself aright, as it is for one who adds another with himself. For as teaching without doing condemns the teacher (for '*you, therefore, who teach another*,' it is said, '*do you not teach yourself?*' [Romans 2:21]) so doing, but not guiding others, lessens our reward. One ought therefore to be chief in each work : having first set one's self aright, one can then proceed to the care of the rest. For on this account He Himself set the doing before the teaching ; to show that in this way one may be able to teach, but in no other way. One will be told, '"*Physician, heal yourself*"' [Luke 4:23], since he who cannot teach himself, yet attempts to set others right, will have many to ridicule him. Rather, such a one will have no power to teach at all, since his actions utter their voice against him. But if he be

complete in both respects '"*he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven*"' [Matthew 5:19] "Homily on Matthew 5").

> [Humility] is mother, and root, and nurse, and foundation, and bond of all good things. [...] Account nothing to be of yourself. Do you have utterance and grace of teaching ? Do not because of this account yourself to have anything more than other men. For this cause especially you ought to be humbled, because you have been deemed worthy of more abundant gifts. For he, to whom more was forgiven, will love more (see Luke 7:47). [...] Why do you think great things about yourself ? Because you teach by words ? But this is easy : to philosophise in words. Teach me by your life : that is the best teaching. Do you say that it is right to be moderate ? Do you make a long speech about it, and play the orator, pouring forth your eloquence without stopping ? But one shall say to you, 'Better than you is he who teaches me by his deeds' — for those lessons are accustomed to be fixed in the mind which consist not so much in words, as those which teach by things, since if you do not have the deed, you have not only not profited him by your words, but you have even hurt him the more — 'Better that you were silent'. Why ? 'Because the thing you propose to me is impossible ; for I consider that if you, having so much to say about it, do not succeed in this, then I am much more to be excused' ; [...] for it is a worse mischief when one who teaches well in words impugns his teaching by his deeds. This has been the cause of many evils in the churches ("Homily on Acts 13").

> He that would be a teacher must first teach himself. For as he who has not first been a good soldier will never be a general, so it is with the teacher ; wherefore he [the Apostle] says elsewhere, '*lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified*' (1 Corinthians 9:27). [...] For if Timothy, to whom all of us together are not worthy to be compared, received commands and is instructed (and he himself was a teacher), then much more should we [be instructed] ("Homily on 1 Timothy 1").

> For on this account He left us here that we may be as luminaries, that we may be appointed teachers of others, that we may be as yeast ; that we may converse as angels among men, as men with children, as spiritual men with natural men, that they may profit by us, that we may be as seed, and may bring forth much fruit. There would be no need for words if we thus shone forth in our lives ; there would be no need of teachers, if we were to exhibit works. There would be no unbelievers, if we were such Christians as we ought to be. If we kept the commandments of Christ, if we allowed injury to ourselves, if we allowed advantage to be taken of us, if being reviled we blessed, if being ill treated we did good (see 1 Corinthians 4:12) ; if this were the general practice among us, no one would be so brutish as not to become a convert to godliness. And to show this : Paul was but one man, yet how many did he draw after him ? If we were all such as he, how many worlds might we not have drawn to us ? [...] For those who are taught look to the virtue of their teachers ; and when they see us manifesting the same desires, pursuing the same objects : power and honour, how can they admire Christianity ? ("Homily on 1 Timothy 3")

Saint John addresses the proper nature and character of a true teacher in other contexts as well, as pointed out in an article by Demetri Karavasilis ("Mystagogy blog", September 2013). He says that good teachers will inspire, attract, persuade. They are humble. They know their own imperfections and weaknesses. They present in themselves the best example : being simple, honest, guileless and candid. They respect the opinions of their students, and they do not use irony with them. They are not hypocritical. They are not selfish, egotistical, intrusive, coercive, despotic or arrogant. They avoid rebuking and chastising, and they do not trample on the life of another person ; but rather, they encourage amendment. They do not expose falls and

weaknesses to ridicule, but rather they nurture good order. They show affection for their student-apprentices, and they know that being lenient accomplishes far more than violence.

Saint Innocent of Moscow is a man who clearly did practice what he preached and taught, and in the way encouraged by Saint John Chrysostom. We may well recall these significant and memorable words, cited earlier (see p. 16), which he addressed to his clergy :

> 'If you are to win your listeners' hearts you must speak from your heart, for it is the strength of our heart's feeling that moves us to speak. So only one who is filled to overflowing with faith and love will be able to speak with a wisdom which his listeners' hearts will be unable to resist' (Canadian Orthodox Messenger, Spring 2000, p. 5).

We are certainly in a period of time when it is difficult to speak clearly about our Saviour Jesus Christ and be truly heard, understood and followed. This is what our Saviour prepared us for, and about which the Apostle warns us :

> *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables* (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

Nevertheless, we are all hearing our Saviour's invitation, just as are the Apostle Peter and the others :

> *And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.' They immediately left their nets and followed Him* (Matthew 4:18-20).

Having ourselves heard the call of our Saviour, along with the apostles we have "*left [our] nets and followed Him*". We still follow Him, our hearts filled with His love, and our hearts eager to share our joy, our peace, our hope with others, with anyone who will hear and be willing to follow the path of life and drink the Living Water.

> *Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus* (Colossians 1:28).

10

The bishop as an example of repentance

> On the one hand it [repentance] is an unceasing dissatisfaction with whatever state we are in; on the other, it is a steady and unwavering trust in giant possibilities. 'I am the greatest sinner,' the man of repentance always says. 'I am unworthy.' With all of that he doesn't lose hope for a moment. [...] [Repentance] is the motor of all the virtues. [...] Repentance is a continual fire in man. [...] Repentance is the fire which gradually burns up the egotism in us (Confessor Priest Dumitru Staniloae, Orthodox Spirituality, pp. 139, 140, 142).

When Father Dumitru Staniloae (†1993) writes about repentance as being a fire, we may understand that this fire has two aspects. The first aspect is a double aspect. It is both the warmth of the love of our Lord which He radiates to us, and it is the warmth of the fire of the love which we feel for our Lord. It is for us to remember that there is nothing to fear in any fiery associations with our Lord, because He heals us and gives us life, and His love is warm, healing and inviting. The second aspect is the cleansing effect that our Saviour's love has on our past and present sins, as we become more united with Him.

If the first-shepherd, the bishop, is to be able truly to lead the sheep in his care, then the example he sets for the sheep to follow must include in a significant manner the example of his own life in repentance. Our Saviour began His public speaking and teaching with the word "repent" (see Matthew 4:17 ; Mark 1:15). In this, we see that repentance is in fact at the foundation of our Christian life in general, and in specific of our daily Christian life. Therefore, the arch-pastor gives the lead. By how he lives, he shows the sheep how to live, and he makes as his own the following words of request to the Lord by Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov) :

> Maintain my life in this world until I may offer unto Thee worthy repentance ("Prayer at daybreak", His Life is Mine, p. 54).

After Saint Silouan of Mount Athos had been reminded by our Lord that he was proud, he asked the Lord what it would take for him to become humble. It helps the bishop to keep constantly in mind the words of the Lord's response to Saint Silouan :

> [...] 'Keep thy mind in hell, and despair not' (Saint Silouan the Athonite, pp. 42, 212).

Saint Silouan had been trying to pray with a pure mind and heart, but he had been constantly distracted and stopped by tempting devils. The Lord had let him know that this was because of pride. The last, daunting, response from the Lord about not despairing is very much an example of how God's love cauterises and cleanses us through such difficult and hot tests. Not despairing requires that we keep our focus on our Saviour, always remembering with thanksgiving that He loves us. He is our Saviour.

The hierarch understands that repentance means a turning about, a 180-degree turn, a turning away from darkness to light, from fear to love, from death to life. "Repentance" comes from the Greek noun μετάνοια, *metanoia*, which means just this : a turning-about. The hierarch understands that this is a daily choice and action, which can only be undertaken with God's help. He understands also that he cannot simply talk, teach and preach about it. Rather, he must be seen to be doing it. And most pointedly, he must be ready to apologise openly any time he may make a mistake, an error, or a deliberate deviation. If the bishop is not seen to be living in

this manner, the sheep cannot be expected to do so either. However, if the arch-pastor is leading the sheep in a wrong direction, and if many naïvely follow him, this arch-pastor is responsible before God for what happens to them. If the rational sheep see that the arch-pastor has himself strayed, they may choose not to follow him. However, in doing so they can risk being separated from the one flock of Christ. There are many traps. The arch-pastor is responsible before God for what happens to the sheep that stray, as well for as the ones that do not. With the wearing of the *omophor*, he is bearing the responsibility for each one of the flock upon his shoulders. This is one of the more crucial factors in the life of a bishop. It is a large part of a bishop's responsibility to help others in their repentance, in harmony with our canonical Tradition. Therefore, following the example of the Prophet-King David, the psalm that we repeat several times daily, Psalm 50 (in the Hebrew numbering, Psalm 51), is the centre of the consciousness of a bishop who is trying to follow the best path. It is his responsibility in using and living this psalm to show all the rest of us that repentance can really be accomplished by us all.

Indeed, when I was in seminary, it was strongly suggested that we learn and come to know Psalm 50 by heart. I am aware that many do know it by heart, as a result of their relationship of love with the Lord. Knowing by heart is not simple memorisation, which limits the knowing to the head. This psalm expresses to the Lord the deep yearnings and concerns of our hearts. It also provides spiritual food for our hearts, and the encouragement to persevere in love. Psalm 50 arises in the historical context of 2 Kingdoms [2 Samuel] 12:1-15, when Nathan the prophet confronted David with his great sin concerning Uriah and Bathsheba : "*So David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord'*" (2 Kingdoms 12:13). David the King then responds from the heart with his prophetic Psalm 50 :

> *Have mercy on me, O God, in accordance with Your great mercy, and in accordance with the multitude of Your compassions, blot out my transgression of the law. Wash me thoroughly from my lawlessness, and from my sin cleanse me ; for I know my lawlessness, and my sin is before my face continually. Against You alone have I sinned, and evil have I done before Your Face ; so that You may be shown to be righteous in Your words, and to be victorious when You are judged ; for behold, I was conceived in lawlessness, and in sins did my mother crave to conceive me ; for behold, You have loved truth ; the unseen and hidden things of Your wisdom have You shown me. You will sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed ; You will wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. You will make me hear exultation and gladness : my humbled bones shall exult. Turn Your Face away from my sins, and blot out all my lawless acts. Build a pure heart in me, O God, and renew an upright spirit in my inward parts. Cast me not away from Your Face, and take not Your Holy Spirit away from me. Render to me the exultation of Your salvation, and with Your guiding Spirit set me fast. I shall teach the lawless Your ways, and the impious shall turn about to You. Rescue me from blood, O God, O God of my salvation. My tongue shall exult in Your righteousness. O Lord, You will open my lips, and my mouth shall announce Your praise ; for if You had wished for a sacrifice, I would have given it. With whole-burnt-offerings You will not be well-pleased. The sacrifice to God is a shattered spirit : a shattered and humbled heart, God will not reckon as nothing. Do good, O Lord, to Sion in Your good-pleasure, and let the walls of Jerousalēm be built. Then You will be well-pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness : an offering and whole-burnt-offerings ; then they shall offer young bulls upon Your altar.*

When the Prophet David is saying : "*Cast me not away from Your Face, and take not Your Holy Spirit away from me*" (Psalm 50:13), these words express his deep sorrow for his misdeeds which were caused by his previous deliberate deafness towards the Lord. He says that he understands that he deserves exile and of being deprived of the Holy Spirit (as humans generally understand retribution). However, he knows that there are no cases in Scripture in which the Lord has rejected those who repent, so he throws himself on the compassionate mercy of the Lord. We can see how the words surrounding this particular citation from the psalm express his confidence in the compassion of the Lord.

In concert with this Davidic example, there is the very significant lesson for us in the repentance of a later king, Manasseh, who had perpetrated great evil (see 2 Paraleipomenon [2 Chronicles] 33:12-20). We have received his own prayer of repentance (referring to these events), which is found in some Bibles at the end of 2 Paraleipomenon. This prayer has become a part of our regular prayers in service-books and prayer-books (see Great Compline of Great Lent, and the last part of the Psalter) :

> *O Lord Almighty, God of our Fathers, of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and of their righteous seed, it is You that have made Heaven and the earth, with all their good order. You have shackled the sea by the word of Your ordinance. You have closed the abyss, and sealed it with Your formidable and glorious Name. All things shudder and tremble because of the Face of Your power, for the magnificence of Your glory cannot be borne, and the anger of Your threat towards sinners cannot be withstood. Immeasurable and unsearchable is the mercy of Your promise ; for You are the Lord Most High : of great compassion, long-suffering and greatly merciful, repenting over the bad things of Men. It is You, O Lord, in accordance with the multitude of Your loving-kindness, who have promised repentance and forgiveness to those who have sinned against You ; and, in the multitude of Your compassions, You have established repentance for sinners unto salvation. Therefore, it is You, O Lord God of Powers, who have not established repentance for the righteous, for Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, who have not sinned against You, but You have established repentance for me, the sinner, since I have sinned more than the number of the sand of the sea. My lawless acts multiplied, O Lord ; my lawless acts multiplied. I am not worthy to gaze and to see the height of Heaven, because of the multitude of my unrighteous acts. I am so bent down with many an iron fetter that I cannot shake my head in refusal. There is no relief for me, since I have stirred to anger Your fury, and I have done what is evil before Your Face, setting up loathsome things, and multiplying offences. I have not done Your will, nor have I kept Your ordinances. And now, I bend the knee of my heart, beseeching You for Your loving-kindness. I have sinned, O Lord ; I have sinned, and I do know my lawless acts ; but supplicating, I beseech You : Forgive me, O Lord ; forgive me. Do not destroy me together with my acts of lawlessness. Do not cherish wrath unto the age, or lay up bad things for me. Do not condemn me to the lowest parts of the earth, since You are God, the God of those who repent, and in me You will show all Your goodness ; for, unworthy as I am, You will save me in accordance with Your great mercy, and I shall praise You always, through all the days of my life ; for all the power of the Heavens hymns You, and Yours is the glory unto the ages of ages* (The Psalter According to the Seventy, pp. 486-487).

When reflecting on repentance, the Prophet Jonah naturally comes to mind. Jonah was sent by the Lord to the people of the city of Nineveh. This city was by the Tigris River, across

from the present-day Mosul in Iraq. Jonah was to tell them that they were being exhorted by the Lord to turn away from their evil ways, lest destruction come upon them. He was not so willing to do so, because, as he himself said, he knew the consequences of the Lord's loving-kindness. He was stubborn, and ran away, but the Lord used "friendly persuasion" to convince him. Trying to escape by sea, he was thrown overboard in a storm, rescued by being swallowed by a huge fish, and safely deposited on land. In the end, he did proclaim repentance to the people. The people finally responded and turned to the Lord. The Lord did not destroy the city. The prophet, however, had fallen into a temptation himself. He was sorry that his proclamation would not be fulfilled, and that he would not get to see the destruction of the city. He sulked. Now he, himself, had to repent. The Lord then gave him the practical sign of the plant that grew to protect him from the hot sun, but which quickly withered. He complained to the Lord about this, too, and the Lord very clearly showed him what is the truth, words to which his heart then responded positively :

> *And the Lord said, 'You took pity on the gourd, for which you did not labour, nor did you make it grow, which came up during the night and perished before the next night. And shall I Myself not take pity upon Nineveh, the great city, in which dwell more than one hundred and twenty thousand people who do not know either their right hand or their left—and many livestock?'* (Jonah 4:10-11)

The following words from the Gospels regarding repentance are important for every bishop to keep in his heart at all times :

> *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand'* (Matthew 4:17).
>
> *'And the* [prodigal] *son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son"'* (Luke 15:21).
>
> *'And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner"'* (Luke 18:13).

The bishop keeps these words in his heart so that he will always remember how he is to be living. He remembers these words so that he will always have ready in his preaching and teaching the resources by which he can help the flock entrusted to him live in accordance with Christ's love. To my mind, this is the clarification of the Forerunner's exhortation : "'*Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance*'" (Matthew 3:8). A life that is being conformed to Christ, and turning away from works of darkness, expresses the meaning of repentance. These fruits are the results of repentance, and it is our Lord who gives worthiness (that is the actualisation of this repentance and new life in Him) to all persons and to all things.

It is really necessary that the arch-pastor know himself honestly in the context of Christ's love and truth. He must be able to distinguish between sin and sinner within himself, so that he may be able to do the same for the sheep given to him to lead on the paths of righteousness. He must be able to discern in the sheep what is truly sin, and through prayerful and nurturing guidance be ready to help them move away from this sin in repentance. He must be able to understand how he, himself, has fallen prey to the lies of the tempter, so that he can better have compassion on the sheep in his care who fall into similar traps. Through his own experience of being helped out of these traps, distortions and deceptions, he is able in Christ to help others as

well. The saying : "Hate the sin, love the sinner" applies very directly to the leader of the flock in his life of service within this flock. We can also look to the edifying words of a recently-reposed spiritual father (a contemporary of Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov) of Essex), the Elder Sergei of Vanves in Paris, France (†1987) :

> Always have the attitude of someone who is waiting for a train, who knows that the train could arrive at any moment, and who remains always ready to board.
>
> The default state of the Christian must be one of repentance. Repentance doesn't mean just asking God to forgive our sins, but also means recognising our state of infirmity and seeing our nothingness before the greatness of God. This state is brought about through humility, fear of God, and the memory of death. This state of repentance must be a constant for us. In order to get it, we must ask God to give us a constant sense of repentance, and so that it truly remains constant, we must always be asking for it. It is for this purpose that we have the Jesus Prayer. If we remain in this state of repentance, which is the state of all the saints, then we will be protected from all manner of sins.
>
> We must never believe that our sinful state is beyond repair. We must be confident that there is always forgiveness for us. All we need to do to be forgiven is ask (Elder Sergei of Vanves: Life & Teachings, pp. 122-123).

It is of paramount importance that we live in a constant state of repentance. The arch-pastor and the pastor are turned to by the rational sheep, because the shepherd is expected to lead the sheep on the path to eternal life in Christ. That is why people have a tendency to think that they should always believe their priest. However, if such confidence in a priest should ever become unquestioning and blind, it reveals a dangerously naïve attitude that is found often amongst us (sometimes even amongst those with so-called high education and intelligence). It may be that the priest never intends or encourages such an attitude, but it may arise regardless, as a twisted fruit of genuine respect. In the context of such blindness, the element of fear is very active, and the mentality of the slave can develop. The priest is not and never can be perfect, all-knowing and always correct. Sometimes the people fall into abusing this trust, and sometimes the priest. Sometimes, as in Soviet days, the people have the responsibility, through prayer, of knowing in their hearts that the priest has tripped or slipped in some way. They therefore pray for him, and avoid being in a position in which they have to do something contrary to the Way of Christ. The twice-given warning by the Apostle Paul shows how crucial it is that the shepherd lead aright, and that the sheep keep carefully aware that what is said and done by the shepherds is in continuity with the eternal truth of Him who is the Eternal Truth, our Saviour Jesus Christ :

> *But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ* (2 Corinthians 11:3).
>
> *But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed* (Galatians 1:8-9).

The Apostle recognises that our Lord gave us the freedom to use our hearts and minds either to choose to follow Him in the way of life and truth, or to stray away. The straying away is often associated with disconnecting the mind from the heart. Therefore, the Apostle uses strong words to help us to remember, and to be faithful.

Sometimes, under very adverse circumstances with a fallen cleric, the faithfulness to Christ of the faithful people can actually help bring that fallen cleric to repentance. This situation underscores the importance of the responsibility priests bear as pastors, and which is being referred to many times in the course of all these words. The words of all the prophets continue to have a living and active application in our times and in our lives now, as the Apostle wrote :

> *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart* (Hebrews 4:12).

Although the Prophet Isaiah does not specifically address priests in his prophecy, he does address leaders. In the context of his exhorting the people to repent, to be faithful to the Lord, and not to stray, the Prophet Isaiah gives them many words about how bad are some behaviours, and the consequences of betraying the Lord :

> *'Learn to do good. Seek judgement and redeem the wronged. Defend the orphan and justify the widow.'* [...] *Your rulers are disobedient and companions of thieves. Everyone loves bribes and follows after rewards. They do not defend the orphans, nor do they regard the cause of the widow* (Isaiah 1:17, 23).

> '*Woe to those who write evil things, for when they write such things, they turn aside judgement from the poor, and rob judgement from the needy of My people, that the widow may be their prey and the orphan a spoil. What will they do in the day of visitation? For affliction will come to you from afar, and to whom will you flee for help?*' (Isaiah 10:1-3)

The words of our Saviour remind us of gravity of our calling and of our service :

> *'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone'* (Matthew 23:23).

> '*He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters*' (Luke 11:23).

We must remember that the Lord is in charge. This is His Church, not ours. Our faith must be applied faith. As our Saviour has said, our faith is to be applied in a living way. All must be brought into unity in Christ :

> *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also* (James 2:26).

As we live our lives of service in the Church, it is crucial that we keep this continually in the front of our awareness, keeping in mind also these prophetic words :

> *He has shown you, O man, what is good. Or what does the Lord seek from you but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to be ready to walk with the Lord your God?* (Micah 6:8)

Despite any failings and betrayals in the life of any priest or high-priest, our loving Saviour has given us words of hope and of consolation. It is our Lord Himself who is feeding us sacramentally, and especially with His Body and Blood during the Divine Liturgy. It is He, Himself, who stands before us in every service of worship. The failings of the priest or high-

priest do not in any way interrupt or block God's blessings and Grace. Our Saviour feeds us in co-operation with (or despite) the priest or high-priest.

Saint Clement, the Martyr-Bishop of Rome, a contemporary of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, and who likely knew the Apostles Peter and Paul, wrote a pastoral letter about the dangers of certain passions (and particularly jealousy). In his writing, he gives encouragement to the rational sheep that he is leading on their path of repentance. He indicates that he was writing these words for himself as much as for them :

> We are writing these things, beloved ones, not only to bring these things to your mind, but also to remind ourselves ; for we are in the same arena and face the same contest. Let us, then, give up those empty and futile thoughts, and come to the glorious and venerable rule of our tradition. Let us attend to what is noble, to what is pleasing, to what is acceptable in the sight of Him who made us. Let us fix our gaze upon the Blood of Christ and understand how precious it is to His Father, because, poured out for our salvation, it brought to the whole world the grace of repentance. Let us pass in review all the generations and learn that from generation to generation the Master has given an opportunity for repentance to those who were willing to turn to Him. Noah proclaimed repentance, and such as heeded him were saved [see 1 Moses 7]. Jonah proclaimed destruction to the Ninevites : those repenting of their sins, by their entreaties propitiated God and received salvation, although they were estranged from God [see Jonah 3]. The ministers of the Grace of God spoke through the Holy Spirit about repentance, and the Master of all things Himself spoke about repentance with an oath : For as I live, says the Lord, I do not will the death of the sinner, but his repentance [see Ezekiel 33:11]. To this He added a good pronouncement : O House of Israel, repent from your lawlessness. Say to the sons of My people : Should your sins be from earth to sky ; and should they be redder than scarlet [see Isaiah 1:18] and blacker than sackcloth, if you turn to Me with your whole heart and say, "Father," I will listen to you as to a holy people. And in another place He speaks thus : '"*Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean. Put away the evils from your souls before My eyes. Cease from your evils. Learn to do good. Seek judgement and redeem the wronged. Defend the orphan and justify the widow. Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord, "although your sins are like crimson, I shall make them white like snow; and although they are as scarlet, I shall make them white like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good things of the land. But if you are unwilling and disobedient, you shall be devoured by the sword;" for the mouth of the Lord has spoken*' [Isaiah 1:16-20]. Therefore, wanting all His beloved ones to partake in repentance, He established it by His all-powerful will. Therefore let us be obedient to His magnificent and glorious will ; and entreating His mercy and His loving kindness, let us fall down and turn to His compassions, having abandoned futile toil, contention and envy which leads to death. Let us fix our gaze upon those who have perfectly ministered to His magnificent glory ("First Letter to the Corinthians", 7-9).

The following words from the Apostle Paul remind us of the importance of repentance, which is the attempt to live a life of purity and of harmony with God's will :

> *Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people'* [see 3 Moses 26:12 ; Jeremiah 39:38 ; Ezekiel 37:27].

> *Therefore 'Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you'* [see Isaiah 52:11 ; Ezekiel 20:34, 41]. *'I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty'* [see 2 Kingdoms 7:14] (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

In this previous citation, there are many references and allusions to various Old Covenant texts which we do not give because of the large number of them. These references may be found in the notes of the Orthodox Study Bible, for instance. We can, here, see how divinely we are created. Truly, the Lord dwells within us. Those who pray also know that the Lord is found by looking into the heart rather than outwards. We continually yield to the temptation to be preoccupied with externals, but our Saviour gives us the following clear reminder :

> *Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, 'The Kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, "See here!" or "See there!" For indeed, the Kingdom of God is within you'* (Luke 17:20-21).

How important it is that we remember these words, "*you are the temple of the living God*" (2 Corinthians 6:16). These words remind us why we repent, why we try in Christ to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, why we care for our bodies respectfully, why we honour Christ in each other, why we give respect to the body of a departed person. In Christ, we try to keep ourselves clean and pure in His purity and love. However, instead of living in a hermetically sealed, exclusive and protected environment, we take this cleanliness, purity and love into the world in which we live. We allow the Lord to use us as yeast and salt wherever we are.

In the following words, the Apostle is careful to remind us about what is the difference between real repentance (which brings life) and worldly sorrow (which brings death) :

> *For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death* (2 Corinthians 7:10).

The Archpriest Paul Lazor, the teacher, has been reported as having commented that "the remembrance of any sin without the presence and mercy of Christ is from the accuser of the brethren, the devil". Christos Yannaras writes :

> Repentance is a gift of life, which can come into existence, grow to maturity and be measured only where there is freedom and measureless love (The Freedom of Morality, p. 191).

That the love and mercy of God must therefore always be before us is evident in the following patristic words from Saint Isaac the Syrian :

> As it is not possible to cross the great sea without a ship, so no-one can attain to love without fear. We can cross the tempestuous sea placed between us and the spiritual [noetic] paradise only by the boat of repentance, whose oarsmen are those of fear. Unless fear's oarsmen pilot the ship of repentance by which we cross over the sea of this world to God, we shall be drowned. Repentance is the ship ; fear is the pilot [rudder] : love is the divine harbour. So fear puts us in the ship of repentance, transports us over the tempestuous sea of this life (that is, of the world), and guides us to the divine harbour, which is love. Hither proceed all who labour and are heavy-laden in repentance. When

> we attain to love, we attain to God. Our journey has ended, and we have reached the island which is beyond this world (The Ascetical Homilies 46).

Sometimes, in the course of our life when we are bound by fear, sin and dark habits, it is difficult to be aware of just what are our sins. In order to discern our sins and faults more clearly, not only do we need to ask our Saviour to reveal them to us, but we also need to let ourselves be aware of the harbour of love ahead of us. It is this haven of love to which we are moving, Christ Himself, who will enlighten our hearts.

There are many monks, knowing and desiring the Lord's mercy, compassion and forgiveness, who have given their whole lives to the Lord in a life of repentance. Such is their acute awareness of their own deficiency in repentance, in contrast to the Lord's love, that they are saying in their final moments of life, almost with one voice, that they have only just begun to repent. Abba Sisoës of Egypt (†429), a monk who in old age had already spent sixty years in this work of repenting, is perhaps the most well-known source of these words that reveal his outstanding concern for repentance :

> It is said of Abba Sisoes that when he was at the point of death, while the Fathers were sitting beside him, his face shone like the sun. He said to them, 'Look, Abba Anthony is coming.' A little later he said, 'Look, the choir of prophets is coming.' Again his countenance shone with brightness and he said, 'Look, the choir of apostles is coming.' His countenance increased in brightness and lo, he spoke with someone. Then the old men asked him, 'With whom are you speaking, Father?' He said, 'Look the angels are coming to fetch me, and I am begging them to let me do a little penance.' The old men said to him, 'You have no need to do penance, Father.' But the old man said to them, 'Truly, I do not think I have even made a beginning yet.' Now they all knew that he was perfect. Once more his countenance suddenly became like the sun and they were all filled with fear. He said to them, 'Look, the Lord is coming and He's saying, "Bring me the vessel from the desert."' Then there was a flash of lightening and all the house was filled with a sweet odour (The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, pp. 214-215).

If anyone ever falls into thinking that he has completed the work of repentance, that person has already fallen far enough to make urgent and immediate the need to repent once again, and to engage the work of repenting. This work does not end while we live and breathe.

Our mother, Saint Mary of Egypt, is a clear example of someone who (just as Saint Photini, the Samaritan Woman) drank the Water of Life, was freed of guilt and lived in true and life-giving repentance. They share their experience with us to this day. As the life of Saint Mary of Egypt was transformed and transfigured by the love of Christ, so is it possible for us all. This is why she is given to us as such a prominent example in the period of the year in which we focus the most on repentance. Her life was completely changed by the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and she remains as a constant encouragement to us all. It is this transforming and transfiguring Grace which sustains us at all times. Her life may be found in The Lenten Triodion, and in other publications in association with the Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete.

Every one of the Pre-communion Prayers is about repentance, something that is obvious to us every time we read them. For instance, we find these very significant words in our prayers of preparation :

> Through Your life-bringing Resurrection You raised up the first father who had fallen. Raise me up who have sunk down in sin and give me the image of repentance (Third Prayer in Preparation for Holy Communion, by Symeon the Translator [*Metaphrastes*]).
>
> Through Your merciful compassion You cleanse and brighten those who repent with fervour, making them partakers of light and full communicants of Your divinity (Seventh Prayer in Preparation for Holy Communion, by Saint Symeon the New Theologian).

Each time every person is preparing to receive the Holy Mysteries of the Lord's Body and Blood, these prayers will be read as preparation for approaching the Chalice. Words such as these are read in conjunction with our other daily prayers which keep us focussed on the regular reception of the Holy Mysteries on the Lord's Day and other days. These prayers help us to be giving thanks constantly for our last reception of the Holy Mysteries, and, in steadily increasing repentance, to be preparing for the next time. The very frequent reading of the eighteenth session (*kathisma*) of the Psalter is a significant element in preparation. This session is very often read at Vespers, and also at every Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts in Great Lent. Every one of the psalms in this session is connected with the steps of the ascent to the Temple in Jerusalem. These fifteen psalms (one for each of the fifteen steps) draw us towards the Holy Altar of the Lord.

From the very beginning, from the moment of the Fall, repentance has been our first priority. This should have been recognised as such by us, but it has been something that we human beings have not done well. Regardless, from the beginning, the Lord has consistently shown us that repentance is both necessary and life-giving. It is the gate to restoring a healthy relationship with Him, and then maintaining a living and lively relationship with Him. It is for us to say "sorry", and to mean it from the heart. The "sorry" is a reflection of the state of our heart, our being in continual forgiveness with each and all. The "sorry" is how we feel towards the other, even when we have not done anything untoward but are ourselves the recipients of some injury. We live in forgiveness, and ask forgiveness of the other, regardless of whose fault anything is. This is the daily work of every Christian, the work of daily choosing to follow Christ, choosing to live in His love, in His light. Therefore, before we approach the Chalice, we do our best to be constantly forgiving everyone for everything, and to be reconciled with everyone around us. The bishop is to be a leader in this, too.

By his own personal example of repentance, the bishop/father/shepherd shows the sheep, even without words, how compassion and forgiveness are given to others around him. As he leads in compassion the flock entrusted to him, he helps the rational sheep to understand the compassion of the Lord, and His readiness to forgive us as we turn to Him. Our Saviour has shown us this compassionate love in the Parable of the Prodigal Son/the Compassionate Father (see Luke 15:11-32). The Lord also prepared a clear foundation for understanding this compassion through the prophecy of Jeremiah, which prepares for the New Covenant :

> '*For I will be merciful to their wrongdoings, and I will no longer remember their sins*' (Jeremiah 38:34).

So it is for the bishop to lead the way by showing people how to live as a Christian. He shows them how to have life-giving and loving interactions with all people without distinction. By his own behaviour, he shows them how to repent quickly, and without delay to confess sin. The faithful people and deacons express their repentance to the Lord through confession,

usually before a priest, and they hear the words of our Lord's compassionate forgiveness. The priests express their repentance to the Lord through confession, usually before a bishop or a priest, and they hear the words of our Lord's compassionate forgiveness. The bishops do the same, usually before another bishop or a priest, and they hear the words of our Lord's compassionate forgiveness. By his own conformity to the love of Christ, the bishop prepares the hearts of the sheep under his *omophor* to accept this compassion and to act on it. It is a serious concern. He obviously cannot do this without having his own heart in untarnished, clear, clean communion with the Lord. Indeed, because the high-priest is associated closely with the Mother of God, he can turn to her for help in repentance. In doing so, he can grow into a similar love for Christ which becomes perpetual and unwavering. The repentance of the Mother of God is seen in her always saying "yes" to the Lord, and always saying "no" to the tempter (see pp. 298-299). She keeps the focus of her whole being constantly on the Lord, and she supports us in coming to the same loving commitment to her Son. The importance of the bishop's living in the same way cannot be over-stated. The rational sheep see how the arch-pastor lives. They follow. We ought to be able to see a reflection of the humility of the Mother of God in every arch-pastor :

> The humility of the Mother of God is greater than any, wherefore all generations on earth exalt her, and all the heavenly host serve her; and this, His Mother, the Lord has given us to intercede for us and be our help (Saint Silouan the Athonite, pp. 309-310).

The quality of humility is the real core of the Christian life, and it has been little-mentioned in this consideration. It is, nevertheless, quite directly related to repentance, and rooted in the love of Jesus Christ. Humility has nothing to do with false and hypocritical self-deprecation (so as to appear to be virtuous). Such false humility was exemplified in the persons of Uriah Heep and his mother, as shown by Charles Dickens. Uriah pronounces the following, which is the complete opposite of what is reality :

> 'Ah! But you know we're so very 'umble,' he returned. 'And having such a knowledge of our own 'umbleness, we must really take care that we're not pushed to the wall by them as isn't 'umble. All stratagems are fair in love, sir' (David Copperfield, ch. 39).

My mother, when confronted with such false humility, would often exclaim : "Ee, I'm ever so 'umble". Humility has nothing to do with false self-accusation and blame, which are, in fact, expressions of pride. Humility is united with the truth, indeed, with Christ the Truth. Humility is united with Christ's love. In Christ, the Truth, we can know ourselves clearly, and have no need to try to excuse ourselves for our falls. We can know the truth about ourselves. In this knowledge, we can become truly healthy, because we can accept that the Lord created us good. In this understanding of truth, love then becomes self-forgetting because of Christ, and not at all self-rejecting or self-deprecating. We can become self-forgetting only because of love for the other. Self-forgetting is being truthful about oneself and the other, and is the result of being healed by Christ. This humility, this love, is expressed well by Saint Dorotheus of Gaza († *ca.* 565) :

> See, brethren, how great is the power of humility. See how effective it is to say, 'Forgive me'. [...] Therefore, it is by humility that all things of the adversary are destroyed. [...] Humility protects the soul from every passion, from every temptation. When Saint Anthony beheld all the snares of the devil laid out, groaning, he asked God, 'Who then can elude all these ?' What did God reply ? 'Humility can elude all of them'. [...] Indeed, nothing is stronger than humility. Nothing can prevail over it. Should some misfortune befall a humble person, he forthwith holds himself responsible. He immediately blames

> himself by saying that he deserves it. He cannot bear blaming anyone else. He cannot bear blaming another for causing a misfortune. Thus, he eludes it undisturbed, without affliction and in complete peace. [...] There are two sorts of humility. [...] The first sort of humility is to consider one's brother to be wiser and to be superior to oneself in all things. Simply, as that saint [Abba Sisoës] said, 'to be below all'. The second sort of humility is to attribute to God all our achievements. [...] God, who is good, grants us humility since it rescues Man from great evils and protects him from great trials (see Œuvres Spirituelles, ch. 2).

This was obviously written with the following words of our Saviour in mind, which He addresses to each one of us, and which we do well always to recall :

> '*Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light'* (Matthew 11:28-30).

With these words in mind, like any other pastor I can myself attest to the veracity of everything said by Saint Dorotheus, and all others like him. I have, in my still short experience, encountered many persons who live in this manner, who live in this love-borne humility. They have been persons of every station in life : pious grandmothers, grandfathers, mothers, fathers, children, monks, nuns, clergy, bishops and patriarchs. Metropolitan Hierotheos (Vlachos) shares this insight from his personal experience :

> Quite often we are touched more deeply by a person's humility than by what he says (A Night in the Desert of the Holy Mountain, p. 39).

Humility is the foundation of everything, and it makes everything possible in Christ. Humility makes it possible for us to respond in an inspired way to the present moral turmoil and the too-rapid changes in technology that clamour for our clear discernment. Humility makes it possible for us to learn better how to work together with our Lord, and not to be manipulators and engineers. Humility makes it possible for us to be patient. Without humility (and the peace which is its companion), none of us will be able to find our way in the mine-field of choice and self-interest. Humility is the natural expression of, and the result of a deep, loving relationship with our Lord. It is humility that we need to acquire above all. It is humility that we all (and especially the hierarchs) need to acquire more deeply in order that we may be able to lead and feed the rational sheep of Christ. Saint John Chrysostom says :

> Let us practice humble-mindedness. For there is nothing so powerful as it, since it is stronger even than a rock and harder than adamant, and places us in a safety greater than that of towers and cities and walls, being too high for any of the artillery of the devil ("Homily on Romans 12").

11

The bishop as an example of forgiveness

> A brother at Scetis committed a fault. A council was called to which Abba Moses was invited, but he refused to go to it. Then the priest sent someone to say to him, 'Come, for everyone is waiting for you.' So he got up and went. He took a leaking jug, filled it with water and carried it with him. The others came out to meet him and said to him, 'What is this, Father?' The old man said to them, 'My sins run out behind me, and I do not see them, and today I am coming to judge the errors of another.' When they heard that they said no more to the brother but forgave him (The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, pp. 138-139).

These words help us to understand how repentance is complemented by forgiveness. Forgiveness is equally central, necessary, and it is required daily in the life of every bishop. Repentance and forgiveness go together hand-in-hand (or hand-in-glove). Every day we frequently pray the "Our Father", and we repeatedly bring to the Lord the words "*and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us*". This is the common current liturgical version, which has been simply accepted from the popular western-based pre-existing text of this prayer. However, these are the words of a more correct translation :

> '*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*' (Matthew 6:12).

A yet more correct translation from the Greek of the verb-phrase "as we forgive" is : "as we have forgiven". This wording of the "Our Father" suggests that everything else we are asking for in the prayer (including our own forgiveness) hinges on our forgiving constantly. Forgiveness is to be in our hearts before it is even needed. What is not repeated daily in the formal prayers (but which may well be remembered by us all at all times) is the exhortation by our Saviour :

> '*For if you forgive men their trespasses* [offences, missteps, stumbling], *your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses*' (Matthew 6:14-15).

Our Saviour has clearly shown us that forgiveness is no option, but rather it is an obligation for Orthodox Christians. If we wish to be forgiven, we must first forgive. In the Scriptures, the Lord is constantly described as being both compassionate and forgiving. Indeed, that is how He always reveals Himself to us. As a result, He is always being asked by us to forgive. The following scriptural selections remind us of this fact :

> *For You, O Lord, You are gracious and gentle, and greatly merciful to all those calling upon You* (Psalm 85:5).
>
> *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His recompense — the Lord, being propitious to all your lawless acts, healing all your diseases, redeeming your life from decay, crowning you with mercy and compassion* (Psalm 102:2-4).
>
> *Who is a God like You, removing wrongdoings and passing over the ungodliness of the remnant of His inheritance? He does not keep His anger as a witness, for He delights in mercy. He will return and have compassion on us. He will subdue our transgressions, and all our sins will be cast into the depths of the sea (*Micah 7:18-19*).*

> *I, even I, am He who blots out your lawlessness, and I will not remember them* (Isaiah 43:25).
>
> *Let the ungodly man abandon his ways, and the lawless man his counsels; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; for He shall forgive your sins abundantly. 'For My counsels are not as your counsels, neither are your ways My ways', says the Lord* (Isaiah 55:7-8).

From beholding the Lord's forgiveness in action, we can understand that forgiving is an absolute requirement for us, and that this requirement has been given to us from the beginning of human history. From the very beginning, the Lord reveals that He is Love : in the Law, and through the mouths of the Prophets. We can clearly see also that forgiveness is for us, as it is for the Lord, a possibility at all precisely because of love. Forgiveness is the product only of love. Love is a universal requirement for all Christians. Being an example of forgiveness is just as important as the bishop's being an example of repentance. The bishop must show the flock in his care how to forgive (a very great challenge for most people) by doing it constantly himself. By his own example, the arch-pastor prepares the hearts of the rational sheep he leads to accept the Lord's compassion, so that they can then themselves express this same compassion to themselves and to others. In order to do this, his own heart must first be prepared by being in communion with the love of the Lord. It is a serious concern. The bishop must be honestly a real human being at every moment and in every place. He must not be simply a pretentious and pompous formal figure spouting fine words as a fake façade dressed up in grand clothes.

Saint John Chrysostom addresses the matter of forgiveness as follows :

> Have you done good and received evil ? In reference to this, most of all lament and grieve for the one that has done the wrong, but for yourself rather rejoice, because you have become like God ; '"*for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good*"' [Matthew 5:45]. But if to follow God is beyond you, [...] come, let us bring you to your fellow-servants : to Joseph, who suffered countless things, and did good to his brothers ; to Moses, who after their countless plots against him, prayed for them ; to the blessed Paul, who cannot so much as number what he suffered from them, and is willing to be accursed for them ; to Stephen who is stoned, and who is entreating that this sin may be forgiven them ("Homily on Matthew 18").

In a typical icon of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, we bishops have a perfectly good example of the importance of living daily in this relationship of reconciliation and mutual forgiveness with one another. The apostles are embracing each other, each with one arm around the other ; and, at the same time, they are, together, holding and carrying the Church in the other arm. From the earliest times of the Church, as found in the Acts, it is clear that the Apostles Peter and Paul did live in forgiveness with each other, even if they had some strong differences of opinion about one thing or another. If those two holy apostles, in the love of Jesus Christ, were able to find their way to reconciliation, harmony, and a concerted effort in the same direction, then it is possible for us. It is imperative that we (and especially the bishops) pay attention to this in our lives : living in reconciliation. Quite simply, it is the way of Christ.

Although we may be attempting to live in such apostolic reconciliation, there are many negative things that happen in the course of life amongst Christians which make it difficult for people to swallow this particular, obvious command and direction of the Gospel. Bishops also have this difficulty. However, regardless of the difficulty, it behoves us all to remember that

forgiveness is not an option for an Orthodox Christian. It is not an option which someone can take or leave. No matter what anyone does, for good or for bad, no matter what the difference of opinion is, we must all still live in reconciliation and forgiveness with each other. Otherwise, why would the Lord bother to waste His time by saying so plainly : "'*But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you*'" (Matthew 5:44 ; see Luke 6:35). Why would He bother to direct all Christians at all times and in every place to forgive people who are persecuting us, to pray for our enemies, and even to love our enemies ? The crucial importance of this direction is made quite clear to us by our Saviour in His words in the Sermon on the Mount :

> '*Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny*' (Matthew 5:23-26).

Our Saviour points out to us that we (every one of us) ought not to arrive at the Offering of the great thanksgiving of the Divine Liturgy, we ought not to dare to approach the Holy Chalice, without first doing everything possible to be living in forgiveness and in reconciliation with all. He also shows us that there are consequences which we bring upon ourselves when we do not forgive. Our Saviour shows us that it is truly an absolute necessity for us Orthodox Christians always and continually to forgive for the sake of our own personal spiritual health, and for the salvation of those who are inimical towards us. A very clear example of this is found in the life of Saint John V "the Merciful", Patriarch of Alexandria (†619) :

> Celebrating the Liturgy one day, the words of Christ: '"[...] *if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you* [...]"' (Matthew 5:23), came into the Patriarch's mind, and he remembered that one of the clergy in the church there had a grudge against him. He left the holy gifts, went up to the priest, fell before his feet, and begged his forgiveness. As soon as he had made his peace with that man, he returned to the Table of Preparation (The Prologue, 12 November).

I am responsible for how much I forgive. I am not responsible for whether (and how much) the other accepts it. Saint Nikolai (Velimirovič) helps us to understand this in a brief homily :

> Do not be vengeful; do not return evil for evil. The evil of your neighbour is sufficient. If you return him evil for evil, you double the amount of evil in the world; but if you do not return him evil, he may yet burn out his own evil through repentance, and you will then have lessened the evil in the world by your patience and forgiveness (The Prologue, 19 June).

The radical forgiveness of the Christian way brings reconciliation and healing. Thus, being healed of any division, with confidence we approach the Holy Table to receive from Christ His life-giving Food. This most important direction from our Saviour has a particular poignancy for the high-priest or priest who may be serving the Divine Liturgy many times in a week, or even daily. It is for such a reason that he will very likely keep in the front of his heart's memory these following words in the *anaphora* of the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, in the prayer following "and all mankind", which he says for his own sake, and for the sake of all :

> Remember my unworthiness also, O Lord, according to the multitude of Your compassions. Forgive my every transgression, both voluntary, and involuntary. Do not withhold, because of my sins, the Grace of Your Holy Spirit from these gifts here set forth.

Our Saviour Himself, hanging on the Cross, with His arms outstretched, was forgiving people from the Cross. He was asking His Father to forgive those who were crucifying Him because they did not know what they were doing. It has been said, also, that those arms were stretched out not by violence and force. Rather, our Saviour voluntarily stretched His arms out on the Cross, and allowed them to be nailed to the Cross. By doing this, He is visibly embracing us all, all His creatures, all His creation. This is the wonderful paradox of how our Saviour addresses everything. He is dying, but He is going to live. He is being brutally crucified, but He is embracing the crucifiers. He is blessing them, and forgiving them :

> O Giver of Life, streams of forgiveness, life, and salvation poured forth from Your pierced side upon us all (Apostikha Tone 5, Saturday Vespers).

As Saint John Chrysostom reminds us, the Holy Cross thus becomes itself the agent of blessing everything and all things, as the vertical part reaches from earth to Heaven, and the horizontal part stretches around the earth, and encompasses everything. This is the paradox that we live with and in. I have heard this very fact preached in many a sermon. The tomb of our Saviour becomes a fountain of Resurrection and forgiveness :

> Let us embrace each other joyously. [...] Let us call 'Brothers' even those that hate us, and forgive all by the Resurrection [...] (Paschal Verses of the Matins of Pascha).

> Let no-one weep for his iniquities ; for forgiveness has risen up from the grave (Catechetical Sermon of Saint John Chrysostom read at the Matins of Pascha).

Thus, the Cross on which our Saviour was crucified is sometimes called the *axis mundi*, the vertical and horizontal axis of the world. From this Death comes Life for the whole universe. In the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem, in the nave between the Tomb of our Saviour and the Holy Table, there is a marked spot on the floor from which the whole world may be understood to be divided into four parts. The four parts or directions in themselves clearly reveal and proclaim the Holy Cross of Christ. This *axis mundi* shows us how the Death and the Resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ spread to, and affect the whole world. It also shows how the arms of the Cross of Christ embrace and bless the whole world as they stretch out and encircle the globe in all four directions.

Granting our request in the prayers preparing for confession, the Lord helps us to learn to repent constantly. This is the extremity of love and forgiveness that we have to grow up to and into. Growing up into this love is not something that we can make ourselves do. There is no technique for this. Nevertheless, if we do not grow up into His love, neither will we be able truly and completely to forgive. What seems to be popularly understood as forgiveness is not in fact forgiveness, but rather, "biting the bullet" and "burying the hatchet". The poison remains in the heart. This is why the popular saying : "forgive and forget" is false. Forgiveness does not at all imply forgetting. In fact, we probably cannot but remember. If we do not remember, it is usually because we hide and insulate ourselves from the pain and poison that go with remembering. However, the manner in which we remember can be healed by our Saviour, and this comes as a fruit of forgiving. Our Saviour's love alone enables true and complete forgiveness, and His love alone enables the cleansing of poisonous memories. The painful

memory is to be brought to our Saviour for healing, sometimes many times over. For the most part, this healing comes simply through daily living a Christian life : a life that is constantly referring to our Saviour, asking Him to be present in my joy, in my sorrow, in my strong moments, in my difficult moments. It is a life in which, at every moment, we are asking Him to bless what is happening during every moment of our life. We must remember to invoke Him, to call Him into our midst at all times. The more we do this, the more we allow Him to work in our hearts, the more we allow Him to heal our hearts, the more we are then enabled to have a positive way of communicating as human beings. The Lord is the Giver of life and love. He multiplies both in us. The more our Lord's love heals our pain and our painful memories, the more we are enabled to pray in purity of heart for those who consider themselves to be our enemy. He multiplies His life and His love in us so that we become more and more like Him.

Archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov), in his book recently published in Russian, English and eight other languages, relates an event from the life of the famous Elder John (Krestiankin) (†2006) of the Pskov Caves Monastery, who had been arrested and was being tortured by the Soviet secret police in the Lubyanka prison in Moscow for about a year while awaiting trial. He had been denounced to the KGB by the main priest of the church in which he had served. To break his will, the police interrogator set up a confrontation between him and this particular priest. Father John was aware of the betrayal.

> But when the head priest came into the room, Father John was so glad to see his brother and fellow priest, with whom he had so often performed the Divine Liturgy, that he simply threw his arms around him! The head priest quivered in the embrace of Father John, and promptly fainted. The confrontation did not work out as planned at all (Everyday Saints and Other Stories, p. 39).

It is necessary that we keep in mind the apostolic witness, including their descendants, the bishops. In recalling this witness, we must never forget that the apostles were ordinary human beings with ordinary human weaknesses, for which our Lord compensated. He healed their weaknesses, and replaced the weakness with His strength, just as He said He would (see 2 Corinthians 12:9). He does this to this day with the bishops, and with us all.

To elaborate and to explain further about weaknesses, we can consider the simple daily temptation into which we all sometimes fall : condemning the other in thought and/or word. The daily habit that concerns us here is the almost robot-like readiness we exhibit in making our first assessment of other persons a negative one. The Apostle James gives this warning :

> *My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgement. For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell* (James 3:1-6).

One of the reasons that the whole world is in a mess is because of the negative consequences of the misuse of the tongue. When we are encountering such a formidable exhortation as this by

the Apostle James, we also remember how easy it is for us to feel that we have become bound by evil, anger, rebellion, unforgiveness and the like, particularly when we have been mistreated in one or another manner. It is too easy to feel without hope, because we feel even enslaved by one or another passion, and particularly by those arising as a result of mistreatment. We can speak carelessly, neglecting our own responsibility for our spiritual health. Such mis-speaking can arise from a sort of reflex reaction in a situation. However, it is necessary to remember that feeling bound is primarily the result of the action of fear that goes with being mistreated, and with the passions. Being aware of the danger of falling into this mis-speaking (which reveals the presence of wounds not yet healed), the words which are read at every service of Vespers, and in a special hymn at the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, are significant and important :

> *O Lord, set a guard on my mouth, and a fortified door around my lips. Do not incline my heart away to words of evil, to make excuses for sins, along with Men working lawlessness ; and I shall not join in with their chosen ones* (Psalm 140:3-4).

It is our Saviour's love which casts out all fear, and which sets us free from all fear and from all bondage (see 1 John 4:18). That is why our Lord says to us the following :

> '*And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven*' (Matthew 16:19).

> '*Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven*' (Matthew 18:18).

Our Lord so kindly gives this assurance to us twice in this Gospel so that we have hope of remembering His words (see also John 20:23). He has given this authority to bind and to loose to the apostles and to their successors, the bishops, it is true.

It is the responsibility of the high-priests and their assistants, the priests, to free Christ's sheep from the bonds that confine them and block them. These words about loosing and binding are repeated in the Mystery (Sacrament) of Confession in order to help us to remember, and to be confident. However, this binding-and-loosing still remains directly connected with repentance. Loosing of bonds requires repentance, because without it (and without readiness also to forgive), we keep ourselves tied with those bonds. Binding-and-loosing is related to our Saviour's words about the "Our Father" as previously cited from Matthew 6:14-15 ; and this binding-and-loosing is also reflected in the Resurrection of Lazarus. As Lazarus comes from the tomb at His command, our Saviour then says : "'*Loose him, and let him go*'" (John 11:44). Our Saviour directs that Lazarus be released from the wrappings of the grave and death, but he is also loosed from sins in a graphic manner that we do well to remember. When we are forgiven, we are truly released. The bindings of Lazarus are visible signs of the bindings with which we are held in sin. This release gives Lazarus new life in every way. If we are feeling bound by the unforgiveness of someone else, then it is possible to turn to our Saviour, and to ask that He unbind us and release us as He directed the release of Lazarus. This is not some simple escape from any possible responsibility for our sinful thoughts, words and deeds, or an excuse for remaining unforgiving. In Christ's love I will pray for and bless those who hate me or will not forgive me. True forgiveness is our Saviour's to give, whether a human being will or will not co-operate. This is why we have the hope to be able to turn to Him on those occasions when we do not have any desire to forgive. We ask Him to give us the desire and the ability. In time, because

we are asking, we will be enabled to co-operate with Him, and in due time, we will have from Him the will to forgive.

Do I truly turn to Christ, and do I freely accept all His forgiveness and His freedom ? Or do I keep holding on to fear, and thus keep being bound because I will not let go of the fear ? The authority to break bonds, to set free, is given to the successors of the apostles. However, it does not run rough-shod over our will. We all must be asking the Lord to help us to receive and to keep receiving this release, so that we do not fall back into our old habits. Although it seems sometimes impossible to let go of fear, the apparent impossibility is because of the prevalence of the lie that the fear is indeed powerful (which it is not). It is through our constant calling to our Lord for help, just as the Apostle Peter called for help on the water (see Matthew 14:22-33), that we will be able in time to let go of fear because we have at last and firmly taken hold of our Lord's out-stretched hand. As Lazarus was released, so our Saviour can release us.

Judging usually carries a connotation of condemnation. Judging can mean something much fairer, and more in line with God's truth, but few of us have a heart well-enough in harmony with the Lord for this. Rather, condemnation is the usual reaction. This condemnation is almost a reflex reaction for us, by thought, or word, or both (typical reactions while driving in traffic are good indicators of this). However, for us, it is in this that the intensity of spiritual struggle lies. It is here that the bishop will have to be very careful indeed, because in this tendency that we all have to make an instant negative assessment of the other are the seeds of evil, division and other troubles. Condemnatory judging has the immediate effect of alienating myself from the Lord, from the other person, and in fact from creation. Simply stated, if I or we condemn, we alienate ourselves from God's love and from His life that comes to us through the community of the Church, the Body of Christ. We are well-reminded of this constantly as we pray the Prayer of Saint Ephrem the Syrian (†373), which is prayed very often during Great Lent:

> O Lord and Master of my life, give me not the spirit of sloth, busyness [or "meddling", or "officiousness", or "despondency"], lust for power and idle talk ; but rather, favour Your servant with the spirit of soberness ["whole-mindedness", or "whole-wisdomedness"], lowliness, endurance and love. Yes, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own falls, and not to condemn my brother, for blessed are You, unto the ages of ages. Amen (Psalter according to the Seventy, p. 465).

In prayers such as this, as we face the daily, hour-by-hour tests, we are enabled to determine to be faithful to Him who is the Truth, and to accept and to think and to speak only the truth, and in love. If we fall into the temptation to express negative things verbally and without prayerful consideration, we fall into the trap from below, and we give expression to what the Apostle James writes about. That is why regular, frequent (even daily) confession is so important, necessary and life-giving. It expresses and enables our constant repentance. We have our Saviour's words about this :

> '*Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgement you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you*' (Matthew 7:1-2).

Since bishops are, indeed, teachers, these words are of great significance to each bishop, and to each one of us. It is the bishop's responsibility both to teach with these words of our Saviour, and also to do them. It is likewise the responsibility of each Christian person both to speak of these words, and to live in accordance with them.

Indeed, if I am judging (usually understood as condemning) someone else, not only am I not forgiving that person, but I also find myself accusing myself of the same sin or sins (see pp. 266-267). The Apostle makes sure that we understand this point :

> *Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things* (Romans 2:1).

> *Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand* (Romans 14:4).

In these days of rampant internet gossip, slander and voyeurism, Saint John Chrysostom gives us good, well-seasoned words to consider :

> Not only do I now admonish the evil-speakers ; but those besides, who hear others ill-spoken-of, I exhort to stop up their ears, and to imitate the prophet who says, '*The one secretly speaking against his neighbour : this one I was chasing out*' [Psalm 100:5]. Say to your neighbour, 'Have you anyone to praise or highly to commend ? I open my ears to receive the fragrant oil. But if you have any evil to say, I block up the entrance to your words, for I am not going to admit dung and dirt. What does it profit me to learn that such a one is a bad man ? The greatest injury indeed results from this, and the worst loss !' Say to him, 'Let us be anxious about our own falls, and how we may give an account of our own transgressions ; and let us exhibit this sort of curiosity and meddlesome activity concerning our own lives. What excuse or pardon shall we find, whilst we never even take into consideration our own matters, but thus inquisitively pry into those of others !' And as it is base and extremely disgraceful to peer into a house and to observe what is within as one passes, so, also, to make an inquisition into another person's life is the last degree of crudeness. [Saint John goes on to say that the one who began to spread speculative results under the pretext of sharing a confidence then exhorts the hearer to say nothing. This action is itself worthy of censure. He pointedly says that if there is some matter of confidence, it is better to keep it so.] [...] It is sweet not to speak evil. For he that has spoken evil is henceforth contentious ; he is suspicious and he fears, repents, and gnaws his own tongue. He is timorous and trembling, lest at any time what he said should be carried to others, and bring great peril, and useless and needless enmity, upon the sayer. But he who keeps the matter to himself, will spend his days in safety, with much pleasantness. We read, '*Have you heard a word? Let it die with you. Take courage; it will not burst you*' [Wisdom of Sirach 19:10]. Extinguish it ; bury it ; neither permit it to go forth, nor even to move at all ; but, as the best course, be careful not to tolerate others in the practice of evil-speaking. [...] Then, beloved, let us flee slander, knowing that it is the very gulf of Satan, and the place where he lurks with his snares. For in order that we may be careless of our own state, and that we may thus render our account heavier, the devil leads us into this habit. But more than this, it is not only a very serious matter, that we shall hereafter have to give an account of what we have spoken, but that we shall make our own offences the heavier by these means ("Homily 3 Concerning the Statues").

Amidst all this difficulty that we have in forgetting to forgive and in being quick to condemn, we can easily feel exasperated and hopeless about our own behaviours. However, our Saviour is constantly showing us how to cope with these weaknesses. Through the following apostolic words, we can find considerable hope and encouragement in order to keep persevering in Christ :

> *And above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins'* [see Proverbs 10:13]. *Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God* (1 Peter 4:8-10).

It is not for us to expose the wrongs of others. This exposes their nakedness before others, and the shame then comes upon us (see 1 Moses 9:21-25 ; 3 Moses 18:7). This exposing of nakedness here is not to be taken literally. Nevertheless, the metaphorical exposing of the other can make that person feel quite naked indeed. Each person makes a personal confession before the Lord. We do not confess the sins of the other to the Lord, nor are we to gossip about what we perceive to be the sins of others.

We have to learn again how properly to pray in harmony with each other, in love with the Lord, together in harmony with Him. This means also that we have to learn how not to assess by externals only. The Lord knows the hearts of each and all (see 1 Kingdoms 16:7). The Lord knows who is holy, and why. The story is told of a recent attempt in France to build a highway through a cemetery. This meant disinterring all the bodies in the right-of-way. One such was discovered by his vestments to be an Orthodox priest. His body was incorrupt. When the coffin was being opened, there was a danger that the body would fall, and a workman put his hand on the body to keep it from falling. People were asked about the priest's life, but they could not recall anything about him that was in any way remarkable, although it was known that his wife had left him, and that his daughter was an unmarried mother. Yet, the Lord gave the sign that he is remarkable to Him, that he is holy. His body was transferred to the Cathedral in Paris, and after 25 years the coffin was again opened. The body remained incorrupt, except for the place of the hand-print where the workman had previously put his hand.

What is the meaning of the signs that occur, such as the one just recounted ? Simply, the signs are the fruits of lives lived in forgiveness. What is behind the exhortation of our Saviour in Matthew 7:1-2, which we considered not long before this ? The words are about living in forgiveness. What is the meaning of what immediately follows those words ?

> '*And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me remove the speck from your eye"; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye*' (Matthew 7:3-5).

We are being very bluntly told that the grudge and our Saviour Jesus Christ are incompatible. The Lord says to us that it is essential for us to forgive those against whom we have something, and to forgive anyone who hurts us. It is essential to forgive anyone and everyone about everything, because He says (as it were) : If you will not forgive people who hurt you, then I will not forgive you when you ask Me to forgive you (see Mark 11:26). On the basis of this, Saint Ignatius takes care to remind us :

> Let not one of you hold a grudge against your neighbour ("Letter to the Trallians", 8).

If we have not already experienced the Lord's forgiveness for us, and allowed His forgiveness to cleanse and heal us, forgiveness is difficult to extend to others. When people mistakenly use the term : "forgive yourself", what is really to be understood is that we are to accept and receive and

affirm and co-operate with the Lord's forgiveness and, in a way, to become forgiveness. We are accepting and living out the Lord's forgiveness. This is best experienced in the context of sacramental confession and reconciliation with our Lord. When we are living in the full, life-giving, joyful, liberating experience of His forgiveness, we can readily give it to others. It can spring up in us from our hearts, much as from an artesian well, similar to our Saviour's words to the Samaritan Woman about living water (see John 4:14). Unless we are constantly vigilant about living in forgiveness, the consequences are terrible. In fact, in not forgiving, we ourselves become what we do not forgive. We become a grudge. We become a grumble. We become a murmur. We become resentment. We become anger. We become violence. The British authors George MacDonald and C S Lewis address this accurately in their writings.

The foundation of all our Christian life is rooted in this forgiveness, as may be seen later in this section in the example of Saint Dionysius of Zakynthos (see pp. 222-223). It is crucially important for us all to be paying attention to our lives every day, to be listening to our hearts every day, to see whether there is someone or something that is not forgiven. If our non-forgiveness continues to sow poison in our hearts, it persists in paralysing our lives. It keeps on hurting other people, too, because it clouds our judgement. Non-forgiveness could be called "a well of anger". It clouds and distorts our reactions to other people when they are inter-relating with us. It poisons everything.

Even if there is only one person or one situation in our lives that remains unforgiven, it still can make everything else foggy and messy. It is crucial that even if we do nothing else great in our lives, we nevertheless find the way in our lives, in harmony with the Lord, to forgive everyone for everything. Our Lord Himself demonstrates to us that forgiveness is not simply expected of us. He shows us that forgiveness is mandatory. Our Saviour also lets us understand clearly that in Him it is possible. In the following dialogue with the Apostle Peter, He first reveals to us what is possible in the forgiveness that comes with His love. If we agree together, knowing together that our Lord's will is such-and-such, then it will be done, says our Saviour. Just after this, through His words to this apostle, our Lord shows the extent to which we are able in Him to forgive. Indeed, in Him we are enabled to forgive without end. These following words are the source of the prayer by Saint John Chrysostom before the Third Antiphon of the Divine Liturgy :

> '*Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.' Then Peter came to Him and said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven*' (Matthew 18:19-22).

When our Saviour says to the Apostle Peter that we should forgive 490 times, this can seem to be an unreachably high number to a person who has difficulty in forgiving. However, our Saviour very clearly is saying more than just this. He is saying that there is no limit to forgiving, nor to the need to forgive :

> *'Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day*

returns to you, saying, "I repent," you shall forgive him.' And the apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith' (Luke 17:3-5).

This response of the apostles is certainly also our response as we hear these words. When our Saviour gives these numbers (Matthew 18:22 ; Luke 17:4), He means that the forgiveness we give is to be without end, infinite. We cannot do this alone. However, in and with Christ, we can, because He is the source of all forgiveness. He is the source of our ability to forgive anyone or anything.

When we do, in the Lord, forgive everyone everything, we finally become free. We become truly free. We become free to be our real selves in Christ. We find our real selves in a loving relationship with the real Lord. We exercise this real self in real loving relationships with human beings, and with creation, in real, healthy, loving relationships that are all full of selfless love. The fog is dispersed. We can see clearly. The darkness is dispersed. We, who were blind, are now able to see. Father Dumitru Staniloae sheds light on this :

> The refusal to grant forgiveness or to ask for it keeps our soul in a state of rigidity. If we retain the memory of a wrong done to us, it lodges in us as an impurity; it festers in us continually and its loathsome smell pervades our whole being. The false lights or shadows of this poisonous matter obstruct our vision and we cannot look at the other with purity. In this situation we cannot love the other; neither can the other love us. Only sincere forgiveness can expel this intruder from our soul and cast out the beam from our eye. Only so can we receive God's loving forgiveness.
>
> In this living family [the Church] infirmities are always apparent, but they are overcome, washed away in the ocean of mutual love between the members. All commit sin, but all contribute to the work of purification; by asking for forgiveness, by granting forgiveness, through their common interchange of prayer for the forgiveness of all. Sin is never allowed to harden into a permanent state. [...] Sin is dissolved by the ceaseless waves of forgiveness, of prayer, of love, which the Holy Spirit sets in motion (Prayer and Holiness, pp. 24, 26, 27).

Sometimes unforgiveness comes from the powers of darkness as an invader, as Father Dumitru suggests.

Forgiveness is an absolute requirement. How do we do this ? Saint Silouan of Mount Athos has told us how to do this simply. It is done by saying over and over and over again this simple prayer, "Lord have mercy" for any person, or any situation, or anything that requires forgiveness. When we are saying : "Lord have mercy", or the whole "Jesus Prayer", saying these words is actually repeating a summary of the whole Gospel, as Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov) notes in his book On Prayer. He tells us that in this prayer we are confessing that the Lord is God. In this prayer we are also asking Him to have mercy on ourselves, and on a particular person, or a situation, on everyone, on everything, on whomever or whatever we are concerned about. When we are saying : "Have mercy", we are not saying to Him : "Spare us from Your wrath" (which is what we usually think that this means in English). "Mercy", rather, carries a meaning which is more like "compassion". This sense of compassion is what we English-speaking people need to recover in our use of "mercy" in our language. Although others say differently, I prefer to understand that the word "mercy" comes from the Latin word *misericordia*. Psalms 50, 55 and 56 begin in Latin with "*Miserere mei, Deus*", which is always translated, "Have mercy on me, O God". The French language still has and uses the word

miséricorde. Other languages, too, have this understanding of the Lord's love and compassion embedded in the word that they are using in this prayer. For example, in Greek they say, "*Kyrie eleison*". In this ἐλέησον, *eleison*, in Greek (and in Coptic), the request is that the Lord pour out the oil of His love on me, on the other person, on the situation. The root word for "oil", ἔλαιον, *elaion*, is involved in the word *eleison* (see Psalm 22). I have come to understand that you can also find the same sort of concept in the Slavonic *pomilui* or in the Romanian *milueşte*.

There are other important concepts to recall in this association with oil and anointing. As we may expect, oil is applied for healing the body, but it is also applied for healing the spirit through enabling forgiveness. It is also applied to persons to confirm and enable them in their responsibilities. It is applied to those entering the Body of Christ, first through the oil of the catechumenate, and then in Holy Baptism with the oil of Chrism. It is applied to persons such as monarchs, in order to enable their personal authority. The oil of Chrism is applied to penitents as a part of the reconciliation in repentance of those who have been estranged from the Church. On Great and Holy Thursday, the oil of Chrism is blessed annually in each local Church by the bishop who is at the head of this Church (usually together with other bishops) and then distributed to all the other bishops for use in their dioceses and parishes.

In this context of mercy and oil, these memorably significant words spring to our hearts :

> *The Lord shepherds me, and nothing shall be lacking to me. In a place of green pasture, there He has pitched my tent. By restful water He brought me up from childhood. He turned my soul about ; He led me on the way on the paths of righteousness, for the sake of His Name. Even if I were to walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I shall not fear bad things, for it is You that are with me : Your rod and Your staff — it is they that have consoled me. You prepared a table before my face, opposite those afflicting me. You dressed my head with oil, and Your cup which inebriates me, how greatly excellent it is. Your mercy shall closely pursue me all the days of my life, and my dwelling shall be in the house of the Lord for length of days* (Psalm 22).

I well remember that, in my early childhood, all the students were required to commit to heart this psalm (even if it was in the King James translation). In stark contrast to the present day, one of the places in which I had to be ready to recite this psalm (besides Church School) was the public school I attended (I believe I was in Grade 6). How much things have changed since those days. This particular psalm is given here in full, as words suitable to be a main guide for our life together. The particular verse on which I am focussing now is : "*You prepared a table before my face, opposite those afflicting me*" (Psalm 22:5). These words both prepare for, and complement the words of the "Our Father" regarding the importance of forgiveness. As we consider these things, it is very necessary that we recall that the psalm is written in the first person.

The words are, indeed, radical, and what they express is radical. In complete harmony with our Lord and His love, we are saying that the state of our readiness to forgive is such that we consider no-one at all to be an enemy. I am sitting at this table, together with and facing those perceiving themselves to be my enemies. I am sitting there already having forgiven them. We can just as well understand that the enemy could sometimes be only one person. Others may perceive themselves to be enemies towards us, but we, in Christ, are determined to live in forgiveness to such an extent that, with the martyrs, we can forgive even those who may kill us. In such a disposition, it is implied that those "*before my face*" and "*afflicting me*" are nevertheless

seated at the same table. Since they are seated at this same table with us (and facing us), we may be perceived by them as being a taunt, because in our heart we have already forgiven them and embraced them. If we are to them such a taunt, then our very being is a provocation to them because they are not ready to respond in kind. Such radical forgiveness can provoke shame or pain in such enemies who are not ready to reciprocate. Nevertheless, it is I, who personally face the afflicter, and I do so with complete forgiveness in my heart. By doing so, a door can be opened for the afflicter to come also to forgiveness and reconciliation.

We recall the clear example of the Proto-martyr, the Archdeacon Stephen. To His accusers, He explains Who is Jesus Christ in the context of those who foretold His coming amongst us, offering them spiritual and life-giving food, just as we often hear or encounter in reading the lives of subsequent martyrs. However, here is their violent reaction, and the archdeacon's Christian response to that :

> *And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not charge them with this sin.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep* (Acts 7:59-60).

So it is that (completely contrary to the way of the fallen world) we could sit down at table to eat; and across from us at the same table are those who are afflicting us, or who would oppress us. This sort of radical forgiveness through love, Christ's love, is what truly does characterise us Orthodox Christians when we live in Christ's law of love ; it is an integral part of the words of the "Our Father" : "*forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors*". Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov) affirms :

> I believe that in his writings Blessed Staretz Silouan, a faithful son of the Church, has provided us with the latest and most trustworthy criterion of truth in the Church — *Christ-like love for our enemies and Christ-like humility* (Saint Silouan the Athonite, pp. 89-90).

Archimandrite Zacharias (Zacharou) sheds further light on our understanding of forgiveness in these words :

> In Greek, forgiveness, *synchoresis*, means to be contained together in the heart. This comes from the word *synchorō*, which is made up of the verb *chorō*, meaning to occupy a space or place, and the prefix *syn*, which simply means together; and so *synchoresis* conveys the notion of being together in the same place, that is to say, in the heart (The Enlargement of the Heart, p. 12).

It will be possible in Christ for each and every one of us to accomplish all the work that must be done in building Christ's Church, His Body, wherever we are, only if we take seriously this imperative of forgiveness, and the practical application of Christ's self-emptying love. When we are living fully in forgiveness, then we have in our hearts those who afflict us (see Psalm 22). Those who perceive themselves to be our enemies are in our hearts because of Christ's self-emptying love. We forgive them, and we are at enmity with no-one.

The following two paragraphs come to us as a gift, as it were, from Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of blessed memory. They are from a sermon given in 1980 :

> Immediately after the war a German newspaper published a deeply moving document: the copy of a prayer found in a concentration camp, written on a torn scrap of wrapping paper. Briefly this was the essence of the prayer: 'Lord, when You come to judge the

> quick and the dead, remember not only the men of good will but those of evil will. But in that day let it not be their violence and cruelty that You remember, but those fruits of forgiveness, of companionship, of greatness of soul that we have borne because of the sufferings that they inflicted on us, and let these fruits be their pardon!' '"*Father, forgive them, for they do know not what they do*"' [Luke 23:34]. [...]
>
> All of us, at every moment, can take upon ourselves the cross of forgiveness. In all our human relationships, at every moment, our heart shrinks and we withdraw from our neighbour because he has wounded us, offended us, forgotten us, rejected us. We are free to open ourselves and to offer ourselves. At the very moment that we are innocent victims, we receive from God that power which is properly divine, of pardoning in His name. And the pardon does not begin at the moment when the suffering ceases, and little by little is forgotten. Pardon begins at the moment when the victim of injustice or violence turns to the aggressor and says: 'I accept you as you are. I accept you as a danger of death. I accept you as a projection of hatred, and I take you up as Christ took up His cross, the instrument of suffering and death, and I will carry you to the end!' It is there that forgiveness begins ("Sermon on the Prayer of Intercession". See pp. 253 ff).

Christ's love affects and influences every aspect of our lives. Forgiveness, then, is already present and active in us long before it is needed to be applied with regard to a particular person, situation or event. This manner of living in Christ's love and forgiveness (and having no enemies) is far from easy. It cannot be arrived at quickly. However, it is when we enter this way of Christ's love that we begin to live in the world in the manner of yeast and salt (see Matthew 13:33 ; 5:13). As we live in the world like this, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we act together with Christ as His transforming and transfiguring agents. We come to know that it is our responsibility to take steps, little by little, to offer our lives, our whole lives, to Christ. When we invite Him to form us in this way, the act of unifying our wills with His Will enables us to grow up into the full stature of Christ (see Ephesians 4:13), to recognise our gifts in the Lord and to comprehend the purpose of our lives.

If we comprehend our responsibilities as co-workers with Christ in this world ; if we hope to fulfil our responsibilities towards our neighbour in just the way our Saviour showed by example and by parable, then this manner of living in His way must become ours. We cannot love our neighbour properly without this love, Christ's love. We cannot even see who is our neighbour, unless our eyes are opened in this love, Christ's love. We cannot be our true selves unless we are on this path, and in this love, Christ's love. We cannot bring life and healing to our neighbour (including all aspects of physical healing) unless we are on this path, and in this love, Christ's love. Unless everything we do is undertaken together with, and in constant consultation in our hearts with Christ, we do things on our own, and quickly weaken, and fall away. In our hearts, we consult Christ. As it were, we talk things through with Him in order to understand His will. Concerning everything in life, it must always be our Saviour who is working in and through us. This statement may be perceived as platitudinous, but it is, nevertheless, the plain fact of our life as Christians.

Our life as Christians is not simply "niceness", "sugar-and-cream", or "sweetness and light". The way of following Christ involves pain. Our Saviour suffered and suffers in love. Love is and must be vulnerable. Therefore, there is always pain with this love. Indeed, the pain in this Christ-like love often does not come from those who are remote, but from those who are near, sometimes very near. That makes the challenge of loving much sharper, of course. It is in living in vulnerable love, and in suffering pain from even those closest to us, that we follow our

Saviour. I had the blessing to have a brief conversation with Archimandrite Arsenie (Papacioc) (†2011) not long before his repose, in the Monastery of the *Theotokos* in Techirghiol, Romania. He firmly reminded me that in Christ's love, suffering precedes joy, just as the Cross precedes the Resurrection. It is one thing to know this truth. It is another thing to have such an inspired person apply it directly to my life. He did this after about ten minutes of talking through a translator, but not having discussed any particular details about my life. I have come to understand much more than I first anticipated about these wise words from the Lord through him. Most importantly, they express the fundamental reality that true Christian love involves being vulnerable and being able to suffer. The normal Christian life which enables this true Christian love is formed by daily prayer, by reading the Scriptures, by frequent confession, by frequent receiving of the Holy Mysteries, by reading lives of holy persons, and by knowing living holy persons. All these and more form us and heal us. It is the Lord who does this forming and healing, and it is to Him that we offer our hearts in deliberate co-operation. It is our Saviour who enables us to pass with Him through the Cross to the Resurrection.

Returning to the consideration of the nature of mercy, progress in baptising our language is also part and parcel of the bishop's responsibility. Part of this progress will come in our proper using of this word "mercy". If we want to ask God to spare us, we can say : "Spare us". When we ask Him to have mercy, we have to mean that we are asking the Lord to pour out His compassion, the oil of His love, on me and on the other person. Saint Silouan said (as did Archimandrite Sophrony) that when we are doing this, we are capable of making no judgement whatsoever about the situation – we do not condemn the other person, and we do not say bad things about ourselves. In the Parable of the Sower, our Saviour shows what is our proper attitude :

> *Another parable He put forth to them, saying: 'The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, "Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?" He said to them, "An enemy has done this." The servants said to him, "Do you want us then to go and gather them up?" But he said, "No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn'"'* (Matthew 13:24-30).

> *Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.' He answered and said to them: 'He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world; the good seeds are the sons of the Kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!'* (Matthew 13:36-43)

The foundation of this parable is the understanding that our heavenly Father creates everything and everyone from His love, and that He patiently waits for the evil and unrighteous to relent and to return to Him :

> '[...] *for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust*' (Matthew 5:45).

In all these references, I am referring in particular to the necessity of forgiveness. However, as we have seen, it is not always immediately obvious to us what in us (or in the other person) is a good plant, and what is a weed. Therefore, when we acknowledge our own falls, we must be careful to be aware of what is the truth about these falls. There is something about the permission of allowing the wheat and the weeds to continue to grow together which applies to our own lives. In time, with the Lord's merciful moving in our hearts, it will become clear to us what is truly in harmony with the Lord, and what is amiss. It will also become truly clear to us how we have erred. Also, it will become clear what has been sent to us from below as a "weed" to distort our self-perception and to cause us to accuse ourselves falsely. In time, we can learn to distinguish between what is good and what is not good in an honest way. Then we can also distinguish between real sins on our part and those which are false accusations. Calling ourselves bad names (that is, accusing ourselves falsely) is not something originating within ourselves. Most often, this is a sign that we have accepted as true what is actually a lie about ourselves. We have heard these slurs somewhere else, and we appropriated them : we believed them and accepted them as truth. Stopping this name-calling, stopping this co-operation with the lie defeats the enemy of our race (the devil) by stopping him from tearing us down, tearing us up, tearing us apart. This process can take some time (because of habit). It nevertheless takes us away from the deadly habit of self-condemnation, and the empty space left behind can then be filled with Himself and with loving affirmations. It is crucial that we ask our Saviour to fill the empty space with Himself. We remember what He, Himself, has said to us (which is an application of the scientific principle that a vacuum demands to be filled) :

> '*When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, "I will return to my house from which I came." And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation*' (Matthew 12:43-45 ; see Luke 11:24-26).

To avoid this catastrophe, it is crucial that we deliberately appropriate Christ's truth and truthful affirmations to ourselves. In actively co-operating with Christ's light and truth within us, we enable Him to overcome the lie, to re-plant and refresh the truth within our hearts. We co-operate with Him as He restores us to the state in which we were created and given life, in unity with Him.

When we are saying : "Lord have mercy", we are acknowledging that we are in need of the Lord's love, compassion and healing. We are asking that He do exactly that : that He be His loving, healing Self to us all. Saint Silouan and Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov) say that when this prayer passes through us to the other person, it passes through our heart, and opens our heart to this very mercy from the Lord. It enables the other person to have some possibility freely to accept (or not to accept) the same mercy. The Lord does not force Himself on us.

However, this prayer, *Kyrie eleison*, enables the possibility that both I and the other may receive Him. My own reception can open in the other person a door to a greater possibility to forgive.

People are finding over and over again that when, with this attitude, they are saying this short and effective prayer, the poison from a painful situation is removed from their own heart. This happens even though there may not be such a big change in the other person or the situation (because sometimes one cannot change the situation). The Lord takes the poison out of the situation in the past that is so painful. He also takes away the poison that was in the memory of the wrongdoing by another person. The more we say this prayer, the more He extracts the poison, so that the pain and the death sown in our hearts by the anger and the bitterness that we sometimes feel towards other people is dissipated. Finally, it is taken away altogether, so that there is no remaining poison. I may be able to remember the event, but it no longer poisons me ; it has no power over me. I can remember the wrong, but it no longer poisons me ; it has no power over me. Instead, I feel compassion for the person who wronged me. When I come to the point of remembering a situation, a person, an event or whatever, and it no longer habitually stirs up this anger, no longer stirs up this disturbance or depression or darkness or whatever else, then I know that I have actually, with God's mercy, been able to forgive. I have been able to forgive because the Lord has listened to me, and I have listened to Him. His love has healed my heart, healed my memory, and freed me to become the person He created me to become. I now know better how truly to give thanks.

Sometimes, when there is something particularly painful and particularly stubborn in our lives, it and the accompanying pain do not easily or quickly go away. It is imperative that we offer this pain and suffering repeatedly to the Lord. It is very fruitful and beneficial to supplement our supplication by taking holy water, and by anointing with oil, through which the Lord does convey His healing love to our souls and bodies. The Lord gives us the tangible reassurances and sacraments because He does love us. It is not His will that we should be stumbling about, sick and crippled all our lives. He wants us to be healthy in every way. We can only become so by constantly looking towards our Lord and Saviour :

> [...] *so our eyes are towards the Lord our God, until He have compassion on us. Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us ; for we have been much filled with contempt* (Psalm 122:2-3).

In our looking towards the Lord, it is, in fact, crucial that we ask Him to give us anew His Grace and the outpouring of His love, so that we will be able to take courage, and apply this basic, little prayer that He has given us : *Kyrie eleison* ; Lord, have mercy ; *Doamne miluieşte* ; *Seigneur, sois miséricordieux ; Gospodi, pomilui*. Through this simple prayer, we let the Lord heal our hearts and keep our hearts always healed, whole, and in clear, unblocked, loving communion with Him. Therefore, being co-workers with Him, we will be able to glorify Him in everything that we think, do and say in our lives.

Forgiveness is not a choice that we dare to neglect if we are to follow Christ. As with most parts of our life, time is required to accomplish this progress to health. It can truly take a long time for deep and thorough forgiveness to penetrate our hearts, since the pain can be very intense, indeed. When we are praying for the one who has hurt us, the memory of the injury brings back also the experience of the pain. For some, because of the nature of the injury, the pain can be excruciating. Some are tempted to give up because of that pain, but this only allows

the pain and the injury to return to the hiding-place and continue to fester and spread poison. We must persevere with God's help. Although this daily intercession may feel like a daily martyrdom, it remains necessary to be vigilant about our thoughts, and to hold on tightly to the consciousness and awareness of God's infinite and immediate love for us. As did the Apostle Peter on the water, so we must take hold firmly of our Saviour's out-stretched hand (see p. 211). He is the source of our courage. As we persevere with His help and the support of the Mother of God, this painful process will, in time, be understood to have been cleaning and healing wounds through a life-giving cauterisation. The Lord's cauterisation does not kill. It heals, and it renews life. It is through the long process of loving intercession that both I and the other can come in time to healing and health in Christ. Years of interceding for the other may be required, all the while pleading with the Lord that He give the strength and perseverance necessary to continue. This intercession does not, of course, cease when we finally see that the Lord has brought us to being able to forgive, because we then continue to intercede out of love. Because of this, it becomes even more possible to continue in such intercession. It has already become a long-standing and stable habit. In my exposure to the lives of Christians (and particularly as I have understood the lives of Saint Silouan and Archimandrite Sophrony), I know that I have seen the actual fruits of lives lived in continuous intercession and forgiveness. Constant and continuous prayer for all those around, for the world and for creation, does indeed bring life and healing from our Lord through us to all His creatures.

Saint Dionysius of Zakynthos (†1622) can serve as an excellent example for us, since his disposition in life has caused him to be given this epithet : the "Saint of Forgiveness". Saint Dionysius was a well-educated man, who became a priest-monk, and who was ordained to be the Archbishop of Ægina and Poros. A year later he returned, nevertheless, to his native island Zakynthos, where he founded a monastery and served as its abbot. It is well known that one night a man arrived at the doors of his monastery, and demanded to make his confession at that moment. Saint Dionysius took him to the church ; and there and then he confessed, and he was forgiven. A mob came in search of the man, and they beat on the doors of the monastery. Saint Dionyisius spoke to the mob, who asked if there were a murderer there. He replied that there was no murderer there, but that they might look elsewhere, up the road. He returned to the man and gave him different clothes and a small boat, and told him to go far, far away. The man had confessed that he had murdered Saint Dionysius' beloved brother. Saint Dionysius could have turned him over to the mob, but he chose radical forgiveness instead. In time, says local tradition, the man repented, and himself became a monk in the same monastery. From these events, we can clearly see that forgiveness is truly life-giving in ways beyond our usual comprehension or expectation. Saint Dionysius shows us how we can, in Christ and with Christ, forgive the most painful and repugnant things. One might say that Saint Dionysius had growing in his heart a tree of forgiveness, a tree watered by tears and the love of God, a tree whose fruits were always ripe, and ready to be picked at any moment. After his repose, his body was found incorrupt and fragrant, and also healing. It remains so on Zakynthos to this day.

There are many other things written elsewhere about this holy man which can serve for our encouragement to follow Christ. We have, for instance, the recent clear sign from the Lord that this way of radical forgiveness is our way, and that it is for us to follow in this way. The destruction in 2001 of the World Trade Centre buildings in New York City included the destruction of Saint Nicholas' Greek Orthodox Church beside them. After this destruction there were both winds and rains in this area. Nevertheless, there was found after these rains, resting

in the open, and no longer in its frame, a paper icon of Saint Dionysius of Zakynthos, which had been in this very Temple. It was completely dry and unharmed. This is poignant because nothing else was able to be found except for a partly-burnt Bible. This paper icon of Saint Dionysius remained whole and visible, to remind us of the absolute need to forgive all at all times, and to remind us that he is always readily approachable, ready to pray for us and to help us. Some people make the objection that the perpetrators did not ask for forgiveness. However, it is clearly shown by our Lord in His words, and in His own example in His passion, that there are no pre-conditions in forgiveness. He tells us that in His love we are deliberately to forgive our enemies, and deliberately to pray for them :

> '*You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy"* [see 3 Moses 19:18]. *But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect*' (Matthew 5:43-48).

Saint Nikolai (Velimirovič) provides the following words, including his own comments about how to live in accordance with our Saviour's exhortation :

> Saint Nilus of Mount Sinai [† *ca.* 430] writes: 'My son, always strive to be simple and kind. Do not have one thing in your heart and another thing on your tongue, for this is a ruse and a lie. Be truthful and not false, for falsehood is of the evil one. Do not return evil for evil, but if someone does you evil, forgive him, that God may also forgive you. If you are tormented by remembrance of wrongs, pray to God for that brother (the evildoer) with your whole heart, and the remembrance of evil thoughts will flee from you.'
>
> It is told how a young man decided to serve a very petulant elder, so that God would forgive him his own sins. He endured twelve years in this most tortuous service and went to God. A great spiritual father saw the soul of the young man in Paradise as he was praying to God for the evil elder: 'Lord, as You had mercy on me because of him, have mercy on him according to Your great goodness, and because of me, Your servant.' After forty days this petulant elder died and, again, that spiritual father saw the soul of that elder reposing in the Kingdom of Heaven. What beautiful and wondrous kindness this patient youth showed— in truth, miraculous (The Prologue, 28 July).

As we can see, monks, too, can be tempted and fall badly, and they can also be completely obedient in Christ's love and prevail in Him. The radical forgiveness of Christ and in Christ is approached only by regularly praying for the one who has caused the hurt (or who is perceived to have caused the hurt). It simply has to be this way, because if the person who caused the injury must first ask for forgiveness, an injured person could sometimes be waiting for several life-times for such an apology. Worse, it could never be true forgiveness because of the conditions that are inherent in that situation. The radical prayer of forgiveness is very simple. It is universal, because it can be used for every situation in life. It is praying with Christ. We know that He is with us, that the Holy Spirit is active in our prayer, that this prayer takes place in our inner Temple, and that the person for whom we pray is taken with us into that inner Temple of the heart. We may perceive that the person for whom we pray is covered in darkness.

However, in the heart, in the Holy Spirit, all darkness is dispelled. There, we can see the person as Christ sees him/her, in the light of His love. The prayer of forgiveness is simply praying, "Lord, have mercy" for each person who has caused pain willingly or unwillingly, in knowledge or in ignorance. In praying this prayer repeatedly, we invite the Lord to be with us, the abuser and the abused, and we invite Him to heal us and forgive us both. In due time, we discover that the Lord has been at work in our hearts and our souls, and we become aware that anger, rage, pain, sorrow, fear and resentment, and all their negative relatives, have melted away. It has been understood for millennia that harbouring resentment, anger and wrath in the heart encourages them to fester, and to manifest themselves in physical, emotional and spiritual diseases. The following words anticipate the words of our Saviour, and they clarify the seriousness of the absolute need to forgive :

> *Forgive a wrong done you by your neighbour; then your sins will be pardoned when you pray. Can a man preserve wrath against his neighbour and still seek healing from the Lord? Can he show no mercy toward a man like himself and still beg God for mercy for himself?* (Wisdom of Sirach 28:2-4)

I cannot merely will to forgive or make myself forgive. However, in the midst of pain and anger, I can ask the Lord to give me the heart to begin to be willing to consider forgiving. He can and does provide even the motivation and the strength to take the first step, and then the following steps.

Healing is to be found in praying for the enemy (which may be a passion or a spiritual force, not only a person) in the manner and spirit of the Beatitudes, and as distinguished from fighting or daring to pray against the enemy. So the wounded person has to be helped by the loving shepherds to come to this radical forgiveness. These Christ-loving shepherds must already have had in some manner their own experience of this forgiveness. The Elder Sergei gives us words of support in this work of prayer and forgiveness :

> Be unshakeable in anything that pertains to the Truth, but at the same time, show complete tolerance for people who sin or who are mistaken. Never judge anyone, and on the contrary, show goodness to those whom you wish to judge. Most importantly, never say to anyone, 'I am spiritual, and you are not.' Saying such a thing will always come back to us. [...]
>
> Pray for someone before telling them about prayer, and in your prayers you will discover what you should tell them and what you should not. [...]
>
> If we are having difficulties in our relationship with someone and we weren't directly the cause of the difficulties, if it was the other who mistreated us or maligned us, even so, we still are the ones who need to repent. We not only need to repent for the guilt which we share with the person we are having trouble with because of our negative attitude towards them, but also, and even more importantly, for the bad attitude and state that we have towards God. [...]
>
> Live one day at a time. Forget about what happened yesterday or in the past. Live each day as though it were your last (Elder Sergei of Vanves, pp. 134, 135, 136).

In His loving-kindness and mercy, our Saviour does not leave us to our own devices with regard to forgiving and being forgiven. He also gives us the blessing of the Sacrament (Mystery) of Reconciliation (Confession). Through our approaching this Mystery regularly, we are given

the opportunity to open ourselves to the Lord before a witness (that is, a priest or bishop). When we admit to the Lord our waywardness, and ask for help and for forgiveness, the Lord gives this to us through the prayer of forgiveness pronounced by the priest, and also through any words of counsel the priest himself may add. Through this Mystery we are, in a manner of speaking, reunited to our baptismal washing, and we are cleansed. The Mystery itself gives us the actualisation of our Saviour's forgiveness, and it gives us assurance that we can let all the bad things go away from us instead of our holding on to them. The Mystery of Confession and Forgiveness reunites us with the Church. Any sin can divide us in some manner from the Church. We must remember this detail. Forgiveness can begin the process of reconciliation with those whom we have offended or hurt, and those who have offended or hurt us, intentionally or unintentionally. The Mystery of Confession and Forgiveness purifies us once again, so that we may approach the Communion Cup (Chalice) with confidence, in love and gratitude for our Saviour's compassion poured out upon us. As we are united with Him, and He lives in us, our Lord enables us more and more to do works of compassion as He does.

12

The bishop as an example of Christian living and leadership

> O teacher of the truth, do not be afraid of repeating again and again; of teaching by repetition and reminding by repetition. Without repetition, the field is not ploughed, nor the road travelled, nor the plank prepared. That is your task: to plough, to lead, to prepare (The Prologue, 17 July).

These words of Saint Nikolai (Velimirovič) are directed to every arch-pastor, whose responsibility is to teach, and also to live in accordance with what he teaches. This teaching must be the Gospel. The arch-pastor is to "practice what he preaches" ; by his example he is to show the rational sheep that living the Christian life is indeed possible. His way of life and his leadership show the sheep where is the right path, and where is the life-giving food. It has been said by someone : "Preach the Gospel ; if necessary, use words". The Apostle exhorts us to pray for our leaders (our spiritual leaders in particular), so that they may lead well :

> *Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct* (Hebrews 13:7).

This means that as the arch-pastor gives the example, the faithful people respond to him. They approach their arch-pastor, reach out to him, get to know him. In doing so, they can experience first-hand that the Christian way is indeed possible. The sheep have confidence to approach the shepherd because the shepherd has already reached out to them. As the Word took flesh and dwelt amongst us (see John 1:14), as our Lord emptied Himself and became Man for us, so we reach out to Him in confidence precisely because of love.

Because the bishop's responsibility is to show the faithful what Christian living actually looks like (recalling the exhortations of the Apostle Paul to the Apostles Timothy and Titus previously cited, pp. 172-173), he cannot be disconnected in any way from the whole spiritual flock under his care, or from each of the rational sheep themselves. The difficulty facing most bishops nowadays is that circumstances of life keep him rather distant from the people who constitute his spiritual family. Wide-spread diocesan territories, or dioceses numbering many hundreds of churches, make closeness to any bishop very difficult. A smaller diocesan territory (and smaller numbers of communities in each diocese) can help to overcome some elements of the problem of accessibility. In Europe, steps are being taken in this direction. Canada is presently almost impossible. Nevertheless, whatever can be done must be done. It is very important that the arch-pastor bridge the gaps personally whenever and however possible.

The Apostle James describes very succinctly what is the essence of the Christian way, and what is involved in this way :

> *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world* (James 1:27).

He also reminds us strongly about the characteristics of the Lord's attitude towards us, and what is therefore our proper attitude towards one another :

> *Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?* [...] *If you really*

> *fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'* [3 Moses 19:18], *you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.* [...] *Mercy triumphs over judgement. What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!* [...] *a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.* [...] *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also* (James 2:5, 8, 9, 13, 14-19, 24, 26).

The exhortation of the Apostle Paul to the Romans does not take second place to these words :

> *'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head'* [Proverbs 25:24-25]. *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good* (Romans 12:20-21).

The coal-heaping referred to is a metaphor about shame, not about real coals. The Apostle reminds us how imperative it is (in order truly to live and to live truly) that we be and do as Christ, just as the Apostle John does himself, and encourages us likewise to do :

> *Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked* (1 John 2:3-6).

> *Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgement; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us* (1 John 4:17-19).

The bishop cannot only talk about such things ; he must live it all personally, and be seen to be doing it. In fact, these particular words (which have been in my heart since childhood) carry so many implications that it would require a whole article to begin to address them. It is not easy to live up to these words, but it is, nevertheless, necessary in Christ to keep trying. It is, perhaps, one reason why bishops are often chosen from amongst the older, more experienced monks. A particular metaphor has sometimes been presented to us in order to help us to understand this situation. The metaphor is that Christ is knocking on the door of our heart. The one handle to open this door is on our side of the door. It is up to us to open this door. Difficult as this may sometimes be for us, our Saviour, who is knocking on this door, at the same time is present with us by the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and helping us to make the needed effort. He never forces, but He is always present and helping us (see Apocalypse 3:20).

Caring for those in need without distinction (especially for those who feel that they are one's enemy), and doing good to all with conscious and deliberate care, is a first priority in the Christian way. It is the bishop's responsibility, by his own life and his own actions, to show

others how to do this. As he remains mindful of the importance of faithfully keeping the Apostolic Tradition, the bishop will constantly be aware of his responsibility to keep the flock intact, whilst always reaching out to reunite with the flock the lost and strayed ones. This is done only by prayer accompanied by loving acts that are reflecting his love and kindness for the person before him. As the bishop knows Christ and behaves in every way possible in accordance with Christ's love, so he encourages the faithful people under his care to do the same. He will try to encourage them to behave in this way in every part of their lives, but the focus will always be on the Divine Liturgy and on the life that flows from it. This focus can be as organic as breathing. A bishop or priest may well understand that the pastors who preceded him have long ago enabled and encouraged the faithful people to be hospitable towards all those around them. They may have helped them develop a conscious habit of showing such true care. The faithful people notice who is not receiving Holy Communion on a particular occasion, and they bring or send to that person some portions of ἀντίδωρον, *antidōron* (meaning "instead of the gift"), that blessed bread which is given after receiving the Holy Mysteries to cleanse the palate. It is given again at the end of the Divine Liturgy for strength. In a similar way, when a person who is evidently not Orthodox is seen to be approaching the Chalice, such a bishop or priest will usually send a deacon or server to take that person to the table of the *antidōron*, and personally give the person some of this bread and wine (or water) instead. Thus, Christ's peace is spread.

All this is not easy. Nevertheless, living life in accordance with Christ's love is precisely possible in Christ. It was the way of life of my parents ; it is and was the way of life of bishops I know and have known ; and it is the way of many people I know. For pastors, the challenge is increased for many reasons, but in Christ it is possible. Saint John Chrysostom shows this (see his words about Psalm 46, p. 185). The words of the Apostle John remind us that we are able to love God (and to love at all in a real way) because God first loves us (see 1 John 4:10). It is this love which enables in us the overcoming of all fear and fears. It is the activity of this love in us that brings healing to all our wounds. It is the activity of this love in us that makes what seems to be impossible to be, in fact, quite possible. Christ's love removes all fear, and brings all life (see p. 210). As in the words of the *tropar* and the *kontak* of the Feast of the Transfiguration, all this activity of Christ's love takes into merciful consideration the limits of our ability to absorb it :

> You were transfigured on the mountain, O Christ God, revealing Your glory to Your disciples as far as they could bear it. Let Your eternal Light also shine upon us sinners, through the prayers of the Theotokos. O Giver of Light, glory be to You (*Tropar*).
>
> You were transfigured on the mountain, O Christ God, and Your disciples beheld Your glory as far as they could see it ; so that when they would behold You crucified, they would understand that Your suffering was voluntary, and would proclaim to the world, that You are truly the Radiance of the Father (*Kontak*).

In his description of the nature of spiritual gifts, the Apostle Paul uses the metaphor of the body to clarify what is the nature of our mutual relationship as Christians, and our relationship as Christians with Christ :

> *Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.*

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'; nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honourable, on these we bestow greater honour; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honour to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. And God has appointed these in the Church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? (1 Corinthians 12:3-29)

If one part of our own bodies is in pain, the whole body is aware of it. So it is that, as a first priority, the bishop's heart must be able to be aware of the pain of those in his care, and be prepared to provide the needed attention. If the bishop might see that he lacks such compassion, it would be necessary for him to turn to the Lord for help. This sort of compassion is not optional for any Christian, and certainly not optional for a bishop. The services of ordination keep reminding us that it is the Grace of the Holy Spirit that is eternally healing, and completing what is lacking. Besides receiving sacramental Grace, the arch-pastor who is aware of his own need for help can do very well by turning first to his friends amongst the saints. Also, he can turn to Grace-filled monastics, or priests, or others who may be able to help him and support him in allowing the Lord to renew and increase divine compassion in his heart.

In the functioning of this body, the Church, the bishop cannot do everything himself, as the Apostle is clearly and rightly showing us. Instead, the bishop has to be ready to enable all those under his *omophor* (and even those beyond it) to discern and to fulfil the gifts given to them by the Lord. The Apostle clearly shows us that everyone, without coercion or distinction, is invited to "*drink into one Spirit*". Christ enables the bishops to provide the spiritual and sacramental means for each to do so. We are made for this purpose, but we are not coerced into doing so. We see that the Lord, without distinction and for the good of everyone, is giving gifts

to each person personally. In 1 Corinthians 12, the Apostle gives only a partial list of these gifts. However, the bishop has to be careful not to make distinctions, and especially not to show favouritism amongst the members of the flock entrusted to him. It is, then, the bishop's responsibility to understand this, and to perceive and to discern such God-given gifts amongst the flock he leads. This seeing, perceiving, and understanding is known as discernment. Discernment is not only for the bishop to exercise, but for each and every person as well. To be able to recognise such gifts in others cannot be so very difficult. For instance, especially when young people die apparently prematurely, the first thing that is shared is all the clearly-recognised gifts that this young person exhibited, and by which s/he expressed compassionate love for the other. It is not only the young who are remembered in this manner. In co-operation with the presbyters and deacons and others, it is the bishop's responsibility, in Christ's love, to nurture these gifts in and amongst the people in his care.

It is the bishop's responsibility in Christ's love to discern who is best suited to meet the specific needs of the diocese in general (or perhaps the Church in general). Such discernment is not arrived at simply by applying rational principles and logic. Rather, the Christ-loving arch-pastor, not forgetting these, will prayerfully assess the possible candidates, all the while asking the Lord to show him who it is that He is blessing to meet this or that need. If it is clear to most persons that the Lord is blessing this choice, it will not likely be a source of temptation to them. If the choice is made without remembering to listen to the Lord's guidance, the results can be divisive. This discernment applies both to women and to men, because the variety of such opportunities for service in Christ's love is effectively limitless ; and the opportunities for service are certainly not limited to clerical or monastic orders. Such an idea is a left-over from the times of the Ottoman Empire, of the Mongolian Empire, of the Soviet oppression. In my experience, many of the best Christian educators have been godly women, who may truly be described as contagiously Christ-loving. Out of this love, women have been well-known for organising the care for the ill. They did and do exercise a gift of the Holy Spirit called helping. Indeed, women were amongst the very first holy, unmercenary physicians. They also did and do care for the lonely, the stranger, the aged, the very young ; and they care for organising normal Christian hospitality. This includes taking care of orphans. It is not that men are not similarly involved in any of these services, but it does seem that women are called to be the "specialists".

One example of the care of orphans in modern times is that of the combined work of the men's monastery in the village of Bancheni, and the women's monastery in the nearby village of Boian, both in the Metropolitan Diocese of Bukovina in western Ukraine. I have had the blessing to visit both communities several times. At the time of writing, each of them numbers over 100 monastics. The abbot, now ordained to be the Vicar-Bishop Longin, and the Abbess Magdalena lead the work of each monastery's interior life, but they all also work together to raise the more than 250 children from all parts of Ukraine, from infants to those in early adulthood who inhabit the Bancheni so-called "orphanage". I write "so-called" because all the children have been legally adopted by Vladyka Longin. It is truly his family, a family shared amongst the two monastic families. The housing for these children is on a special and distinct piece of property on the edge of Bancheni, and adjoining the men's monastery. The very neat and clean modern quarters house several children per room in six buildings, and each nun cares for up to seven children. The male monks share in the work, but in a different manner. The education of the children is provided for on the premises and nearby in the village. Everything is new and up-to-date in the facilities. The atmosphere is clearly that of a family, despite the large numbers.

The children call all the male monks "*tato*" (papa), and the female monks "mama", and there is visible peace and joy, and very normal behaviour amongst them. A number of the children have visible physical, or mental disabilities. Some are suffering the consequences of being children of addicts. There is on-the-spot medical supervision. All the resources are provided by the monks, nuns, and private supporters of the "orphanage". The children, being legally adopted, have life-long protection, and support. Some children have been healed of serious diseases through prayer. Some of the children, now grown, educated and married, have settled nearby the "orphanage" in order to contribute to the raising of their brothers and sisters.

The bishop has the responsibility to bless and to enable all those who provide all the needed services throughout the diocese. As well, he has the responsibility of providing the necessary formation and preparation to help those who serve to be able to do so well. In the course of my travels in traditional Orthodox territories, I have seen universally the bishops doing exactly this. In these countries, even where the Church is so small (such as in the Czech-lands and Slovakia), the Church is extremely active in providing education, medical-care, hospice-care, orphan-care, prison-care, care for the aged, and many more types of service. These services are provided by men, women, monks, nuns — indeed, by every sort of person who has been given manifold gifts to offer. This is the case even though there are state-provided facilities in all these countries. Humanly speaking, it would be impossible to accomplish so much with so little. Nevertheless, the Lord is working in and through us. It is He who ultimately enables and provides everything that is necessary for a truly healthy Church. When we co-operate with Christ, then the impossible becomes even more than possible.

Although the bishop may truly have many practical and administrative responsibilities, these cannot be allowed to take priority over his pastoral responsibilities, even if administration may be one of his chief personal gifts. The bishop can well use the gifts and abilities of the faithful people to help with this important and necessary work of administration. Our canonical Tradition mentions this also. His own experience and abilities may supplement the work of the other labourers for Christ to help them help him. However, the bishop has to be discerning, so as to be able to trust them in their helping. Sometimes, those who are put in positions to help the bishop to do his work may be tempted to "take over" this work, because they are convinced that they can do it better. They skip the consultation that asking for the blessing involves. Sadly, this taking-over may sometimes even involve the use of manipulative, threatening and deceptive tactics, which risk the scandalising of the people so mis-used. Outside the protection of the blessing, privileged, private and confidential information may sometimes be used as a weapon in order to control and to force. When such co-operating with the powers of darkness occurs, the healthy relationship of mutual trust, the healthy relationship of living in the context of asking for and giving blessings, is lost. Instead, the relationship between the bishop and his "helpers" can become adversarial and manipulative. This is a death-bringing, deadly environment. It is against the Gospel and Tradition. It is the way of the world. Certainly it is the bishop's responsibility to avoid every situation in which any distortion might arise, but it is also the responsibility of the lay-persons and others to make sure that they, themselves, do not fall into this deadly trap. It kills them ; it kills productive life in the Church ; it kills those that they are "helping". In the Scriptures, the Lord through Moses early gave us direction on this matter :

> '*See, I set before you today life and death, good and evil. If you hear the commandments of the Lord your God I command you today, to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His ordinances and judgments, then you shall live and multiply; and the Lord*

your God will bless you in the land you go to inherit. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but go astray and worship different gods and serve them, I announce to you today, you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land the Lord your God is giving you, into which you are crossing over the Jordan to inherit. I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you: I set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live and love the Lord your God, obey His voice, and cling to Him. For this is your life and the length of your days, that you may dwell in the land the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them' (5 Moses 30:15-20).

In this context, we may consider the notion of delegation, a term that is constantly repeated in Canada and elsewhere, nowadays. I am ever exhorted by the members of the flock entrusted to me to do more of this. However, although this seems like a reasonable way to proceed, there are problems, as is revealed by a study of the meaning of the word. When this concept is used as a noun, a delegate is a person designated to act for or represent another or others. Priests may, in fact, be correctly described as being local delegates of the high-priest. When the concept is used as a verb, to delegate is either to send or appoint (a person) as deputy or representative ; or it is to commit (powers, functions, etc.) to another as one's agent or deputy. In either of these cases, the direction of action is from higher to lower in responsibility. It is the action of the one who is higher in responsibility to delegate one or more responsibilities to a person who is lower in responsibility (or even to impose it).

It seems to me that this is the opposite direction from which such sharing of responsibility ought healthily to occur. Rather, the proper manner of such sharing is better described as progressing from the lower to the higher. The higher in authority may recognise an ability in another person, and even nurture the gift, and make suggestions. The higher in authority may even invite the lower in authority to help or to assist. The higher in authority may not impose. The inviting affirms the goodness of the one invited. The lower in authority may accept the invitation, or may even volunteer without invitation. This can bring joy, along with a recognition of the flowing of Grace from Christ, through the high-priest or priest's invitation to the one invited. Every such invitation is not an "award" or "honour", but rather, an invitation to serve together with Christ. Therefore, the higher in authority may not impose. Any imposition gives the opportunity for division or resentment, because it may be perceived as favouritism. It is useful for every bishop to recall that Saint Cæsarius of Arles, France, did delegate the tasks of administration to many deacons, so that he could pursue his apostolic work.

In this consideration of a correct focus in leadership, there are examples available to us as a resource. I underline that when I use the word "leadership", both the episcopate and the presbyterate are implied here. A movement arose in the USA, in which retreats were begun for disabled persons. In former times, such disabled persons were considered to be sick. However, they are clearly not sick, but only disabled. At these retreats, a non-disabled person accompanies the disabled person, and does for that person whatever s/he cannot do for or by herself or himself. The helper does not "invade" the one being helped. During these retreats, which are focussed on Christ, people are brought into a deeper communion of love with each other. This movement has spread considerably. However, it seems that in whatever locality the attention is diverted away from Christ, in that locality the retreat movement ceases to exist. This is a helpful and significant example for a bishop or priest to keep in mind. Only in Christ can this life-giving

relationship of mutual respect and mutual support be maintained. Only in such a context can one be able to see the functioning and life of the Body of Christ gathered in that place.

Early-on in my episcopal service I learned that there are no insignificant elements in the life of a bishop whose life is to be an example of Christian living. It is his responsibility to pay close attention to the implications of everything he does, whether it is in his liturgical leadership or in his daily life. It is for him to understand that his actions must always be with a view to maintaining the unity of the flock. Although no-one can fully anticipate all the implications involved in any choices, the bishop nevertheless bears the responsibility of exemplary leadership.

A high-priest is not likely ever to be able without fail to take perfect decisions, because a bishop is a human being who is prone to limitations, weaknesses and vulnerabilities just as is everyone else. He can make mistakes. Because of this, there will be many occasions on which a bishop's mistake will be erroneously perceived by someone as a deliberate action or choice. The difficulty and the particular danger about blunders made by bishops is that they can adversely affect the lives (particularly the spiritual lives) of many people. When he does make such a blunder, he carries it on his heart, and it is imperative that he bring it before the Lord to be corrected. Only the Lord can repair certain sorts of damage. Sometimes, even if the bishop may be correct, not all the sheep will be ready and/or willing to follow him for whatever myriad of possible reasons. This does not alter his responsibility to lead, and to lead correctly and righteously. Such life-giving leadership can express the meaning of the phrase of the prayer near the end of the *anaphora* in the Divine Liturgy, which asks that the bishop be enabled rightly to divide the word of God's Truth. It also does not alter his responsibility to pray for all the sheep, regardless of their disposition towards him. It does not alter his own responsibility, through his own daily life and work, to be an example of repentance. The limitations and mistakes and errors of the high-priest or priest do not at all alter the fact that Christ is with us always, as He Himself promised us (see Matthew 28:20). Therefore, regardless of any faults on the part of a cleric, the sacraments that he serves remain holy, as they truly are. They remain real, true, effective. Christ remains true to His assurances. In and through these sacraments (Mysteries), He is with us all, always.

Most of us Orthodox Christians know very well that our Church life is "spherical" or "circular" in nature, as we see in the regular celebration of the cycles of fasts and feasts throughout each year. The pyramid is the metaphor usually employed to demonstrate the administrative structure of Church life, but this pyramidic image suggests oppression and coercion. The metaphor of the sphere suggests equality and co-operation. We can also recall the equality that was provided in the context of the round table of King Arthur. In the context of the sphere metaphor, the leader is not at the top, but rather in the centre (much as the nucleus is the centre of a cell). From the centre, the leader directs the development and the life of the cell. This is in harmony with Christ, who is, Himself, truly at the centre of everything. From Him comes all life.

In this circular and spherical environment, we may better understand the meaning of decision-making by consensus rather than by simple majorities or by autocracy. Both majority-rule and autocratically-forced decisions produce divisions. Even a majority that is a great majority leaves a possibility open for division. Consensus understands that we keep talking together until we can agree together. This has been the way of Christians from the beginning. In

our days, amongst the Quakers (the Society of Friends), no decision is taken until there is complete agreement. It is the same in many indigenous cultures, such as in the government of Nunavut. If we can agree, we can avoid divisions. This is why it is important for us at all levels of our Church life to learn to arrive at decisions in this way. In this circular context, we can see that there is general equality. As we know through our experience in the life of the Church, our life together is reflecting the communion of love, the unity that is the Holy Trinity. This harmony of love, this unity of heart in the context of distinct persons, is the pattern by which we Christians are to live love. Living in loving harmony with the Lord and with each other as one, our hearts and minds are able to be united in loving harmony with the Lord's Will, led by the Grace of the Holy Spirit.

We do not talk together to achieve a mere intellectual agreement. We, together, speak with each other, with our hearts in the Lord, co-operating with the Holy Spirit who enables us to be and act as one. As our Saviour said to us : '*For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them'* (Matthew 18:20). Our Saviour fulfils this assurance during all gatherings of Christians who invoke Him, and who actively listen to Him and co-operate with Him. We talk together so as to discern in our hearts together what the Lord is asking us to do or not to do. Let us keep in mind the words of Saint Dorotheus of Gaza about this sphere-circle image :

> Saint Dorotheus unremittingly exhorted his monks to remain united one with another in charity, and gave them this image: 'Imagine a circle traced on the earth; that is, a line drawn in the round with a circumference and a centre. Imagine that this circle is the world; the centre is God; and the rays are men's different paths or ways of living. When the saints, desiring to draw near to God, move towards the centre of the circle; in the measure to which they penetrate further in, the nearer they draw to one another; and the closer they come to one another, the closer they are to God. And you understand that it is the same in reverse, when one turns away from God to go outward: it is then clear that the more we move away from God, the further we are from one another; and the further we are from one another, the further we are from God' (The Synaxarion, 13 August).

C S Lewis understood this image very well when he wrote his phantasy book The Great Divorce in 1945. This is not a theological work ; but read with Orthodox eyes, and understood by an Orthodox heart, this work can be seen to reflect the understanding of what Saint Dorotheus said and wrote.

During one meeting in which I participated in Moscow, Patriarch Aleksy II (see pp. 57 ff) took the opportunity to stress in his words the importance of peaceful harmony amongst the leader and all the other bishops. He insisted that the bishops in a synod must not oppress one another, must not fight with one another, must not resent one another ; but instead, they must work co-operatively with one another in mutual forgiveness and harmony in Christ. They must be true brothers : brothers in Christ. Such an exhortation reminds me of the way of life of my own parents. Recalling the words of the Apostle Paul : "'*Be angry, and do not sin'* [Psalm 4:5]*: do not let the sun go down on your wrath*" (Ephesians 4:26), they had made from the beginning of their marriage the resolution never to let the sun go down on their anger. They always resolved any difference of any sort before retiring for the night. They began every morning fresh, and in harmony with one another. I know many other couples married for a long time who say that this is their way of life also.

This principle, this behaviour, is simply practical — not only for married couples, but for all Christians in any condition or status, for all parishes (including their leadership), for all dioceses and their administrations, and, of course, for bishops. Indeed, the bishops should be allowing the Lord to establish their brotherhood in Him so that they can, as far as possible, be of one mind, and act with one mind in Christ. Saint Ignatius of Antioch exhorts us :

> I took it upon myself to encourage you, that together you may run in accordance with the mind of God. Indeed, Jesus Christ, who cannot be separated from our life, is the Father's mind, as also the bishops who have been assigned unto the ends of the world are in the mind of Jesus Christ ("Letter to the Ephesians", 3).

Acting in unity and harmony (such action describes consensus) is working in conciliarity in its strongest form. It is this conciliarity that produced the Symbol of Faith, the Nicene Creed. It is the mindfulness of this conciliarity in Christ that maintains unity of heart and mind in the Body of Christ. It protects us from the attempts of the wolf-of-souls, the accuser, the divider, to introduce divisions and strife into the Body of Christ. The following exhortation is intoned by the deacon in the Divine Liturgy just before the singing or reciting of the Symbol of Faith :

> Let us love one another, that with one mind we may confess

and we immediately respond :

> Father, Son, and Holy Spirit : the Trinity, one in essence, and undivided.

Being of one mind is not limited to our proclamation of the Symbol of Faith all together as one. It completely involves our whole life and lives, all together.

In this context, bishops have a responsibility towards each other, on the basis of who they are in Christ, and on the basis of our canonical Tradition. This responsibility includes living in mutual love and forgiveness with each other, in accordance with the Gospel. The bishops are not required to be "friends" as such (although very many are indeed real friends) ; but they are expected to behave in harmony with each other, in harmony with the Tradition of Christ, to be in perpetual mutual forgiveness, and to work together for the glory of God and the health of the Church. Were the bishop to fall into the "C.E.O." temptation, self-interest and power-mongering would become obvious and undesirable factors. Despite the need to live in, and to interact with secular/civil society, the bishops must always, alone and together, accomplish this interaction while keeping the way of Christ in first place and first priority.

We are given the following reminder by Saint Ignatius of Antioch, in which he shows his understanding of the one-mindedness, the harmony, the unity amongst the early Christians :

> You, therefore, as well as all your fellow-travellers [*synodoi*], are God-bearers, temple-bearers, Christ-bearers, bearers of holiness, adorned in all respects with the commandments of Jesus Christ, in whom also I exult that I have been considered worthy, through the things that I write, to converse and rejoice with you, for in human life you love nothing but God alone ("Letter to the Ephesians", 9).

We also know very well that the Latin expression *lex orandi lex credendi est* (the law or rule of prayer is the law or rule of faith) clearly expresses the relationship between liturgy and life. In this spherical context, we perceive all things as being inter-connected in every way. In such a sphere, our ecclesiastical sphere would be expected to be constantly expanding. The closer we come to Christ, the more we become aware of those who are "outside" the sphere, and of those

on the periphery. In Christ, we become more compassionately concerned to co-operate with our Saviour in drawing them to Himself. Our missionary work, then, comes from Christ, who instils in us His desire to include all and everything in this harmonious family. He also provides us with the opportunities to do this work. Examples of this compassionate missionary disposition can be seen in the life and witness (despite any mistakes) of the Archpriests Dmitry Dutko (†2004) and Alexander Men' (†1990) at the end of the Soviet era. Each was very publicly visible : teaching and preaching and writing openly. Father Alexander, dressed openly as an Orthodox priest, taught in a secular institution. Their love for Christ influenced and encouraged great numbers of people who were otherwise suffering from fear. As the sphere continually expands in reaching out and constantly including others who (as we all) properly belong within this sphere, we all continue to move together towards Christ who is at the centre. Consequently, we move more closely to each other.

In meetings of bishops, and in their relationship with each other, there is properly a round-table equality amongst them all. "Headship" is exercised in the context of consensus and conciliarity, the chief expressing the mind of all as he speaks. According to the Holy Canons, such consensus and conciliarity are not optional. Apostolic Canon 34 directs that the bishops of a given nation must be able to

> acknowledge him who is the first among them, and account him as their head, and to do nothing of consequence without his consent. [...] But neither let him (who is the first) do anything without the consent of all ; for so there will be unanimity, and God will be glorified through the Lord in the Holy Spirit.

Although there is an order of precedence (just as there is in every monastery) in a meeting of bishops on a territory, there is no inequality. The one who is "chief" is given this responsibility by his peers, and all his acts are in consultation with, in harmony with and in communion with his peers. Here we become aware of one of the chief differences that developed between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. After many centuries, the latter moved to give the one who is chief actual power over the other bishops, from whom he became distinct, and not a peer. Even the title of this bishop, "pope", moved from correctly implying fatherliness to implying kingliness (which it does to this day). Even if people will easily refer to the Pope of Rome as "the Holy Father", the underlying understanding of his rôle seems to be that he alone is the one to decide all matters. It seems that the title "Vicar of Christ" as a source of power remains mixed in with any intention to convey a paternal disposition. This is unavoidable since the Pope of Rome is also a head-of-state. As such, his own practical rôle has long been that of a king, and the bishops have been spoken about as princes. This is a departure which to this day causes difficulty in the mutual understanding between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholics, despite the fact that we have the mutual foundation of the Seven Ecumenical Councils from 325 to 787 (it has been argued that there are actually nine councils, because the acts of two more in the ninth century have the emperor's signature). And there are also the results of many other meetings up to our time, in which we are in agreement.

For us Orthodox, as the Canons and Tradition show, all the bishops are to act as one, in a manner demonstrating the harmony of the Holy Trinity. The model of the Most Holy Trinity, regardless of our sinful slips and aberrations, remains the image of our existence in, and as the Church, in all our relationships, and in all our service. It must be our aim to imitate the kenotic (that is self-emptying) hierarchical order of the Most Holy Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy

Spirit. In the Most Holy Trinity, there is absolute harmony and order in love. There cannot be room for any understanding of precedence based on supremacy of power. Partly for this need to act as one, everything moves very slowly, exasperatingly so to some. The bishops, before making major decisions, must meet together, and together come to being in agreement about how to proceed together. This is the purpose of local and general councils, which convene bishops of all ranks in an area.

During the last century or so, in the aftermath of the communist revolution in Russia, there grew up an anomalous situation because of the mass migration of exiles. This great migration was sometimes also for economic purposes. The result was the establishment of episcopal administrations based on national and linguistic heritage in the different lands which received the migrants (Western Europe, Australia, North and South America). These administrations came to be overlapping, often resulting in there being several Orthodox bishops in one city. The result has been considerable confusion, and frequent mis-communication.

Nowadays, there is developing yet another sort of synod-style gathering for the purpose of helping to co-ordinate our ecclesiastical life, that being a gathering of the fifteen heads of the autocephalous Churches. About some limited matters, these leaders can agree to work together, and they can solve some problems. However, they cannot function as an official council of the whole Church. An official council would require the involvement of all the bishops in some manner (although not every bishop in the world could possibly attend). At the time of this writing, there has been a process of trying to unite in some better manner the work of the bishops of the various "jurisdictions" in North America. This grew from the long-time work of the Standing Committee of Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), which has now become the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America (ACOBNCA). Because of governmental and other concerns, Central America tends also to meet together with South America, and there is likewise a distinct assembly of bishops in Canada. This development gives hope for yet greater visible and practical unity in the future. Still, it moves slowly, as we may perhaps understand. The bishops would be glad of more movement, but it has to take its necessary time. Although it is already many decades since the Chalcedonian and pre-Chalcedonian Churches agreed that there is no theological difference between them, visible unity has not yet been achieved for the same reason : it takes a long time to overcome such long-term divisions, even under the best conditions. It is unavoidably a slow process to pursue conversations towards some sort of consensus when there is no structure to help it move along. The process is also slowed, and sometimes stopped by the frequent political turmoil and wars that affect many Orthodox countries. Much more time, and much more talking are still required, and all definitely must be undertaken in the context of prayer and mutual intercession.

13

The bishop's relationship with civil authorities

> *Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth* (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

These words of the Apostle to his disciple Timothy form the back-ground and purpose of the relationship with civil authorities of a bishop, and indeed of us all. Nevertheless, the relationship with civil authorities is one of the more nebulous areas of a bishop's life and work. This is so largely because the nature of that relationship very much depends upon the type, personality and disposition of each civil authority, and the bishop's prayerful sense of how that relationship would be best expressed. For instance, how a bishop may address an Orthodox Christian ruler is not the same as how he may address a non-Christian, or a pagan, or a secularist. Just because a ruler may be an Orthodox Christian in name does not therefore mean that he lives accordingly. A bishop may make practical requests to an Orthodox ruler on behalf of the people under his care, and for their benefit. In the best situations, the bishop and the ruler work together in a deep harmony, and they accomplish great good for all. It is seen in our history how working together helps to establish the Lord's protection on the land and the people. The arch-pastor may also be faced with having to correct the errors of a ruler. This can have results in sharp contrast to that of harmony (death being one). For instance, when Saint John Chrysostom criticised the Empress Ælia Eudoxia (†404), the result was his twice being sent to exile, and on the way to the second exile in Georgia, his death in Comana in Pontus. He knew what could (or would) be the consequence of speaking the truth in love as he did ; but he also well knew that the Lord is in charge of everything. He was therefore ready to say at the very end : "Glory to God for all things". Another more recent example is Metropolitan Philip II of Moscow (†1569), who dared to condemn the massacres by Tsar Ivan IV (the Terrible). As a result, he was deposed and murdered. The bishop does not tell the ruler how to govern, but he can act as a Christian conscience to the ruler who is an Orthodox Christian (albeit that it may cost his life, as in this case). Even if the ruler be Orthodox, there are risks associated with acting as a conscience to him.

Because of our markedly different circumstances, not every bishop in our days would be able to act in just the same manner as did Saint Ambrose of Milan :

> Humble before lesser men, he was fearless before the great. He reproached the Empress Justina for heresy, cursed Maximus for tyranny and murder and forbade the Emperor Theodosius to enter a church until he had repented of his sin. He refused to meet the powerful Eugenius, the self-styled Emperor. God granted this man, who was so pleasing to Him, such Grace that he could raise the dead, drive demons from men, heal the sick of every ailment and see into the future (The Prologue, 7 December).

Albeit that the details of our life-situations are so different nowadays, this does not mean that any bishop is excused from being honest and forthright before any and all civil authorities. The bishop is to be faithful to our Saviour Jesus Christ, the Great Good Shepherd, and to be willing to

remain so even at the cost of his own life. Clearly, the bishop must maintain even more than an arm's-length relationship with the civil government, so that he may maintain a sort of neutrality. Therefore, he cannot be actively involved in politics and business, and he cannot hold any civil office.

In the past, there have occasionally arisen problems because clergy have indeed fallen into the temptation of being involved without a blessing in business, government, political or military matters. The disturbance this caused was serious enough, and happened often enough, that it resulted in the need for some corrective directions. These corrections were provided during some greater councils which had been convened to correct major errors. Some examples of the signal corrections are : Canons 3 & 7 of the 4th Ecumenical Council (451) ; Canon 3 of the 7th Ecumenical Council (787) ; Canon 16 of the Council of Carthage (419). Following are other examples of the seriousness of the consequences of making such wrong choices :

> Let not a bishop, presbyter, or deacon undertake worldly business ; otherwise, let him be deposed from office (Apostolic Canon 6).
>
> We have said that a bishop or presbyter must not lower himself into public affairs, but must attend to ecclesiastical needs. Either let him be persuaded, therefore, not to do so, or let him be deposed ; for no one can serve two masters, according to the Lord's injunction (Apostolic Canon 81).
>
> If a bishop, presbyter or deacon shall serve in the army, and wish to retain both the Roman magistracy and the priestly office, let him be deposed ; for the things of Caesar belong to Caesar, and those of God to God (Apostolic Canon 83).

There are further canonical prescriptions designed to keep the Church's life properly focussed. For instance, there had obviously been some sort of trouble because some clergy had been tempted to become "curatories", superintending and taking care of the internal affairs of households of civil magistrates for income and/or influence. In The Rudder, we find Canon 11 of the "First-and-Second" Council of Constantinople (861) :

> The divine and sacred Canons impose the penalty of deposition on presbyters or deacons who undertake secular offices or worldly cares, or the so-called curatories in the households of civil magistrates. We too confirm this, and as concerning the rest of those who are included among the clergy we decree that in case any one of them is being employed in secular offices, or undertakes or accepts so-called curatories in the households of civil magistrates or in the suburbs, that person shall be ousted from his own clergy. For, according to the most veracious utterance pronounced by Christ Himself, our true God, '"*no one can serve two masters*'" (Matthew 6:24 ; see Luke 16:13).

Sometimes a bishop may have become distracted and overcome by personal interest, and may have therefore neglected his responsibilities to the flock entrusted to him. Because of this, we have this prescription :

> If any bishop, presbyter or deacon, when any of the clergy is in want, does not supply him with what he needs, let him be excommunicated ; but if he persists, let him be deposed, as one who has killed his brother (Apostolic Canon 59 ; see p. 144).

The arch-pastor ought not to allow himself to be diverted by anything from giving his full attention to the welfare of the diocese and the flock entrusted to him. Nevertheless (and notwithstanding the cited canons), there are often circumstances which require a priest and/or

deacon to conduct business, or to work for a government in the world. Sometimes this is because of the poverty of the community he serves ; sometimes it is because he is a missionary. But he would not, nevertheless, undertake this work without the knowledge and specific blessing of his bishop.

If the ruler is not Orthodox, much less may be said directly by the bishop to the ruler about his way of life, because this ruler is not within the Orthodox Church. Real co-operation may nevertheless be possible on some levels, as was the case in Great Britain between Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh and Queen Elizabeth II. Also, in some cases in the past, under Islamic occupation, some bishops and priests behaved themselves in such a way, and spoke in such a way, that the Islamic rulers respected and accepted the Orthodox presence, and there were longer periods of peaceful co-existence. In these cases, the bishop is certainly not telling the ruler how to rule ; but by his words and example he shows to the people he leads and to others how Christians ought to live, in accordance with the Gospel and Tradition. Speaking the truth is necessary, even if there may be painful consequences. Saint Tikhon of Moscow had such experiences. On occasion, he (and others like him) had to reassure and calm the faithful in the face of violent attacks, lest there be even worse violence. Speaking the truth does bear fruit. One such contemporary example is the manner in which the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople publicly draws the attention of many national leaders to ecological concerns and to other important matters in terms of our responsible stewardship of the earth. Putting this stewardship into its proper context, he speaks and writes, taking into account the following words from our beginnings (our genesis) :

> *Then the Lord God took the man He formed and put him in the garden to tend and keep it* (1 Moses 2:15).
>
> *Also, God formed out of the ground all the wild animals of the field and all the birds of heaven, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. Thus whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all the cattle, to all the birds of heaven, and to all the wild animals of the field* (1 Moses 2:19-20).
>
> *Thus God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, 'Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and have dominion over it. For the dread and fear of you shall be upon all the wild animals of the earth, all the birds of heaven, all that move upon the earth, and all the fish of the sea. I have put them under your authority. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as I did the green herbs*' (1 Moses 9:1-3).

These particular passages remind us clearly that God, from His love, created everything that exists. He created all that exists to participate actively in a loving relationship with Himself and with the whole of His creation. When He created human beings, He created us to have authority over everything, and to exercise this authority in harmony with Him and His love. However, by the time of Noah, we see that "*the dread and fear of you*" had come upon the animals, and this was the result of our Fall. This element of fear that we introduced into our relationship with creation after our Fall has continued to poison that relationship until this day. This poisoned relationship is worsened also by our selfish and greedy behaviour. We see also spelled out here that after the flood we began to eat animals.

Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, addressing all this, speaks the truth from the Scriptures, not from political motives. His words do have good effect (despite any dangers to

him that might arise through a misunderstanding), because the Lord is with him. Let us pay close attention to the following passage from Saint Nikolai (Velimirovič), which expresses the same world-view. He distils our right awareness into a few words :

> While you are on earth, regard yourself as a guest of the Host, that is, of Christ. If you are at table, He honours you thus. If you breathe the air, you breathe His air. If you bathe, you bathe in His water. If you travel, you travel around His earth. If you accumulate goods, you accumulate what is His; if you squander them, you squander what is His. If you are influential, you are so by His permission. If you are in company with others, you are with His other guests. If you are in the countryside, you are in His garden. If you are alone, He is present. If you set off anywhere, He sees you. If you do anything, He has it in mind. He is the most careful Host whose guest you have ever been. And be, in your turn, careful towards Him. A good host merits a good guest. These are all simple words, but they speak a great truth to you. All the saints knew this truth, and ordered their lives accordingly. Therefore the immortal Host rewarded them with eternal life in heaven and with glory on earth (The Prologue, 6 March).

With such an understanding in mind, there are other patriarchs and bishops who do things in ways similar to Patriarch Bartholomew, such as speaking about the value of human life from conception to natural death, about caring equally and respectfully for all human beings, about caring for and nurturing all aspects of our environment, as God has given us the responsibility to do. Historically, the metropolitans of The Orthodox Church in America, along with other bishops, have been going to Washington, DC, and walking annually with crowds of people from many backgrounds in the annual March for Life there. The bishops can give the civil leaders an opportunity to think twice about possible courses of actions, and to think soberly about the consequences of their decisions. Sometimes, for one reason or another, an arch-pastor may successfully intercede with the ruler's government on behalf of the flock entrusted to him, often about simple and practical matters.

It is different when the attitude of the ruler may be hostile, as has often been the case. Nevertheless, the bishop will inevitably have reason to intercede with the local governing authorities from time to time on behalf of the needs of the people under his care. The more remote from Christianity is the ruler, the more difficult is the path of this relationship. Much less is the bishop able to comment on the ruler's manner of ruling, because the ruler is not connected with Christ. Some have nevertheless done so, because they felt compelled to speak for the Lord on behalf of the people, and these hierarchs have paid for it with their lives, even in an environment not officially anti-Christian.

Much more have such sacrifices and consequences been seen when the government is indeed anti-Christian. The most vivid and recent example of this is, of course, the Soviet Union's government after the Bolshevik Revolution. Immediately, bishops and priests were being put to death in large numbers. In the first five years after the Bolshevik Revolution, 28 bishops and 1,200 priests were executed. During 1937 and 1938, 100,000 clergy were killed. By 1939, over 99% of all Russian Orthodox churches had been closed, including almost all the monasteries of men and of women. Much more occurred (and these are statistics mostly from the actual Russian part of the USSR, not necessarily including other republics). In the early days of World War II, because of the massacres of clergy in the late 1930s, and the imprisonment of those not killed, there remained only three bishops not in prison. There were only 500 open churches (before the revolution, there were 54,000 churches open). Although suppression of the Church

reduced the visibility and availability of churches and sacraments, the faithful themselves persevered. There are many examples of such perseverance. In 1922, Saint Tikhon, the Patriarch of Moscow, showed his love for our Saviour in a manner which both foreshadowed what was to come and revealed the steadfastness of the faithful people of his day. He said : "Let my name die in history that the Church may live!" (The Synaxarion, 25 March) Such a testimony is good for every arch-pastor to keep in mind. He died, but his name did not die. The names of multitudes of people did disappear from memory, but the fruit of their shed blood lives to this day. In 1940, just before his death, the Priest Gregory Popov composed the now well-known Akathist-hymn "Glory to God for All Things", itself a reference to words of Saint John Chrysostom before his death. To this day, this Akathist-hymn supports many a suffering person.

By 1953, after the release of some clergy and the ordination of many, 22,000 churches were open. In the time of Khrushchev, however, there was yet another major repression. Under his leadership, 50,000 more clergy were killed, and by 1985 there were only 7,000 churches open. It is known now that besides bishops, there were killed at least 200,000 priests, deacons, monks and nuns (this is a conservative number). It is impossible to give a clear number regarding the multitudes of lay-persons who were killed for the sake of Christ. These multitudes are simply included in the total sum (conservatively numbering 35,000,000), together as one with Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, pagans and unbelievers who also were executed (or worked and starved to death). Then came the fall of the Soviet system. Stubborn resistance to Christ the Truth was overcome by Christ through love.

After the passage of more than twenty years since 1990, the Russian Orthodox Church had 160 dioceses including 30,142 parishes served by 207 bishops, 28,434 priests and 3,625 deacons. There were 788 monasteries : 386 for men and 402 for women. There were already very many seminaries, chaplaincies, and social-service institutions. These statistics do not include all the churches and territories of the former Soviet Union, but they serve as an example of the life that comes from the Lord by the prayers of the faithful, and through the co-operation of the clergy. These statistics (which are taken from Wikipedia) show how the Lord answers our prayers. It is well-known that Stalin ordered the destruction of Moscow's Christ the Saviour Cathedral near the Kremlin in 1931. After its destruction, attempts to build a monument to Stalin and to communism on the same site failed. The ground was far too soft to hold the planned giant building (despite its having previously supported the cathedral). In time, after many years of neglect, the area was dug out and a very large swimming-pool was constructed. Although it is said that an unusual number of persons drowned in this pool, it is also said that many faithful persons were secretly baptised in these waters. In due time, when the communist system came to its end and the rebuilding period began (after 1990), the pool disappeared. The cathedral was rebuilt in a remarkably short time, with modern methods. Much time was saved in using reinforced concrete instead of meticulously carved and shaped stone. It was consecrated in 2000. This time, besides the cathedral itself (and ironically because of the pool), even more facilities than were included in the original structure were able to be provided, including many below-ground facilities such as parking, meeting and dining areas, and some living quarters — and this with no sinking of the structure, and no water in the basement. The interim pool may itself be understood as part of our Lord's miraculous plan. This entire series of events can serve for us as a metaphor for the whole situation in which attempts were made to destroy the Church, and in which prayers were constantly answered. If we are willing to understand, we can see signs that our Lord does not forsake us. As can be seen, much has

occurred, but much missionary work remains to be done just to return to the number of parish churches open before World War I.

My own encounters with Church life in Russia (without at all forgetting Ukraine, Romania and other countries) attest to this miraculous renewal. I well recall how quickly Temples to the Lord were being re-opened, re-built, or built newly in Moscow after this resurrection began. It was less than a decade before the city of Moscow had 800 Temples fully functioning. At that time also, the surrounding Moscow Region had over a thousand such Temples. The opening and construction of more occur every year. It was reported that in the last couple of years, 200 more churches have been established in Moscow. There, and everywhere in Russia and the other Orthodox countries, these new Temples are immediately well-attended and frequently attended. Indeed, they are usually quite full. It was expressed by one archbishop in Moscow that the bishops find it more than a challenge to meet the rapid growth of the civil population of Moscow. Millions arrive, and many do not have legal permission to reside in the city. Many of those arriving are already Orthodox Christians, but many are not. There is a steady (sometimes even immense) demand by people for conversion to Christianity, and for baptism and Christian education. The baptism of adults is now occurring very regularly, and very many Temples now have facilities to accommodate adult baptisms. Despite all the construction of churches and the provision for all sorts of social needs through hospital and prison chaplaincies, hospitals, orphanages, food for the hungry and the like, it seems to the concerned bishops that they cannot make much progress in terms of meeting all the real needs. These needs continue to grow in numbers extremely quickly.

The resurrection of Church life and reconstruction is very, very evident in a country such as Albania, where all Christianity was completely suppressed by the communists. Now, in the years since 1991 and the restoration of religious freedom, the Albanian Church, with so few resources, has recovered eight dioceses, almost a thousand parishes, and it has rebuilt almost three hundred Temples and sixty monasteries. Archbishop Anastasios, an indefatigable missionary, has been an exemplary shepherd throughout this resurrection, and not without opposition from others. Georgia did not suffer as drastically as did Albania, nor did any other country ; but Georgia, which had been greatly depleted by communism has, since 1990, returned almost completely to being a healthy and fully-functioning autocephalous Church, replete with rebuilt Temples and monasteries, and many more in the process. It is only by faithful prayer and service, and depending on our Saviour, that the Church in these countries will actually be able to achieve what is expected. Our Saviour did, indeed, say to us :

'*For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required*' (Luke 12:48).

To be sure, some centuries earlier, during the time of the Ottoman Empire, many bishops did suffer. One notable example is Serapheim, the Archbishop of Phanarion and Neochorion in Epiros on the west coast of Greece. In 1601, he was denounced by a so-called "brother" concerning an uprising against the government, something with which he had nothing to do. Nevertheless, he was very horribly tortured and beheaded because of the denunciation, and also because he would not deny Christ and abandon Him when he was given an ultimatum. In a similar situation, in 1657, Patriarch Parthenios III of Constantinople perished by hanging, because of political intrigue once again, and for refusing to leave Christ. In 1659, Patriarch Gabriel II of Serbia suffered similarly, again because of political intrigue and for refusing to forsake Christ. We may not forget how the Coptic Orthodox Christians have suffered

continually for more than 1300 years of Islamic occupation in Egypt ; and how, following the current so-called "Arab spring", this persecution has wrought havoc, and multiplied the numbers of deaths of Coptic Christians, as well as the numbers of those escaping, fleeing the terror. Such deaths and fleeing away of Christians is taking place not in Egypt alone. In these circumstances (and the very difficult ones leading up to them), the Alexandrian Pope Shenouda III of blessed memory is known to have gone to the president and other leaders to ask for more religious toleration, and also to ask for protection and mercy towards certain persons and situations. It is the activities of him and his successor, along with their bishops, that have until now kept the situation from becoming still much worse. The recent Egyptian civil election, however, and the events surrounding it, led to the deaths of a great many Coptic Christians. The killing has continued, and it seems that there is a great danger that it will continue. The turmoil in Egypt was soon followed by even greater turmoil in Syria. There, Christians had until recently been able to live in greater peace. Refugee Christians in large numbers sought refuge there during the wars in Iraq. Now, the danger for Christians in Syria is sending them to other neighbouring countries as refugees, and also around the world.

We cannot forget the intercessory work of the officially holy bishops, such as the great Hieromartyr Ignatius of Antioch of the second century, and of course the intercessory work of the apostles themselves. In inexplicable ways, their prayers keep things from being worse than they are. It is important that we also not forget details of the truth of historical events. It is easy to forget significant details, and to accept present-day simplifications or even distortions of these facts. Almost nothing is reported openly and publicly about the suffering of Christians all over the world in our very days. Therefore, it often may seem that we Christians do not exist at all. Similarly, it is often neglected to be mentioned what were the conditions of Christians and Jews in Ottoman times. In many large cities, there were numerous large Jewish communities inherited by the Ottomans from the time of the Roman Empire. Pressure was exerted on them. The famous and helpful Jewish scholar Moses Maimonides of Spain was so hard-pressed that he had to leave the land of his birth, and died in Alexandria (†1204). Regardless of the sad fact that since the 4th Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451) in Bithynia of Asia Minor, the Chalcedonian and Pre-Chalcedonian Christians have not been in communion with one another, we nevertheless all fervently intercede with the Lord for each other, and we support each other in any practical way possible.

We also have to acknowledge and confess the rôle played by the Mother of God in the protecting of faithful Christians. Very frequently, indeed, she has revealed herself visibly to the Copts and also to many Muslims ; and she has done so graciously, and with healings. The most famous of these is her repeated appearance above and about a Coptic Christian Church in Zeitoun, a suburb of Cairo, Egypt. This occurred by day and by night from 1968 to 1970. Millions of people saw her, and very many were healed, regardless of the nature of their faith or belief. The healings are medically verified. Before and since this time, the Mother of God has been revealing herself to many others, and she always brings healing, along with renewed love for her Son. There are countless examples of the protective activities of the Mother of God in every century. For many centuries, this has been so with the Wonder-working Icon of the Mother of God in the Sayednaya Women's Monastery in western Syria. This icon (considered to have been written by the Apostle Luke) is from the apostolic times of the Church. The monastery has existed since before the sixth century. Very many Muslims approach this icon in confidence of being heard. This strengthening work of the Mother of God amongst us is an

encouragement to us all to be faithful to her Son, and to trust her and her Son to be with us in all circumstances. It is good to know that the Mother of God is considered to be the Abbess of the whole Holy Mountain of Athos. In fact, she is the Abbess of every monastic community throughout the world, whether of men or of women. The fact that she appears to us, and the many ways in which she encounters us, strongly motivate us to pray for each other and to help each other.

Reading the lives of saints in The Synaxarion helps to keep us mindful of the faithfulness of our Saviour and of the Mother of God, who both love us. Even if we must die for the sake of being faithful to our Saviour's love and truth, He and she are nevertheless always with us, and they open the gates of the Kingdom to us. Although The Synaxarion is not bought by large numbers of us, many of its contents may be found on the internet. We have also the regular services of the Church, and the liturgical texts we hear (including the canons of the saints whose memory is kept that day). These texts both teach and remind us about how each saint followed Christ, and particularly how the martyrs persevered unto death. They are a source of encouragement for us to persevere as they did. This is so particularly for those believers who are in danger. The endangered ones are not only those overtaken by wars and persecutions, but also those who serve in military chaplaincies in war-zones. It is not insignificant that the Apostle Paul wrote :

> *For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labour; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith* (Philippians 1:21-25).

To die is gain, because it means eternal life in the love of the Heavenly Kingdom of Christ. However, the Apostle is content to wait until the fulness of time has arrived for his death. The day of his death did come, at the same time as that of the Apostle Peter, in different parts of Rome on 29 June in the year 67. In anticipation of that day, however, the Apostle Paul expresses that he is content to continue to labour for the welfare and growth in Christ of the Philippians, and by extension all those whom he brings to, and nurtures in Christ. Not all of us are called to witness for Christ through our deaths, but we are all called to witness for Christ through our living, unto our deaths. The challenge and struggle for each Christian never cease in this life.

14

The bishop as an example in prayer and intercession

> The Lord will give prayer to him who prays (Saint Silouan the Athonite, p. 317).

This simple and straight-forward statement about prayer is made by Saint Silouan of Mount Athos in his writings. Its roots are in the prayer of Anna, the mother of the Prophet Samuel, which is found in the third canticle of Matins : "*Giving prayer to the one praying, He has also blessed the years of the righteous one, for not by strength is a man powerful"* (1 Kingdoms [1 Samuel] 2:9). Saint Silouan himself is a living testimony to the truth of these words. His disciple, Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov), who wrote his biography, is likewise a living testimony to the truth of these words. We begin to pray. The Lord is in the beginning, and before the beginning. He gives us the desire and the strength to begin, and He gives us the ability to continue. Prayer is simply mutually exchanged love with our Lord. This exchange is in the form of a person-to-person communion. Especially when there are no words at all, and love simply flows openly and freely between the Lord and His creature who stands with heart and arms uplifted before Him, this is the height of true and pure prayer. Both Saint Silouan and Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov), understood and lived this. Merely standing next to Archimandrite Sophrony, not needing words, was itself an entering into that communion of love. The joyful peace that surrounded him was palpable. It is to such a communion of love that the faithful arch-pastor aspires. The more he is bathed in such peace and joy in this communion, the more the sheep can see and feel it. This is truly how the Christ-loving arch-pastor comes to know where is the living food in Christ, and how he can lead to this very food the faithful and Christ-loving sheep under his care. It is, moreover, through his own communion with the Lord in such love that the arch-pastor, who carries each member of this flock in his heart, is able to bring each of those sheep before our Saviour. Through and because of His Love, it is our Saviour who acts in saving and life-giving ways with the flock.

It is true that there are very many living fruits that result from the arch-pastor's communion of love with Christ. The Christ-loving arch-pastor cannot but pray from his heart for the flock entrusted to him because this is how Christ's love operates. The arch-pastor must have a living and life-giving relationship with the flock he leads. It is only by prayer that this relationship can be properly developed. This is also the only real way that the arch-pastor can help the flock of rational sheep learn how to pray and to intercede. He must do it first himself, in such a way that they can see that he does it, and so that they can see the fruits. It is not that the arch-pastor makes a public display of his prayer. This is to be hidden. It is rather that the fruits of his prayer cannot be hidden. The arch-pastor (as every Christian) puts into practical action the love for Christ which is constantly growing in the heart. Because of this prayer, our whole being participates in the living water of Christ, which nourishes and refreshes everything and everyone. Our relationships with others are truly deepened when we pray for them, and as the Lord acts in and through us. The Elder Sergei of Vanves said as much (although his words put it in reverse order). We clearly understand that what the Elder says does not mean that we pray for others simply as a means to an end :

> In order to deepen our relationships with others, we need to pray for them. (Elder Sergei of Vanves, p. 134).

Saint Seraphim of Sarov spoke strongly of the great need to nurture Christ's love in our hearts. The fruits of this are peace and hope. He told the novice John (Tikhonov) :

> 'My joy! I implore you, acquire a peaceful spirit, and then thousands of souls will be saved around you' (An Extraordinary Peace, p. 83).

> 'Oh! If only you knew what joy, what sweetness awaits the just soul in heaven, you would resolve to bear thankfully in this temporal life all manner of sorrows, persecutions and slander. And even though this very cell of ours were full of worms and though these worms were to eat our flesh during the whole of this temporal life, we ought to consent to it with the utmost longing, so as not to lose that heavenly joy which God has prepared for those who love Him. There is no pain, no sorrow, no sighing there; there, all is unutterable sweetness and joy; there, the just will shine like the sun' (*op. cit.*, p. 85).

Until now, we have mostly been addressing the responsibilities of the bishop as a shepherd with the flock entrusted to him. The whole responsibility for the flock, for the parishes and parishioners, does not rest solely with the bishop alone, although it remains that he alone can decide and judge some matters or speak on behalf of the diocese. Sometimes the bishop may improperly consider himself alone responsible (in the sense of being isolated from all others). Sometimes it is the people who will expect that he is responsible, and that they are not. Neither is correct. The responsibility is, in fact, mutual, even though the bishop might sometimes forget this when he is feeling pain. And further, the bishop and the people under his *omophor* are together responsible to Christ, and we are enabled by Christ to carry this responsibility. At the same time, it is important to remember that we are all responsible for our own spiritual lives. We can, indeed, choose daily to draw closer to the Lord. Truly, this is repentance. In this repentance, we have many means of support and encouragement, such as the Mysteries of Confession, Anointing and Holy Communion. When we choose to follow Christ, He supports us. We cannot ever blame anyone else for our mistakes, sins and betrayals. Those were our mistaken choices or deliberate betrayals, and they are our own responsibility. Indeed, our Saviour Jesus Christ shows us that our way is this mature way of personal responsibility and of pure, loving concern for the other.

Directly related to the fact that God is Love (1 John 4:7-21 ; see p. 7) is the fact that God is good. We are reminded of this frequently with such words as these :

> *O confess the Lord, for He is good, for eternal is His mercy* (Psalm 117:1).

> *Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good : chant to His Name, for it is good* (Psalm 134:3).

Our Saviour, Himself, reveals His goodness to us :

> '*I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep*' (John 10:10-11).

Our Lord's goodness is not trivial, like passing a plate of cookies or simply extending "best wishes". Our Lord's goodness is the most powerful thing in Heaven and on the earth. Our Lord's goodness is the source of all that is good, beautiful and true. Words from the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great reveal to us the great and pervasive effect of this goodness :

> Protect the good by Your goodness, and make the evil be good by Your kindness (the *anaphora*).

Our Lord's goodness prompts us from within to follow Him in all things, and to apply in a practical way these words :

> *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose* (Romans 8:28).

It is the responsibility of the faithful people to pray regularly (not only liturgically) for their bishop. This prayer is for their own protection, too, as they join their hearts with his. The liturgical expressions are not without their significance in expressing this relationship. The bows that the bishop and faithful make towards each other throughout each service are a repeated expression of mutual respect, not only of one another as human beings, but more, of the presence and image of Christ within each other. At every invocation of blessing or declaration of the peace of Christ by the bishop, the people respond (in one form or another) : "and with your spirit", and each is accompanied by a bow — by both bishop and people. These gestures give physical visibility to the mutual respect, the mutual love, and the mutual prayerful intercession that exist amongst the arch-pastor and the flock he leads. This is reinforced by the custom in which, when a bishop is commemorated by a deacon or a priest, the bishop will say (quietly or sometimes audibly) : "May the Lord God remember your diaconate (priesthood) in His Kingdom, always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages", accompanied by a bow, of course.

It is a known principle that the more one is conformed to Christ, the more one will be attacked from below. When under attack, it is a usual temptation to pay too much attention to the adversary. This temptation can be a complete distraction from mindfulness of the love of God. This distraction can be, and it is, indeed, deadly. The more we are attacked, the more we must cry out to Christ and to the Mother of God for help. To dare to engage in direct struggle and confrontation with the adversary (as though we were capable of prevailing by ourselves in such an encounter), is to invite spiritual death, and sometimes even physical death. Nikolai Motovilov († 1879), a disciple of Saint Seraphim of Sarov, experienced the consequences of such a dangerous idea. He was released from the grip of the devil only after thirty years of struggle, when he venerated the relics of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk († 1783). Saint Nikolai (Velimirovič) shows us that only Christ prevails, defeating death by His Death and Resurrection :

> Conquering all our enemies, He invites us to partake in His glorious victory. Not that we should ourselves conquer, but that we should creep in under the wing of His victory. His strength alone conquers; His weapons alone slay. We are without strength and without weapons, and our enemies are fearsome. But with Him we can conquer those more powerful than ourselves (The Prologue, 6 April).

We are continually reminded of this fact in our worship and life. In our Temples, we are constantly seeing these initials : IC XC, and this word : NIKA. The initials are the Greek initials for Jesus Christ (Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, *Iēsous Christos*). Νικᾷ, *nika* is Greek for the verb "conquer". Thus, the initials mean "Jesus Christ conquers". We see this in many icons, and in the stamp on most of our *prosphora* (bread offered at the Eucharist). We see this on many items of the clothing of monks, and of the vestments of clergy. This we are to remember and to embrace daily.

It is well-known that Saint Anthony the Great withdrew into the desert in order make sure that the Lord was his first priority. He withdrew also to allow the Lord to weed out of him anything that stood between him and the Lord. But how did he and others like him go about

this ? We can know something of this from what Saint Athanasius the Great wrote about his life. The first steps were in humility, and loving observance and emulation :

> He worked, however, with his hands, having heard, '*If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat*' [2 Thessalonians 3:10] and part he spent on bread and part he gave to the needy. And he was constant in prayer, knowing that a man ought to pray in secret unceasingly. For he had given such heed to what was read that none of the things that were written fell from him to the ground, but he remembered all, and afterwards his memory served him for books. Thus conducting himself, Anthony was beloved by all. He subjected himself in sincerity to the good men whom he visited, and learned thoroughly where each surpassed him in zeal and discipline. He observed the graciousness of one ; the unceasing prayer of another ; he took knowledge of another's freedom from anger and another's loving-kindness ; he gave heed to one as he watched, to another as he studied ; one he admired for his endurance, another for his fasting and sleeping on the ground ; the meekness of one and the long-suffering of another he watched with care, while he took note of the piety towards Christ and the mutual love which animated all. Thus filled, he returned to his own place of discipline, and henceforth would strive to unite the qualities of each, and was eager to show in himself the virtues of all. With others of the same age he had no rivalry ; save this only, that he should not be second to them in higher things. And this he did so as to hurt the feelings of no-one, but made them rejoice over him (Life of Saint Anthony the Great).

Saint Athanasius goes on to describe how the accuser and adversary — the enemy of our race — was determined to draw Anthony away from this way of life in the Way of Life, by bringing to his memory wealth, relatives, responsibilities, comforts and the like. When Anthony remained determined and faithful, the pressure increased, and the torture of thoughts and inner turmoil increased. However, Anthony turned to the Lord always, and the Lord acted in, through and with Anthony. When the deceiver took human form to increase the distraction, Anthony continued to call out to the Lord and to turn to Him. When Anthony withdrew to live in tombs and away from people, the pressure and attacks increased and became physical. He was beaten and tossed about. Still Anthony called out to the Lord, turned to Him, and co-operated with the Lord who was always working in and through him. The tests continued day and night for almost twenty years, yet Anthony never let go of the Lord.

> After this when many were eager and wishful to imitate his discipline, and his acquaintances came and began to cast down and wrench off the door by force, Anthony, as from a shrine, came forth initiated in the mysteries and filled with the Spirit of God. Then for the first time he was seen outside the fort by those who came to see him. And they, when they saw him, wondered at the sight, for he had the same appearance of body as before, and was neither fat, like a man without exercise, nor lean from fasting and striving with the demons, but he was just the same as they had known him before his retirement. And again his soul was free from blemish, for it was neither contracted as if by grief, nor relaxed by pleasure, nor possessed by laughter or dejection, for he was not troubled when he beheld the crowd, nor overjoyed at being saluted by so many. But he was altogether even as being guided by reason, and abiding in a natural state. Through him the Lord healed the bodily ailments of many present, and cleansed others from evil spirits. And He gave Grace to Anthony in speaking, so that he consoled many that were sorrowful, and set those at variance at one, exhorting all to prefer the love of Christ before all that is in the world (*op. cit.*).

The result of this struggle was complete identification with Christ, and the works and working of His love. Some of Saint Anthony's words of spiritual direction follow :

> 'For we have terrible and crafty foes—the evil spirits—and against them we wrestle, as the Apostle said, [...] "*not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places*" [Ephesians 6:12]. Great is their number in the air around us, and they are not far from us. Now there are great distinctions among them ; and concerning their nature and distinctions much could be said, but such a description is for others of greater powers than we possess. But at this time it is pressing and necessary for us only to know their wiles against ourselves. First, therefore, we must know this : that the demons have not been created like what we mean when we call them by that name ; for God made nothing evil, but even they have been made good. Having fallen, however, from the heavenly wisdom, since then they have been grovelling on earth. On the one hand they deceived the Greeks with their displays, while out of envy of us Christians they move all things in their desire to hinder us from entry into the heavens, in order that we should not ascend up thither from whence they fell. Thus there is need of much prayer and of discipline, that when a man has received through the Spirit the gift of discerning spirits, he may have power to recognise their characteristics : which of them are less and which more evil ; of what nature is the special pursuit of each, and how each of them is overthrown and cast out. For their villainies and the changes in their plots are many. The blessed Apostle and his followers knew such things when he said, "*for we are not ignorant of his devices*" [2 Corinthians 2:11] ; and we, from the temptations we have suffered at their hands, ought to correct one another under them. Wherefore I, having had proof of them, speak as to children. The demons, therefore, if they see all Christians, and monks especially, labouring cheerfully and advancing, first make an attack by temptation and place hindrances to hamper our way, namely, evil thoughts. But we need not fear their suggestions, for by prayer, fasting, and faith in the Lord their attack immediately fails. [...]
>
> 'I have spoken about these things, and now I must not shrink from speaking about them at greater length, for to put you in remembrance will be a source of safety. Since the Lord visited earth, the enemy is fallen and his powers weakened. Wherefore although he could do nothing, still like a tyrant, he did not bear his fall quietly, but threatened, though his threats were words only. And let each one of you consider this, and he will be able to despise the demons. [...]
>
> 'But if any one having in mind the history of Job [see Job 1 & 2] should say, "Why then has the devil gone forth and accomplished all things against him ; and stripped him of all his possessions, and slew his children, and smote him with evil ulcers" ? let such a one, on the other hand, recognise that the devil was not the strong man, but God who delivered Job to him to be tried. Certainly he [the devil] had no power to do anything, but he asked, and having received it, he did what he did. So also from this the enemy is the more to be condemned, for although willing he could not prevail against one just man (for if he could have, he would not have asked permission). But having asked not once but also a second time, he shows his weakness and want of power. And it is no wonder if he could do nothing against Job, when destruction would not have come even on his cattle had not God allowed it. And he has not the power over swine, for as it is written in the Gospel, they besought the Lord, saying, "'*Permit us to go away into the herd of swine*'" [Matthew 8:31]. But if they had power not even against swine, much less have they any over men formed in the image of God' (*op. cit.*).

The bishop's position amongst the flock, in the lead, leaves him exposed to such spiritual attacks. This makes the prayers of the faithful for him all the more crucial. Just as essential are the bishop's prayers for the flock. We all, together, ask the Lord to protect and to save each other. Sometimes the people feel that they are bereft and alone, and sometimes a bishop feels this way also. Such feelings are quite usual. However, the feeling can also be a challenge to hold on closely and firmly to the Lord. In doing so, we can be enabled to understand why the feeling has arisen, what are its root-causes, and where in it is the lie. If we have lived with a lie for a very long time, it can be very difficult to discern what exactly it is, because we have somehow identified ourselves with the lie and pretended or accepted that it is the truth about us. Our Lord has given us our spiritual fathers and mothers and our confessors who can help us to do this discerning. This feeling of being bereft and alone is obviously a temptation meant to drag us down into despair. Of course, this must be avoided if possible, by quickly, instantly, calling to our Saviour for help and protection. In truth, we are never abandoned by Christ, and we do not wish to abandon Him. Likewise we, the bishop-and-faithful, do not wish to abandon one another ; and in Christ and with Christ we will not do so. It is very helpful for us to remember that if we may forget Christ, He will never forget us. The following are only a few amongst many of the assurances provided to us by the Lord :

> '*But the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not be afraid, nor be terrified*' (5 Moses 31:8 ; see Hebrews 13:5).
>
> *Even if I were to walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I shall not fear bad things, for it is You that are with me* (Psalm 22:4).
>
> *If I were to go up into Heaven, You are there ; if I were to go down into Hadēs, You are present* (Psalm 138:8).
>
> '*Will a woman forget her child, so as not to have mercy on the offspring of her womb? But even if a woman should forget these things, nevertheless, I shall not forget you,' says the Lord. 'Behold, I painted your walls on My hands, and you are continually before Me'* (Isaiah 49:15-16).
>
> '*I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you*' (John 14:18).

Prayer brings Christ into the midst of any situation, including the liturgical situation and our life-situation. He does not intrude. He must be invited. This is the essence of prayer. At the same time, Christ is never in any way "outside" us, or away from us. It is we who sometimes think that we perceive that He is outside or away, but that is our mistake. There is a helpful comment from the fourteenth-century anchorite, Julian of Norwich in England. She is reported to have said that between God and us there is no "between". We are together, as one. Because God is always with us, and because the members of the flock are always in the heart of the arch-pastor, intercession must be a living part of the daily prayer of the high-priest. In this union in his heart with God and with the people entrusted to him, the high-priest lifts up the flock before the Lord. As a loving father/arch-pastor, he brings this flock (which is also his family) before the Lord. This activity or work of intercession is an important and integral fruit of the love the shepherd has for the sheep. It is a part of his knowing the sheep entrusted to him, and of their knowing their shepherd. In the love of Christ they mutually support each other, and they

mutually call to our Saviour to save, and to the Mother of God to protect. Saint Ignatius of Antioch exhorts us :

> Pray unceasingly for others ; for there is in them hope of repentance that they may attain to God ("Letter to the Ephesians", 10).

Some monks say that a half-dozen to a dozen serious believers in the whole world praying at any one time are responsible for keeping everything from collapsing, and I can probably accept that. However, I don't think that these few are yet completely alone. I know that there are many other people sincerely praying, too ; and these particular persons (the few and the many) are hidden from us. These particular persons throughout the world are those who are deeply in love with the Lord, and who are completely obedient to Him, and so they are helping us to survive through their prayers. So we all, too, pray for people known or unknown to us, but known to the Lord. Wonderful things still do occur. I see the fruits of these wonders frequently in the lives of persons I encounter. Thus, I am confident that when we are living in harmony with the Lord, weather can indeed be moderated ; earthquakes can be mitigated ; wars, fires and tsunamis can be stopped. That is, of course, why we have prayers about these things in our Book of Needs (*Euchologion*). We have the concrete example of Saint Herman of Alaska and the stopping of both a forest-fire and a tsunami by the placing of the icon of the *Theotokos* in the path of each. Without Saint Herman's intervention with the help of the Mother of God, there would have been a very great devastation. This is because the depth of Monk's Lagoon of Spruce Island becomes quickly very shallow towards the shore. If there is a tsunami, this makes such a wave much higher than in other places where the sea-bottom remains deeper.

Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) writes to us about prayer with regard to Saint Silouan who, in his love and simplicity, served on Mount Athos at Saint Panteleimon's Monastery for about fifty years. The *Staretz* (elder) had trusted the Mother of God from the beginning. As he left his village, he said :

> 'If the Mother of God is prepared to stand for me, there I go, and her business is to save me' (Beginning to Pray, p. 112).

Saint Silouan was given the obedience to be in charge of the workshops of the monastery, and to supervise and guide the many temporary workers who came there to earn a little money to take home. Of course, he prayed for them. Metropolitan Anthony continues, in words that touched me profoundly when I first read them over forty years ago :

> One day other monks, who were in charge of other workshops, said 'Father Silouan, how is it that the people who work in your workshops work so well while you never supervise them, while we spend our time looking after them and they try continuously to cheat us in their work?' Father Silouan said 'I don't know. I can only tell you what I do about it. When I come in the morning, I never come without having prayed for these people and I come with my heart filled with compassion and with love for them, and when I walk into the workshop I have tears in my soul for love of them. And then I give them the tasks they have to perform in the day and as long as they will work I will pray for them, so I go into my cell and I begin to pray about each of them individually. I take my stand before God and I say "O Lord, remember Nicholas. He is young; he is just twenty; he has left in his village his wife, who is even younger than he, and their first child. Can you imagine the misery there is there that he has had to leave them because they could not survive on his work at home. Protect them in his absence. Shield them against every evil. Give him courage to struggle through this year and go back to the joy of a meeting, with enough

> money, but also enough courage, to face the difficulties".' And he said 'In the beginning I prayed with tears of compassion for Nicholas, for his young wife, for the little child, but as I was praying the sense of the divine presence began to grow on me and at a certain moment it grew so powerful that I lost sight of Nicholas, his wife, his child, his needs, their village, and I could be aware only of God, and I was drawn by the sense of the divine presence deeper and deeper, until of a sudden, at the heart of this presence, I met the divine love holding Nicholas, his wife, and his child, and now it was with the love of God that I began to pray for them again, but again I was drawn into the deep and in the depths of this I again found the divine love. And so', he said, 'I spend my days, praying for each of them in turn, one after the other and when the day is over I go, I say a few words to them, we pray together and they go to their rest. And I go back to fulfil my monastic office.' Here you can see how contemplative prayer, compassion, active prayer are an effort and a struggle, because it was not just saying 'Remember, O Lord, him, him and him.' It was hours and hours spent just praying with compassion, praying with love, both blending together (Beginning to Pray, pp. 112-114).

It is for each bishop himself to learn how to accomplish this intercession practically, whether or not he does it just in the manner of Saint Silouan. A small diocesan family enables this prayer more easily ; a very large one can be prayed for in some other manner.

Saint Silouan himself said that Saint Seraphim of Sarov was a pillar of the Church that reached up to Heaven. He noted that it was because of Saint Seraphim's intercessory prayer for Russia that the Lord saved Russia during his lifetime. Then he said that Saint Seraphim was followed by another pillar who arose and reached up to Heaven some decades later. This was Saint John of Kronstadt. Saint Silouan recalled how, after serving in the church, when Saint John's carriage was brought to the door, people surged round about him as he stepped out of the Temple, and they tried to touch him and to receive the blessing from him :

> In all the hurly-burly his soul remained rapt in God. His attention was not distracted in the midst of the crowd and he did not lose his peace of soul. How did he manage this? That is our question. He achieved this and was not distracted because he loved the people and never ceased praying to the Lord for them. [...] Just as Father John of Kronstadt preserved his peace of soul by praying for the people without cease, so we lose our peace because we do not love the people of God (Saint Silouan the Athonite, p. 314).

Saint John of Kronstadt, who had a multitude of spiritual children, insisted that we must pray with special fervour for the living and for the departed during the Divine Liturgy :

> Pray for all, near or far, with sincerity, because in a heartfelt prayer we can spiritually communicate with everyone through our love for them. Through prayer we can draw our fellowmen so near to us that they will be in our hearts, and we can warm their hearts with our love and help them in their doings (The Life of Father John of Kronstadt, p. 49).

He is further reported by others to have often repeated the following petition from the *anaphora* of the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great :

> And Yourself, O God, remember all those whom we have not remembered, through ignorance, forgetfulness, or the multitude of names, since You know the name and age of each, even from his mother's womb.

I cannot but cite large portions of a homily by Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) because of its importance in this consideration, and also because it cannot be said better. As I see it, it is

good that a bishop keep in mind that Metropolitan Anthony, as a good homilist, presents all this teaching in terms that most hearers might comprehend :

> Prayer is an immense subject. It embraces and sustains the whole of Christian life. It is both the intimate relationship which each one of us has with our God and that which the Church has with Him as the whole body of Christ. To deal with the subject as a whole seems to me impossible, and I should like just to say here something about the prayer of intercession. It is at the very heart of the Christian life. Christ is the supreme intercessor. And what is the Church, in each one of its members and in its totality but an extension in time and space, through the course of the ages and in a world which is gradually being won for him — an extension of the real presence of Christ, incarnate in those who are its members, and also, the presence of the Holy Spirit in those who, singly and together make up the temple of the Spirit? [...]
>
> He is at the heart of the chaos, because the Lord who is the Lord of peace, the Lord of life is also the Lord of [over] death. All power is His. He is in command and He is king. [...]

Here, we see that Metropolitan Anthony emphasises that God in Christ is not distant nor absent, but intimately close to us, and involved in our lives. As examples, he uses the Three Children in the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar (see Canticles 7 *&* 8 of Matins : Daniel 3:26-56, 57-88), and a number of acts of our Saviour in the Gospels. Recalling how our Saviour came to His frightened and distressed disciples on the turbulent water in a storm, he reminds us that our Saviour is always present, especially in a storm (see Matthew 8:23-27 ; Matthew 14:22-33 ; Mark 4:35-41 ; Luke 8:22-25). Our Saviour's peace and powerful command may be likened to the calm in the eye of a hurricane. He is able to bring this peace and powerful calm instantly into our experience. Then Metropolitan Anthony explains further :

> The term 'intercession' does not denote first and foremost a prayer; it denotes an action; to intercede is to take a step which brings us to the heart of a situation, which brings us to the point where all conflicts meet head-on, where the impact of this collision is at its most violent. Intercession begins with an involvement, an involvement that is definitive, permanent, complete, unlimited, unconditional. The interceding Christ is not the praying Christ; it is the Christ who is the Word of God made flesh; it is the Son of God who becomes the son of man; there is every evidence that He prays, but His act of intercession is first of all an act and not a word. The Son of God becomes the son of man; the Word is made flesh; there is a unique person in whom God and man meet, in whom the breach between God and man is healed; harmony is restored: man and God are united forever in the perfect obedience of the man Jesus Christ of which St Paul speaks, in the perfect, sacrificial self-giving of the Word made flesh. There is in Him, as it were, a concentration of the whole conflict, of all that separates man and God, and in Him, this conflict, this separation, is brought to an end. [...]

In this homily, Metropolitan Anthony gives concrete and personal examples of the meaning and content of intercession. He shows us how intercession finds its best example in our Saviour's prayer from the Cross : "'*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do*'" (Luke 23:34). These words might well be applied especially to the responsibility of bishops, who are so particularly identified with our Saviour in such a public manner. Then, he continues his formative consideration of Who Christ is, and the implications for us :

> Saint Maximus the Confessor, in the seventh century, reflecting on the Incarnation, the Passion and the Death of Christ says: 'If it is true, as Scripture teaches, and as God proclaims through His prophets and apostles, that death is the fruit of sin, that man dies

from the loss of God, that man dies from being no longer grafted on the source of life, then Christ, from the moment of His conception is alive and immortal. He cannot be at the same time the Living God and mortal man; even His humanity, penetrated with divinity, is beyond death, because it is united with God forever'. How then does He come to die? By this act, willed and freely accepted, of solidarity with sinful man, He immerses Himself in our death; He clothes Himself with it; He is going to die of it. And to that end He shares all that belongs to our human destiny, not only hunger and thirst and weariness and anguish, but something more besides: have you ever given the attention of your whole heart, your whole power of feeling, to the cry which He utters from the height of the Cross: '"*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*"' [Matthew 27:46] If it is true that one dies from the absence of God, from the loss of God, then it is there that He accepts a solidarity — ultimate, agonising, appalling — with us: He undertakes to share with us the only tragedy that is final and ultimate, the loss of God which is our death. And in His death, He is torn apart. His soul, dazzling with the light of the divinity, and His body, united forever with His divinity, are separated, torn from each other; the body of Christ rests incorruptible in the tomb because it is penetrated by the presence of God; and the soul of Christ, like the soul of every man, descends into hell [i.e. Hadēs] as we proclaim in the Apostles' Creed [see Part C-6].

But what then is hell? Oh, how different it is from the hell of Dante, from all those images that we find of the Christian hell, the place of torment! The hell of the Old Testament is something infinitely more terrible; the sheol of the Old Testament is the place of the radical absence of God; it is the place where God is not and never shall be, and it is to that place that every human soul descends, not only the souls of sinners but also those of the just, because before Christ there is no bridge between the eternity of God and the death of man. Christ, sharing our destiny, having lost God and being dead because of it, descends to the place where every human soul that has lost God descends, and there is set the very mystery of our redemption. He descends into this hell which awaits Him, this hell which He has overcome on earth at every moment and which now awaits its victim, which now knows that it is going to possess Him and overcome Him for ever; and suddenly this hell finds itself full of the splendour of the divinity, of the eternal and uncreated light of the Living God. It is by His death that He has conquered hell and death: there is no longer a place where God is not and to which man will be banished. Now, for the Christian, to die is to fall asleep in the Lord. Death in its utmost atrocity, as irremediable separation from God, does not exist, and that is why we sing in the Orthodox Church and why we all believe, with the joy and exultation of faith, that the death of Christ has destroyed death; not this falling asleep in the Lord, but the definitive death of separation.

That is the measure of the solidarity of Christ with men: His solidarity with God was total and it was on that account that the city of men rejected Him. It is because of this, because He wished to be faithful to the end, to be one with God to the end, that the city of men could only do Him to death outside the walls of Jerusalem. Rejected by men, abandoned by God, yet united in solidarity with both at the cost of His life — that is the solidarity of Christ and that is the solidarity to which He calls us. It is His incarnation, His absolute solidarity with God and with man, which *is* the act of intercession on which a prayer of intercession is grafted, a prayer which is true because it is under-girded by the act, a prayer which is true because it expresses an act accomplished, not simply an appeal to the generosity or mercy of God, but an appeal to God under-girded by an act which cannot be forgotten or rejected by the Father who so loved the world that He gave His only Son to die for its salvation [see John 3:16].

> We are called to be in the world what Christ was. Remember the words He spoke and the mission He gave to His disciples on the evening of His resurrection: '"*As the Father has sent Me, I also send you*"' [John 20:21]. And these words, which sometimes sound like a song of victory or a trumpet-blast to those of us who live in a strong world and who are apt to turn with rather ill-considered charity towards a world which is weaker, these words which send out missionaries supported by all the power of the country from which they come, these words sounded more like a knell when Christ uttered them. On Good Friday Christ was dead on the Cross, on Sunday He says to them: I send you into the world as My Father has sent me. The image is clear: as sheep into the midst of wolves — to give your life, to shed your blood, in order that others can believe in the love of God and be re-born in the hope of this love, and can be joined to this body of Christ which is destined, as long as the world lasts, as long as there is one sinner in the world, to crucifixion. Christ in the glory of His Father, seated at the right hand of the Father, bears in His hands and feet and side, the marks of the Passion [...] ("Sermon on the Prayer of Intercession" ; see pp. 217-218).

The effectiveness of intercessory prayer that is rooted in the love of Christ is seen in the following very simple and straight-forward encounter :

> The blessed Abba Paul the Simple recounted the following incident: 'I had a disciple who, unbeknownst to me, fell into various sins. It so happened that he died. I prayed at length to God and besought the Holy Theotokos to reveal to me in whose company his soul was to be found after its departure from his body. After quite a few days spent in prayer, I fell into ecstasy. I saw my disciple being supported by two strangers, deprived of any mental or bodily power whatsoever. Nor did he speak at all; it was if he were turned to stone. I was in great agony. [...] Then, as if by Divine inspiration, I recalled that which the Lord said about him who is not clothed in a wedding garment: "'*Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth*'" [Matthew 22:13]. When I had awoken from the ecstasy, I began to be exceedingly sorrowful and anxious. I gave alms, according to my ability, for the repose of his soul and had him commemorated at Divine Liturgies. I besought the Holy Theotokos to have mercy on him. I also besought God, Who loves mankind, on his account. And even though I had reached such deep old age, I began to toil in asceticism and eat only uncooked foods. After a few days, I saw the All-Holy Theotokos, who said to me: "Why are you sorrowful and anxious, little Father?" I replied: "On account of the brother, my Lady, because I saw him in a wretched condition." She answered: "Was it not you who supplicated me because you wanted to see him? Now, then, you have been informed." And I said: "Yes, I entreated you, I supplicated; but I did not wish to see him in that condition. Of what use is it to me to see him and to cry and be in pain?" And the Holy Theotokos said to me: "Go now. For your humility, toil, and love, I will show him to you in such a way that you will not be sorrowful." The next day, I once again saw (in ecstasy) the brother coming towards me in elation, advancing forward by himself, laughing. And he said to me: "Your intercessions, Father, inclined the All-Holy Theotokos, because she loves you exceedingly. And she besought our Saviour to release me from my bonds, since I was constricted by the ropes of my sins." When the brother spoke these words, I was filled with joy. And forthwith I saw the All-Holy Theotokos, who said to me: "Were you informed, Elder, just now?" I answered: "Yes, my Lady, and I was very pleased, because I saw him in comfort." She replied: "Go, then, and always remember the brother through prayer, almsgiving, and Divine Liturgies. For almsgiving and Liturgies exceedingly aid those who have reposed"' (The Great Gerontikon [The Great Book of Elders] vol. 4, ch. 18, §32, pp. 348-351).

15

The bishop as an example in prayer and spiritual struggle

> Abba Anthony said to Abba Pœmen, 'This is the great work of a man: always to take the blame for his own sins before God and to expect temptation to his last breath.' He also said, 'Whoever has not experienced temptation cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.' He even added, 'Without temptations no-one can be saved' (The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, p. 2).

For a bishop as much as for anyone else, it would be well to keep these words of Abba Anthony in mind at all times. These words keep our spiritual balance and perspective clear. For us all (and especially for a bishop), there must in our life be a firm foundation in prayer : in daily conversation with, and adoration of the Lord. Without this, neither the bishop nor anyone can manage to keep above the stormy waves of life, and the myriad distractions and temptations that assault us all. As Saint Anthony says, temptations are inevitable : no-one escapes. Our Saviour suffered temptations. It is crucial that we remember always that they come from the powers of darkness. Following Christ brings spiritual struggle. Although I am not at all the person qualified to write about such things, something more must be written here, in the context of this consideration about prayer, concerning spiritual watchfulness and the struggle to be completely and always faithful to Christ. Therefore, I dare to write at least some words about this struggle, which affects every one of us who follows Christ, and who wishes to draw nearer to Him in love (regardless of function, category or "rank"). Because his responsibility places him in the lead, and therefore somewhat exposed, it is possible that the struggle may have its own particular intensity for a bishop. This sharp struggle comes to all Christians as a matter of course. The powers of darkness always try to extinguish the Light, Christ (see John 1:5-14), and there are attacks on everyone who participates in that Light. No-one ought ever to ask specifically for spiritual struggle. Sometimes a bishop may experience a particular intensity of spiritual attack because of dark political activities which expose him to attack, much as Uriah (the husband of Bathsheba) was placed at the front lines and left exposed to the arrows (see 2 Kingdoms 11:14-17).

Bishops are, for instance, spiritually tested very sharply in regard to the well-known principle that having stability of place is crucial for the development of prayer. The sad truth is that if a bishop did not already have a deep and stable habit of prayer, he would not easily acquire it after ordination to the high-priesthood. A bishop has always been required to travel in order to visit the flock entrusted to him, and to attend Holy Synod meetings. Of old, this meant being absent months at a time. Nowadays, both the modern rapid means of transportation that keep a bishop in perpetual motion, and the modern facilitation of rapid, perpetual and ever-invasive communication contribute to the complexity of dangers which have made it perilous in the extreme to be a bishop. The candidate for the episcopate must be aware of this grave danger, and must have his priorities in order. One simple way to help survival (one which is clearly known to many a bishop), is that when travelling, the bishop might carry an icon that is used at home in his cell, so that in his various accommodations he will have this point of stable spiritual reference and connexion. Many also carry holy water for blessing and drinking.

In his letter to the bishop of Jerusalem of his day, Saint Barsanouphius of Gaza († *ca.* 540) writes :

> If, as we believe, everything is possible for God, let us do our utmost in Him and He will Himself exterminate our adversaries. It is He who '*disperses the counsels of the nations* [...] *and He sets at nought the counsels of princes. But the counsel of the Lord remains unto the age*' [Psalm 32:10-11]. Affirm the truth, struggle for it, and God will fight your enemies for you. They struggle according to the flesh ; but you, hold firm according to the Spirit, that is to say with prayers and supplications for whatever is needed, asking God for His help. [...] Do not fear them, '"*for those who are with us are greater in number than those who are with them*"' [4 Kingdoms (2 Kings) 6:16]. They are with the devil and with those who have the same passions ; but we are with God and His saints. We put our hope in God, who said, '"*I will not forsake you nor disregard you*"' [Joshua 1:5]. And He '*is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think*' [Ephesians 3:20], and He fulfils for us the word, '*Blessed is the one whose Helper is the God of Jacob ; his hope is on the Lord his God*' [Psalm 145:5]. They put their hope '*in sons of Men, in whom there is no salvation*' [Psalm 145:3].

As we are aware, Saint John "Climacus" († *ca.* seventh century), abbot of the monastery at Mount Sinai, wrote the book The Ladder of Divine Ascent, which is normally read in monastic communities every Great Lent. In due time, an icon was written of this Ladder of Divine Ascent, in which we can see that our Saviour at the top is blessing all those who are ascending this ladder. However, the nearer we draw to our Lord, the more the forces of darkness work to draw us away from Him. In the icon, these forces are depicted as skinny black figures that are attempting to pull off the ladder those trying to ascend it. In the course of life, the tests become stronger, not lesser. It is necessary to understand that such tests/temptations do not come from our loving Lord, but from the wolf-of-souls who dwells in darkness :

> *Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone* (James 1:13).

In this context, it is important that we understand the consequences of our choices. As the Apostle Paul reminds us :

> *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places* (Ephesians 6:12).

All of the entities to which he refers are spiritual ones, the fallen bodiless powers who are determined to drag us away with them : "Misery loves company". They are in misery because they exist in the lie. They know Who is the Truth, but they deny Him. Thus they suffer. If we are not aware of this dangerous fact in our lives and environment, we are in great danger. As soon as we become distracted by lies and fears, and we consequently allow our attention to stray from our loving Lord and Master, we step aside from His protection and we become vulnerable prey for the wolf-of-souls. It is and always has been the case that matters that appear to be urgent and that demand immediate attention quickly become robbers of our peace. They are tyrannical slave-drivers of our attention, spinning us quickly (like little tops), and we lose all sense of direction.

Our Saviour Himself faced temptations and tests. The Apostle and Evangelist Matthew in his Gospel writes for us about the temptations that our Saviour Himself faced after His baptism, during His time in the wilderness :

> *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.' But He answered and said, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God"'* [5 Moses 8:3]. *Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: "He shall give His angels charge over you," and, "in their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone"'* [Psalm 90:11-12]. *Jesus said to him, 'It is written again, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God"'* [5 Moses 6:16]. *Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, 'All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve"'* [see 5 Moses 6:13]. *Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him* (Matthew 4:1-11 ; see also Mark 1:12-13 ; Luke 4:1-13).

In this encounter, the tempter (the accuser, the devil, the usurper, the enemy of our race) finds our Saviour in a greatly weakened condition, physically. Always, the tempter aims at weak spots, and he prefers the surprise-attack. However, he did not seem to understand Whom he was actually encountering.

The subtle and not-so-subtle propositions that he places before the Lord contain the roots of all our passions (fear, pride, greed, lust for power, coercion, vainglory, gluttony, jealousy, anger, *&c.*). In every case, had our Saviour accepted, humility and selfless love would have disappeared. The first temptation proposed was hunger. Had our Saviour taken that or any other bait at any time, it would have brought about a break in the complete unity of the Holy Trinity. Likewise, if we are tempted in this manner, and accept it, then we break communion with our Saviour as we look for help elsewhere. About the second temptation regarding tempting the Lord our God, Saint John Chrysostom writes :

> With that extreme gentleness He reasons with him again from the Scriptures, saying, '"*You shall not tempt the Lord your God*"' : teaching us that we must overcome the devil, not by miracles, but by forbearance and long-suffering, and that we should do nothing at all for display and vainglory ("Homily on Matthew 4").

It may be said that this temptation is also related to our tendency in times of stress to bargain with the Lord. In our arrogance we can dare to think that we know better than the Lord, and have better solutions to difficult situations. Brashly thinking that we know God's will for us, we may try to force a miracle from the Lord, as was suggested to our Saviour. The third temptation about honours and power was aimed at destroying humility. This temptation was attacking the truth of Who He is : that He is Love. Had He succumbed, humility and meekness would readily and incomprehensibly have been replaced by pride, jealously, lust for power, anger, coercion and so on. Coercion can be described as the use of power to get our own way by force. This temptation shows itself to us in the short-cuts that we accept and take in our impatience to achieve our own ends. These short-cuts produce the oppression of others and the poisoning of our environment which has become so characteristic of us. Our Saviour shows us the better way.

In the words of the Apostle Paul we find an exhortation that is related to temptations :

> [...] *I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly* (Romans 16:19-20).

It is the Lord who accomplishes everything, and it is necessary that we keep this always in mind and in heart. If in our hearts we are living in continual communication of love with our Saviour, there can be no surprises in the attacks. The temptations will come, but in Christ we will be aware of them in their approach. In this awareness, we can in Him keep them away and prevent their landing, as we keep flies away from us and from our food at a picnic.

The Lord Himself does not engage in a dialogue with the enemy of our race, but rather cites what is written in the Scriptures. Satan leaves Him afterwards. This is truly an example for us to follow. It is necessary that we always remember that the enemy of our race is very aware of the Scriptures, and that he dares to cite them as well. However, his citations are always with adjustments, distortions, twists, underlying poisonous suggestions, and wrong context, because he is the deceiver and the father-of-lies (see John 8:44).

Further to what has been written so far (and particularly with reference to the citations from Matthew and Romans), a clarification might be useful. For us to be "wise" and "simple", as the Apostle prays for us, it is necessary that we be always aware of who we truly are in Christ. The simplicity to which he refers in his prayer is that of single-mindedness, single-heartedness, single-focussedness (not simple-mindedness). Our relationship with Christ must grow so that it becomes constant. It must be a continuous communication in love in the heart. If the arch-pastor does not really "know himself" in truth and in Christ, he can very easily fall into traps. For instance, the fact that the arch-pastor clearly has a fatherly-motherly pastoral-familial responsibility for the flock entrusted to him carries with it the danger of making special or particular attachments to some members of this flock. He could easily enough dare to regard the flock as his own, and forget that on Christ's behalf, he is merely a steward of the flock of Christ. In the past, there were some few occasions when this distraction and confusion led to a confusion of physical assets between the bishop and the diocese. Because genuine love and affection for the flock can be distorted, sometimes it may come to be known that a bishop has particular favourites. Sometimes the trap of attachment can come from a member of the flock who may be tempted (knowingly or unknowingly) to think that the arch-pastor could actually become his/her own father, and then try to bring about an attachment. Then, as is usual in a family amongst the children, jealousies simmer amongst them, and resentment festers towards the parent. The arch-pastor greatly needs the healthy custom of daily self-examination in Christ, with frequent confession if possible, so as to maintain his balance, and to be able to serve Christ and His flock effectively. Our Saviour could pass unscathed through His encounter with the adversary because, obviously, He knows Himself. He is Truth. We must live in this Truth.

In the writings of others, there is a variety of popular terms often used instead of the term "spiritual struggle", which is used in this section. The terms "spiritual combat" and "spiritual warfare" are typical of this. Some of these expressions have older roots in western thinking. These terms demonstrate a perception that there is some sort of fighting expected. The late Pope John Paul II (†2005), in one of his speeches, spoke about "spiritual combat", and described it as a secret and interior art, the manner in which monks daily struggle against temptations. His words suggest that monks are "specialists" or spiritual "professionals" in this struggle.

However, from an Orthodox perspective, it would be said that the daily struggle to be faithful to Christ is the struggle of all Christians, whether or not they are ordained to any function, whether or not they are clergy or monks. Furthermore, in much of what we might find written on the subject outside of Orthodoxy, we see an emphasis on the rôle of the demonic forces. Indeed, especially in Protestant literature, the emphasis is on the word "war" and on fighting with the devil(s). This focus on combat, warfare, and the demonic is not really in harmony with our normal Orthodox way of living the spiritual life directed towards Christ. Spiritual struggle is definitely not considered by us to be a monastic speciality. Rather, the life of monks, motivated by repentance, is an intensification of devotion to Christ. By example, monastic life nurtures and reinforces the life of Christians in parishes. The parishioners, in loving response, usually help to support and strengthen those who have given themselves so completely to the service of our Saviour in monasteries. By their intercessions and prayers, in their steadfast devotion, the life of the monks (both male and female) extends from their communities to help to serve as an anchor of stability in the life of our parishes.

When an exaggerated focus is placed on the enemy of our race and on evil forces, two ugly things can happen. In the rightful place of the Lord, these forces become the main focus of our attention ; they thus usurp and replace Christ. We pay attention to them, and Christ is moved to the back-ground. These forces then become idols, and we become idolaters, having been "led down the garden path". Then, a high-priest or priest, who has lost his way and tries to take "short-cuts" in his spiritual leadership, can create fear in the flock he leads. He could then use this fear as a weapon, whip or goad to try to keep the sheep obedient and in line. By force and by fear, he imposes his own will, instead of remaining patient and waiting for the Lord to act amongst the sheep. This is the dangerous, deadly tactic of "fighting fire with fire" in an ignorant manner, a tactic which can only fail, because the leader (now unrighteous) puts himself in the place of the Righteous Judge. He thus puts in peril his own soul, and that of the sheep in his care. He has become a spiritual and emotional abuser instead of an agent of healing, and thus is amongst those falling off the ladder.

If we refer back to the life of Saint Anthony the Great who was considered previously (see pp. 248-250), we can see clearly that what comes first is a truly loving encounter with our Saviour Jesus Christ, and then (because of love) a determination to serve Him and Him alone. Indeed, the very same thing can be seen in the Gospels and Epistles with regard to everyone who has met Christ and decided to accept His invitation to follow Him. We love the Lord, and we wish to follow Him, and to be like Him. We desire to be pleasing to Him in everything. However, we are fallen persons who live in the midst of fallenness. Because of our immersion in this worldly context, we have a myriad or even myriads of habits and ways of thinking and perceiving things that make it difficult for us to fulfil our desire to love God.

Orthodox Christianity would not be at all the same without its strong monastic foundation. Monasteries maintain the traditions of living the Christian life which have been passed down from the beginning, that is, from Christ. In itself, the weekly (and even daily) chanting of the whole Psalter in monasteries helps to develop spiritual fathers and mothers, and wise elders as well. By God's mercy, both spiritual and material good arise through the prayers and obediences of the monks, which affect for the good the monastic community in which they live. This beneficial effect is extended to the larger community living around the monastery, because there is inevitably a constant interaction between the monks and their neighbours. There is a blessing extended to people living farther away who may make a pilgrimage to speak

with a spiritual father/mother, or with a wise elder (if there be one). Monastics devote their entire lives learning to love God and to live in constant repentance. All the wisdom and all the goodness that ever come from a monastery come from the love of God, flowing to others through those who have encountered this love, experienced it, learnt it, lived it. Reading The Synaxarion daily gives us a clear reminder and understanding of how monks who withdraw from the world truly become Christ's yeast and salt for those who live in the world. We are grateful that there are monastics who devote their whole lives to this and to this alone.

Thoughts come to us from everywhere, especially during the times when we really want to be in communion and communication (at prayer) with the Lord. Sometimes they appear to be practical thoughts, good thoughts, or even excellent thoughts. Sometimes they come from within. Sometimes they come from the environment (some say "out of the air", or "out of the blue"). Sometimes they come from insidious dark forces. Sometimes they come one-by-one. Sometimes they come to us as a bombardment. Sometimes they attack us as a thick cloud of arctic insects. Sometimes they come with conflicting perspectives. Sometimes they come accusing us with distortions of old memories. This is particularly the case in the remembrance of past sin. It becomes a weapon used by the enemy to dishearten us. Many persons may even become obsessed by the memory of some past sin or sins (actively committed, or inflicted upon them by another, or by a sin or sins committed or inflicted by oneself upon another). This obsession is always in the absence of God's love. This memory exerts a debilitating and poisonous influence on us. Sometimes memories come to us, accompanied by the love of God. These may indeed be accurate ; but without this love, the memories become twisted through an undercurrent of deception and fear. Recollection of sin in the context of God's love is true, and it serves as a motivation for repentance, and as a confirmation of God's mercy. Nevertheless, when we are praying, "no thoughts" is to be the aim of us all. Our focus and purpose is to absorb and to respond to Christ's love, which He constantly gives to us in ways we often do not even see. In times of great stress, it is salvific that we constantly recall, and that we make our own, the words spoken by the father of the possessed child, who said to our Saviour, "'*Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!*'" (Mark 9:24). This is all the more necessary when we have difficulty perceiving that the Lord is with us, because of the distress and chaos of our lives. Sometimes we may have to include this plea in the context of our use of the "Jesus Prayer".

We can often feel that we are being assaulted by thoughts. It is necessary to remember that we owe thoughts no duty of hospitality. Rather, we let them (or we help them) pass by. I recall seeing many instances of such a strategy in Chinese martial arts, in which an attacker is helped to pass by without making any real contact. At least one or two of our modern educators might speak in similar terms. The Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko has been reported as having said in effect that when you are praying, and you are disturbed by various thoughts (especially those that are guilt-ridden and shameful), you do well just to let them pass by. You don't need to invite them in for a cup of tea ! The usual Greek word for such thoughts is *logismoi*, a word now very frequently used amongst English-speakers as well. The Greek word λόγος, *logos* (which means "word") has many applications, and its greatest one is its use in describing the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the *Logos*, the Word. Λογισμός, *logismos*, the singular form of this derivative of *logos*, is the term mostly used in monastic writing : it refers to the first thought that attempts to interrupt, disturb and distract a person from prayer focussed on our Lord. This is the invasive thought which we are to resist. If we fail, then we instantly encounter not one *logismos*, but many *logismoi*. The fact that many monks often speak and write about their

gruelling struggle with *logismoi* shows how difficult this is. In the traditional understanding of this word, *logismoi* can suggest many meanings : calculation, chatter, what we might even call noise. Thoughts can be random. They can appear to be something reasonable and logical. They can appear to be of some substance. They can appear to be good. Perhaps some thoughts are good in other contexts ; but when they arrive, interrupting us in the midst of prayer, in the midst of our focus on the Lord, then they are not good at that moment. No matter what good there may appear to be in them, they nevertheless are distracting us from our focus and attention on Christ, and they are therefore sent to us from below for that purpose. We have this comment of Saint John the Dwarf († *ca.* 405) (we may understand the tree to be the Tree of the Cross itself) :

> 'I am like a man sitting under a great tree, who sees wild beasts and snakes coming against him in great numbers. When he cannot withstand them any longer, he runs to climb the tree and is saved. It is just the same with me; I sit in my cell and I am aware of evil thoughts coming against me, and when I have no more strength against them, I take refuge in God by prayer and I am saved from the enemy' (The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, p. 87).

Saint Theophan the Recluse (†1894) reflects on this same struggle with thoughts. He reminds us that we all struggle with thoughts that disturb us just as does the buzzing of annoying mosquitoes. He explains that it is by experience that we can learn how to cope with them. He adds that this turmoil of thoughts is our common experience, and the particularities are of no importance. However, he says that we must be wary of those thoughts that can pierce the heart as does an arrow, and which can leave a scar. It is only by addressing it immediately with prayer that the scar can be erased, and the opposite feeling restored (see The Art of Prayer, pp. 162-163). Saint Theophan reminds us that certain thoughts may manage to penetrate us and pierce us because we have suffered from a distraction. At such a time it is crucial to turn to the Lord immediately, and to allow Him to take away the poison and the pain. He alone can replace them with the joy that is the constant witness of His presence in our hearts. If we do not do this, then our responses and actions may well be from the poison and pain and not from His love.

In The Vatopedi Catechesis, the Elder Joseph of Vatopedi Monastery on Mount Athos (†2009) says to us all that one who truly practices repentance must be as a crab. A crab, when confronted or cornered, turns and sidles away in the opposite direction, and escapes. The elder says that although some writers exhort us not to yield in battle, we are not all the same, and we do not all have the same mind, health, and strength as, for instance, the Elder Joseph. He reminds us to be very wary of will, opinion and judgement. These words reflect one of the prayers at the end of the fourth *kathisma* of psalms. As Peter did, so we also reach out to Christ, and cry out, "'*Lord, save me!*'" (Matthew 14:30)

Pope Shenouda III of blessed memory was a long-experienced hermit. He has said that God loves each of us as much as He loves those who in Christ have prevailed in struggles with sin and sinfulness. He works within each of us just as He has always done with others. Whenever attacks increase, Grace increases even more. This is why it is so crucially important to hold on closely and firmly to the Lord, and to call constantly for His help. Sometimes our focus can be misplaced in subtle ways. Our concern for the Church and her welfare can sometimes become a preoccupation. This same Pope Shenouda once told a struggling hermit-monk from the West that it is quite possible and tempting to be found busy about the House of the Lord ; but what is necessary is to be found busy about the Lord of the House. Correct priorities are important. Christ, only Christ, Christ alone is our concern. This focus precisely reflects the

Resurrected Saviour's questions to the Apostle Peter, which we shall encounter later (see pp. 318-320). With this apostle, we respond to our Lord's love with focussed determination : "'*You know that I love You*'" (John 21:15). The order of priority is, obviously, that our Saviour loves us, and because of this we love the Lord. With His help, we can love others as He loves us. When we are not aware of our Lord's love for us, we cannot be sharers of His love with others.

In the midst of our consideration of spiritual struggle, it is absolutely essential that we all understand and remember that this struggle is always a factor in our lives. It is not something from which we, who love Christ and wish to be like Him, can escape. The enemy of our race (the devil) constantly challenges our love and faithfulness to Christ, and he does not stop throughout our life. The struggle is a significant factor in the life of each of us simply because we are members of Christ. For this reason, the Apostle gives us these words out of his own experience in order to encourage us to persevere :

> *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us* (Romans 5:1-8).

We see how the Apostle encourages us by subtly reminding us that we are not pampered greenhouse plants, but plants enabled by Christ to endure the most difficult weather. Tribulation teaches us how, in Christ's love, to persevere. Perseverance, he says, produces character. That character is the character of Christ Himself. Character produces hope because, the Apostle says, into our hearts God pours out love, love, and more love and life by the Grace of the Holy Spirit. He enables us to persevere, and we do persevere because we love Him, and we hold tightly to Him. The struggle can be particularly sharp for the arch-pastor, because he is called in his leadership to reveal the character of Christ clearly and without distortion to the sheep. Bearing the character of Christ, he has the needed hope with which to lead to Christ Himself the sheep entrusted to him. Hope is the expression of the joyous and life-giving companionship of Christ with us at all times.

It is when we are distracted, forgetful or besieged, that we learn how to call constantly to the Lord for help, and to refer always to Him, just as the Apostle urges us, and just as did Saint Anthony. It is only the Lord who can keep our focus stable in His love, and keep our hearts in His peace. The Elder Paisios (Eznepidis) of Mount Athos commented that when we have come to such stable inner tranquillity, it doesn't matter what is happening around us, how much is the noise, how many are the activities. In the context of this tranquillity, it is only Christ, who is at the centre of our being, that is of any importance. Then nothing will be able to disturb us. He spoke of this in the context of an occasion when he was riding a bus in which the driver insisted on playing music very loudly. Father Paisios spoke, then, about ἀπάθεια, *apatheia*, a Greek word which expresses an inner tranquillity which cannot be disturbed by anything that might happen nearby or at a distance (see Spiritual Counsels, vol. 1, pp. 206-211). Father Paisios is known also

to have commented that during prayer all thoughts may be treated as if they were aircraft attempting to land. He said that we ought to stop the thoughts from landing, since once they do, they begin their work of serious distraction and/or diversion, and sometimes enslavement (see Elder Paisios of the Holy Mountain, p. 48). We do this by ignoring them and turning to the Lord, not by employing some overt activity. It is because of the effects upon us of the distracting attackers that it is crucial that we keep our hearts clean in Christ. The following words of the Elder Sergei of Vanves can also help us :

> Passions manifest themselves first in your thoughts, and then when they begin to resonate with us, when we begin to pay attention to them or take an interest in them, then our feelings work with the passion. It is at this point that we become guilty of sin, whereas before we had actually taken an interest in the passion, we had no guilt whatsoever. The last step, then, is when the thought is transformed into an act. This stage is the most serious. You must avoid this evolution of the passions by refusing to dialogue with bad thoughts from the moment they appear. Repel them immediately.
>
> If a bad thought appears to us in our spirit, we need to immediately purify ourselves through contrition. It is better to feel contrition and repent than to pray right away because without this contrition our prayer will be soiled by our sin.
>
> Contrition is asking God to forgive us for a thought, an act, or a state.
>
> In order to endure spiritual difficulties, we must make use of patience. Patience is not a passive state whereby we wait for things to get better through external circumstances or a change of our will. On the contrary, patience is an active virtue in which we are ready to act.
>
> When we notice evil tendencies in ourselves, we must waste no time in asking ourselves where they came from, in figuring out what within us produces such evil. At the same time, we should never believe that these evils are a part of who we are, that they are some hidden part of our personality that we just didn't notice until now. The great danger there is to begin to feel solidarity with the bad tendency, to start to think of it as our own. The truth is that any evil is not of our own but of the demons. The demons want us to think that they do not exist, that they are not doing anything in our lives, and that all of our evil and all of our sins come from ourselves and are a part of us. Do not be fooled by this trick. Of course, the demons suggest to us things that pander to our own tendencies, desires, and tastes, but at the same time, they are so stupid that they also mess up and suggest to us things that don't concern us at all, for which we have no attraction or desire. Evil is exterior to our nature even though it sometimes comes into contact with it. Just as an abscess develops on and with our own skin but is still something foreign to our body and that must be cut off, so too our passions and temptations use who we are to work themselves into us and must be cut off before they get any deeper into us (Elder Sergei of Vanves, pp. 130, 131 ; 138-139).

Another "wise saying" may increase our comprehension simply by adding another perspective : An indigenous elder was teaching a child, saying that within him/her are two creatures, each trying to dominate — a horse and a wolf. The child asked : "Which will I become?" The elder responded : "Whichever one you feed". There are other versions of the same advice elsewhere, which mean exactly the same thing.

It is usual that human beings experience a struggle with lust (particularly sexual lust) from adolescence on. We can see in the lives of monks we encounter in The Synaxarion that this

is the case, and that they grappled with this passion in many different ways. Saint Nikolai gives us some very helpful words from Saint John Cassian (†435) on this subject :

> Saint John Cassian writes thus on the struggle with a spirit of lust: 'The struggle with a spirit of lust is a fierce struggle, longer than others, a daily struggle, and only a small number of people come to total victory. This struggle begins with the first ripe growth and does not finish until all the other passions have been mastered. In this struggle, it is necessary to use two weapons. For the achievement of a perfect and pure chastity, bodily fasting is not enough (though it is of the utmost necessity). On top of that, compunction of soul and unremitting prayer against that most unclean spirit; then, constant study of the Scriptures together with prudent works, physical labour and hand-work. These things keep the heart from unchastity and bring it back to itself. Above all, deep and true humility is needed, without which one will never attain victory over any passion. Victory over this passion is a freeing for the perfect purifying of the heart, from which, according to the words of the Lord, flow forth poison and grave ills: '"*For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts,* [...] *adulteries, fornications*"' and so forth (Matthew 15:19). One must have patience and constant humility of heart, and keep oneself carefully during each day from anger and other passions. For as far as the fire of anger penetrates into us, so afterwards there penetrate more easily the live coals of lust. It is interesting that many other spiritual guides link causally the passion of anger and the passion of unchaste lust, from which it follows that those prone to anger are the most prone to lust' (The Prologue, 29 February).

Frequently making confession and frequently receiving the Holy Mysteries together make up the simple and basic practice by which we all (high-priests, priests, deacons, monks, nuns, lay-persons) can invite the Lord to help us to keep our spiritual house swept and clean. This vigilant practice can also help us be protected from invasion. This is life-giving Food. It is certainly crucial for us in our struggle with any and all passions, and especially with anger and lust. By constantly reminding ourselves that we are worse than other people, we follow in the authentic foot-steps of all those who have gone before us in Christ. To manage to do this, we constantly cling for support to our spiritual fathers/mothers, and to the saints who are our spiritual friends. This relationship is an organic part of the Orthodox way. As soon as we begin to think that we are better than the other, we have also begun to condemn the other, and we are lost again. For this reason, it is helpful if we daily say the Prayer of Saint Ephrem the Syrian, that prayer which is repeated liturgically by us with prostrations all during Great Lent (see p. 211).

It is very useful to remember the caution often repeated that if I point my finger at someone else, there are three other fingers on my hand pointing back at me (in one culture, it is said that four fingers point back, which means that the thumb is used to point). Therefore, if I accuse another person of anything, I can do so because this same thing is already three or four or more times present and active in my heart and life. This is why I am lost if I do such a thing. As our Lord says to us :

> '*And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me remove the speck from your eye"; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye*' (Matthew 7:3-5 ; see also Luke 6:42 ; Romans 2:1-11).

The plank or beam can often be a small unrecognised sin or temptation which has sneaked in through the back-door, and which overcomes us unawares. What is even more dangerous in

this is that we feel free to condemn, because we are unaware that there is any such plank present. Readiness to condemn has taken over through deception and illusion. The plank, of course, is related to lingering pain which is produced by unconfessed sin, or unforgiven injury. In either case, repentance is needed ; and our Saviour is, of course, the Physician who can and will remove this plank for us.

It is essential that we recall at all times that although the negative powers present themselves in various apparently substantial forms and in distracting matters, they in fact have no substance at all. Indeed, their only strength is found in what we give to them. This means that if we accept their pretence and their illusion as being real, or true, then we give them strength and power over us. If we hold on to our Saviour and to the Cross, and we refuse the lie, then the truth of their lack of substance is revealed, and by the power of the Cross, they disappear. If we keep recalling that they are all lie, and that they are not substantial at all, and if we keep our hearts and minds focussed only on Christ, all the bluster and pretense will continue to dissolve. This is but one reason why it is so very important for us Christians to be reading the lives of the saints, both in The Synaxarion, and in various other biographical publications. Many web-sites are also good resources. The experience of these holy persons, which is not deviating from that described by Saint Athanasius about Saint Anthony, shows that perseverance in Christ does, indeed, bear fruit.

As for ourselves, in our daily walk in Christ, it is crucial that we ask the Lord to enable us to discern our own thoughts : what is from Him and what is not. Fear is clearly never from the Lord, as we have already seen. Whether thoughts come to us from within, or from the exterior, all that comes to us must be weighed in the context of the Scriptures and the Tradition of the Orthodox Church, in order to be certain that the thought is indeed sent from the Lord. More repentance is needed. We can also consult with our spiritual father/mother, or confessor, or some experienced person, in order to try to evaluate them. More repentance is needed. Another way to assess thoughts can be observing and reflecting on the sorts of thoughts that arise (and their source), on occasions when I am hurt by some negative action or inaction, or inconvenienced, rebuffed, rejected, ignored, neglected, or defamed by someone. More repentance is needed. By extension also, it is important to consider what occurs when I am praised, over-praised, flattered, congratulated, or when I receive some other apparently positive act from someone. More repentance is needed. When I can see how I am reacting in such situations, and when I can understand the source of the thoughts, this can help me to understand, for instance, that I have an interior weakness, or that I must forgive. More repentance is needed. This can also help me to understand that I have accepted a tempting thought or suggestion from outside myself, and I have to ask the Lord to heal me of this wound. More repentance is needed. Bishops, along with other leaders, are very frequent receivers of exaggerated compliments and flattery, and people frequently make the great mistake of telling them what they, themselves, think the bishop wants to hear. Even more does the bishop need to be careful, to sift the accompanying thoughts, and as always to keep considering himself worse than, not better than others (see Philippians 2:3). Humility is a life-long work.

In the broken and rebellious environment of human beings, there is always pain, there is always difficulty and opposition and betrayal. However, the Lord is with us regardless, as we see in the words of the Apostle to his disciple Timothy :

> *But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution* (2 Timothy 3:10-12).

It is important that we remember always that the persecution mentioned here is not always from the exterior, such as under the persecutions of anti-Christian forces in one or another place or time, or such as disturbances or attacks raised by difficult neighbours or parishioners. Some persecution comes from within, as it were, from difficulties with spiritual struggle, with emotional struggle, or from difficulties with mental illness (because of which, for instance, there are often troubles with intruding voices, or obsession with the self). These things can sometimes feel like torture.

Implied here also is the pastoral responsibility of the high-priest and priest to lead and teach the sheep of the Lord about spiritual struggle : the discernment of thoughts ; the understanding of the distinction between truth and lies ; the awareness that all thoughts do not originate in ourselves, but that they are introduced by evil powers, and also that they are "in the air" ; the understanding that it is the Lord's love that overcomes all evil ; the understanding that it is not we who should ever try to fight evil by ourselves. Rather, we join ourselves, we unite ourselves to Christ who overcomes evil. It is necessary that we help all to comprehend that, as bearers of Christ's light, we bear the responsibility of keeping His light shining pure and bright within us. Christ's light invites all to healing and life. That is why, at the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts we almost by reflex fall to our knees and make a prostration when the priest brings out the lit candle, and proclaims : "The light of Christ illumines all". We thus physically respond in awe to the tangible and physical sign of the power of Christ's love. We also may express this loving awe by making prostrations often during our daily prayers. We have to be mindful also that, as always, the light of Christ provokes a reaction from the powers of darkness. Those who sit in darkness are overcome by darkness, and they are agitated by the truth revealed by the light of Christ. Not all are willing or able to accept this light and love. Some who accept being present to the light have not been able to accept the love of Christ, which is the source of the light, and they therefore fall away. Some who have fallen away can be brought back through the prayers and labours, support and visitation of loving pastors and other Christians, so that they may again later accept the invitation. Indeed, we all fall and repent repeatedly. Falling and repenting happen constantly throughout every day, during all our activities, during public and private worship, during public and private prayer.

In the context of spiritual struggle, the struggle to be faithful to Christ at all times, everywhere, and always, our main aim remains to be pleasing to Him, because we love Him. We love Him because He loves us, and He gives us life. As He emptied Himself and became a Human Being for our sake because of love, so also do we empty ourselves for each other, motivated by the same love. Imitating our Saviour, Jesus the Christ, we give ourselves for others. We put others first. We serve ; and in so serving, we serve Christ. It is known to be so with the nuns of Mother Theresa of Calcutta (†1997). She had been asked how she could cope with daily encountering and helping so many people in such broken conditions, and people who are dying. It is reported that she replied that she can see Christ in the distressing guise of the poor. There are very many persons amongst our saints who have understood that when they serve the poor, the indigent, the dying, they are serving Christ in person. There are many

occasions in the life of Saint Paisius (Bishoi) of Skete in Egypt († fourth century) when this reality became visible even to those around him. Although he was a hermit, people came to him from time to time, as is the case with many another hermit. He told his disciples that the greatest of the virtues is what is done in secret. He further advised them to follow the counsel of another, but not one's own will. One time, accompanied by two others, Christ came to his cell. Saint Paisius washed His feet, and it was revealed to those who were there that the visitors were Christ and two angels. Another time, a monk had a dream that Christ would appear to the brothers in the monastery church. He spread the word, and the monks began to gather. They all passed by a paralytic beggar, who asked to be taken also, but they refused. Last came Saint Paisius, who took the man onto his back and carried him. When he arrived at the church, the others could see that it was Christ whom he carried on his back.

There is the more recent life of service of the New-Nun-Martyr Marie (Skobtsova) of Paris (†1945). In the foot-steps of martyrs before her, on the evening just before the liberation of Ravensbrück prison at the end of the war, she voluntarily took the place of a frightened young woman destined for the gas-chamber. As she died, so she lived. So it was with those who were her disciples, including her own son George. Before his own martyrdom he wrote a letter to his grandmother and her companions. His writing gives us an example of the forgiveness for all and the care for the other that so marks the greatest of Christians, whether or not they be martyrs. Saint Marie was uncompromising in her insistence on hospitality and love of the neighbour. This was so much the case that she tended to behave as do fools-for-Christ. Her sense of humour was a prominent characteristic, and (as with fools) it provided a defence for what was beyond bearing and beyond comprehension. In the context of her strong focus on hospitality, it is useful to recall first that her memory (together with the memory of her companions) is on the same day as the memory of the Holy Prophet Elijah (20 July). We know that the widow of Zarephath (also called Sarepta) shared her last food with the holy prophet :

> *Again the word of the Lord came to Elijah, saying, 'Arise, go to Zarephath of Sidon and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.' So he arose and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the city, there was a widow gathering firewood. Elijah called to her and said, 'Please bring me a little water in a cup so I can drink.' She went to get it, and Elijah called after her and said, 'Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.' But the woman said, 'As the Lord your God lives, I do not have any bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar. You see I am gathering a couple of sticks, so I can go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die.' But Elijah said to her, 'Take courage, and do as you say, but make me a small cake from it first and bring it to me. Afterward make some for yourself and your son. For thus says the Lord, "The bin of flour shall not be used up, and the jar of oil shall not run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth."' So the woman went and did it. Thus she and he and her children ate for many days. The bin of flour was not used up, and the jar of oil did not run dry, according to the word the Lord spoke by Elijah* (3 Kingdoms 17:8-16).

There are more, similar signs wrought by the Lord in the lives of the Prophet Elijah and of his disciple, the Prophet Elisha. There are also many such signs in the lives of holy persons, as recorded in The Synaxarion. In fact, there are many other instances of this provision by the Lord in the lives (and verbal witness) of many persons I know and have known. Orthodox people do not seem so often to write about these experiences. There is, nevertheless, an inherited written

account about the encouraging experience of one of our saints, our holy mother Mastridia († *ca.* 580). She lived as a significant ascetic in Jerusalem in the sixth century. As has often happened to others, a young man began to pester her. To save them both, she took some soaked beans in a basket and fled alone to the desert, where she reposed :

> There she spent seventeen years, during which time, by the power of God, the beans did not come to an end nor her clothing wear out (The Prologue, 7 February).

There is also the written record by a Protestant woman who was similarly helped during World War II. Corrie ten Boom (†1983) describes in her book The Hiding Place her experience with a bottle of vitamins which she smuggled with her into the concentration camp where she was sent. She relates that during the time of her imprisonment, this bottle continued for several years to provide vitamins for her and the other prisoners, without any reduction in quantity. There are countless such stories told by lay people, including monastics, throughout every century. I have known not a few people who have told me about how it was in their lives, that the Lord provided for desperate needs at just the right time. Sometimes the needs were personal and sometimes they concerned many persons. A concrete instance of such provision can be found in the life of the Monk Nicephoros of Sebaze, a wooded and isolated place in Bithynia, Asia Minor († ninth century) :

> When a terrible famine ravaged the region, the saint had the monastery's reserves opened, without counting the food, to all who went there for help. By God's Grace, the reserves were not only not depleted but the provisions were miraculously multiplied. Saint Nicephorus was thus able to preserve the inhabitants of the region from famine, as Joseph the Patriarch did of old in Egypt (see 1 Moses 41) (The Synaxarion, 29 April).

When our love grows to be so selfless and so self-emptying that we can right away see Christ in the other, we remain truly united to Christ. Because of this, we are also given the strength by Him to help and to support one another when we are in distress or under attack. Let us recall our Saviour's words about who is our neighbour (see Luke 10:29-37). We support one another in prayer and in practical ways. Similarly, when we see our priest or high-priest in distress or under attack, we support him. Long ago, there was a comparison made between human behaviours and the characteristic behaviours of two different sea-creatures (to which that of chickens may be added). Human beings sometimes behave as do chickens. When one of the flock is injured or weakened for some reason, the rest of the flock have been known to peck to death the weakened one. We sometimes also behave as do sharks. When an injury occurs in a shark, and blood is sensed, immediately other sharks arrive to devour the wounded one. However, when an injury occurs in a whale, and the injury is sensed, other whales gather round, and they take turns buoying up the injured one so that it can continue to breathe, until it is strong enough, if possible, to do so again without help. This is well-known also to be the case amongst dolphins/porpoises. Indeed, many human beings speak of having been rescued by a dolphin or a porpoise. It is said that the nurturing and saving attitude of a mother whale or dolphin towards her calf is God-given. It is also said that their tendency towards helping to save the one in distress is also divinely "inborn". Being united to Christ, we Christians are given by Him the heart to be able to see who is drowning in grief or in sin, and to behave supportively as do the whales and dolphins in similar situations.

Moreover, we Christians have also an inborn sense of belonging to the Lord, or of tending towards the Lord, or of yearning for Him. However, we are not always necessarily

aware that our Lord is and always has been at the centre of our being. It is to this centre that all who seek Him look. He is found there : in the heart. The "Jesus Prayer" is also called the Prayer of the Heart. We sometimes feel that He is absent. However, in reality, He is not absent, but we have difficulty perceiving that He is there. We feel that He is "out there" somewhere, and so we feel as if we have a "hole" or an empty place within ourselves. If we feel this emptiness within, it is for us, then, to ask Him to help us to realise that this space is filled with Himself and with His love. We have to come to the awareness one way or another, that He is there, in our hearts. He is there, in His love. What we sometimes may perceive as empty is not truly empty. The sensation is a deceiving temptation. If we co-operate with our Lord, and keep continuously mindful of His presence in and with us, then we will not be deceived, but rather we will allow Him to enlarge, to increase, to broaden our hearts :

> *I ran the way of Your commandments, when You broadened my heart* (Psalm 118:32).

The Apostle, a man of open and unimaginably broad heart, writes to the Corinthians about opening their hearts as he and his companions have opened theirs to them :

> *We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. As a fair exchange—I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts also* (2 Corinthians 6:11-13 – NIV).

He is not writing about something selfish. His concern about opening the heart is that there be, in response to his open-hearted love towards them, a similar opening of the heart which leads to deeper and deeper communion with our Saviour. This is what he cares about for them. When we are ready to accept that this special place within us belongs to our Saviour, then, when we seek Him, we find Him. We find Him not outside, but within us. Regardless of how we perceive this, our Lord is constantly drawing us to Himself just as a magnet insistently and strongly draws iron to itself. As we suffer more pain (as each of us always does), so also our yearning for love and for consolation increases. Recalling Psalm 118:32, we can say that, in a manner of speaking, this suffering and yearning co-operate with the Lord. He increases the "space" within us, a space which our Saviour fills more and more with His love. Indeed, it is well-known that the more we share His love, the more our Saviour increases His love in us so that we can give yet more love. He is our life, the only Healer and Lover of our souls.

Whether or not we act on it, we have the divinely "inborn" tendency, a tendency given by Him to become like Him. It is the Lord who gives us the capability to become like Him. We are created in His Image. He enables us to come to the Likeness. He calls us ever more deeply into His love, and in Him we are able to persevere. In doing so, we come to being able to fulfil the following words of our Saviour :

> '*Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends*' (John 15:13).

These words, which describe exactly what our Saviour Himself did, are supplemented by the Apostle Paul :

> *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us* (Romans 5:7-8).

We are hoping to come to the state of being vessels and conduits of Christ's love. We desire to be able to be like this : to be ready to die for the other, just as Christ died for us. This hoping is always active, not passive. The activity of hoping is much like the ancient Hebrew language, which is completely rooted in verbs and verb-derivatives. Hebrew is very action-based. What is spoken is also acted upon. Thus, we very naturally and very actively hope. It is therefore crucial that, with Christ's help, we take particular care so that in our life He remains the one priority, the first priority, the ultimate priority. He is, as described in Apocalypse 1:11 : [...] "'*the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last*'" (A, *alpha*, Ω, *omega* : the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet). He must be the beginning of everything about us, throughout both the day and the night, and the end of everything about us, throughout our entire lives. Perseverance in prayer and in action is not temporary. It is our life. Perseverance in prayer is the expression of our active hope in Christ. Our hearts must be helped to persevere, through regularity in prayer, to be in a constant state of praise, prayer, thanksgiving, intercession, whether with or without words.

How are we to arrive at such a state, which amounts to the unceasing prayer that the Apostle Paul asks us to do (see 1 Thessalonians 5:17) ? The simple answer to this question is the same as the answer to another question : "How do I pray ?" It is : "Simply begin". Indeed, it can be said that by asking the question, a person has already begun. "How do I begin to pray ?" has an answer similar to the question : "How does an infant learn to swim ?" It is well-known that if an infant is put into the water, the child already knows how to float around, and perhaps even to paddle about. The child needs only minimal help right from the beginning. So it is with prayer. Because we are created for prayer, for communion with the Lord, prayer, in fact, is built into our very being. Prayer is at the core of our very being. When we desire to pray, we have already begun. When we take another step, we are already advancing. Just as a parent with a child learning to walk, our Divine Parent, the Lord, is right there with us, supporting us and protecting us. Therefore, we joyfully say :

> *I shall love You, O Lord, my Strength. The Lord is my Steadfastness, my Refuge and my Rescuer. My God is my Helper : I shall hope on Him. He is my Protector, the Horn of my salvation and my Support* (Psalm 17:1-2).

Saint Ignatius (Brianchaninov) (†1867), Bishop of Stavropol, Caucasus, Russia, wrote very seriously on the matter of prayer. Although his book, The Arena: An Offering to Contemporary Monasticism, was written primarily for monks, much of what he wrote has to do with the prayer-life and attitude of every Christian. For the support of us all, the following paragraphs will summarise some of his counsel about the life of prayer.

For the holy Bishop Ignatius, prayer is the fulfilment of the first commandment of our Saviour, and the Introduction to the Law (the *Shema*). He says that loving God with all our thought, strength and being is only possible through prayer. Our Saviour's additional reminder regarding loving our neighbour as ourselves, is possible also only through prayer. As a barometer of the liveliness of our prayer, he cites this extract :

> *In this, I know that You have delighted in me : that my enemy shall not rejoice over me. Because of my guilelessness, You have supported me, and You have secured me before Your Face unto the age* (Psalm 40:12-13).

If our prayer is alive, and our relationship with the Lord is alive, then we will be acutely aware of the Lord's delight in us, and His protection of us. We will be able simply to have complete confidence in Him. The word "guilelessness" implies, according to dictionaries, a state of being "genuine, honest, ingenuous, innocent, natural, real, sincere, true, unpretending, unpretentious, and perhaps sometimes naïve". Saint Ignatius explains that when we do come to a state of having a disposition of kindness and mercy in our heart towards everyone, and when we forgive everyone who offends us ; then, through us, God's kindness towards human beings becomes a reality visible to all who have the eyes to see. We become guileless, as we were created to be.

When, in our hearts, we are in constant communion with the Lord, we can be as Adam before the Fall, walking with the Lord in the cool of the evening (see 1 Moses 3:8, where it might be understood that this had been a pre-Fall custom). We can become guileless, as were our First Parents before the Fall. We may understand that as Adam walked with the Lord, so we are also walking with the Lord. Every day at Vespers, we may recall this as we read or sing the very ancient hymn of evening which accompanies the lighting of the evening lamps, and which may be said to welcome us to Paradise :

> O Jesus Christ, the gladsome Light of the holy glory of the immortal, heavenly, holy, blessed Father : now that we have come to the setting of the sun and see the light of evening, we praise God : Father, Son and Holy Spirit ; for meet it is at all times to worship You with voices of praise, O Son of God and Giver of Life. Therefore, all the world glorifies You (Vespers).

This English translation is an attempt to transmit clearly the meaning of this ancient Greek hymn. It is not simply the more usual literal translation that approximates Greek word-order.

Saint Ignatius of Stavropol warns us that from the moment we determine to follow Christ, and to be in constant communion with Him, our fallen nature resists. The fallen angels try to keep us enslaved to fear and to rejecting the Lord in many ways large and small, in sins known and unknown, voluntary and involuntary. We rely on Christ's constant forgiveness. Constant communion with Him (especially in the Divine Liturgy) is the ever-ready medicine.

The holy Bishop Ignatius says that it is prudent to make careful preparation for prayer, so that we are not vulnerable to attack. He says that we must begin by being watchful, so as to be rid of resentment, and to be free of condemnation of anyone. He reminds us that our Lord has already told us to take care that we live in forgiveness with all. We may call this process a daily examination of our conscience. Forgiveness is at the heart of the "Our Father". In the words about forgiveness expressed there, we can perceive the echoes of forgiveness throughout our Saviour's service to us when He was amongst us (see Matthew 9:1-7 ; Mark 2:1-12 ; Luke 5:17-26 ; 7:40-50). Forgiveness is to be extended to everyone without distinction. Thus we can understand from our Saviour's words about the Good Samaritan (see Luke 10:29-37) that if our neighbour is such a despised person as a Samaritan, the relationship of forgiveness is truly active when the untouchable one sees to the healing of one who should be untouchable to him also. As Saint Ignatius said, we ought to free ourselves from cares through loving obedience and surrendering ourselves to God's will, as well as through cultivating humility of spirit, and being mindful of our sinfulness. He recommends living in accordance with the spirit of these words :

> *Turn Your Face away from my sins, and blot out all my lawless acts. Build a pure heart in me, O God, and renew an upright spirit in my inward parts. Cast me not away from*

Your Face, and take not Your Holy Spirit away from me. Render to me the exultation of Your salvation, and with Your guiding Spirit set me fast (Psalm 50:11-14).

Indeed, as the deacon or priest is censing the Altar area, the Temple, the icons and the people, he recites the whole of Psalm 50. It keeps him (and us all, together with him), mindful that constant repentance and living in forgiveness is our way of life. It is more than important to recall before Whom we are standing : the Righteous Judge of all. He is Love, and He is also the Righteous Judge. Standing in awe before His Face, we cannot be other than ashamed, contrite, repentant : with bowed head we stand before Him equally on both legs, and without moving. In this attitude, we allow the deep sighs of our heart to come forth with tears before our loving, Righteous Judge. The posture of the body helps the soul, because the body and soul (spirit) are united. As we are exhorted by the deacon to bow our heads unto the Lord, so the priest asks the Lord to look upon us who have bowed the necks of our souls to Him.

Thanksgiving, in accordance with the words of the Apostle Paul, is the foundation of all our prayer, and directly related to this is praise. It is for this that we were created. When we magnify the Lord, we begin to approximate our real selves. The Lord enables us to become our real selves in living out the God-given purpose of our lives, which is found only in the context of His Love. In thanksgiving and praise, love grows, and love expels fear. Saint Ignatius exhorts us to recall these words of the Apostle Paul, and to rejoice, giving thanks always :

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you (Philippians 4:4-9).

The holy Bishop Ignatius also emphasises the importance of paying careful attention during prayer, and of keeping a single-hearted, single-minded focus on the Lord. Of course, he refers frequently to The Ladder of Divine Ascent by Saint John "of the Ladder", abbot of the monastery at Mount Sinai. The way to this careful attention involves asking the Lord to help us to focus on the words of the prayers. When the mind strays again, we turn again to the Lord, asking Him for help to bring the mind back into focus on the words of the prayers. When praying, the words are to be pronounced clearly, and without any rushing. The praying should also be audible to the one praying, using another one of our physical senses, so that the mind and heart are enabled to keep focus on all the prayers. It also puts into action the exhortation summarising the Ten Commandments :

'*Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. You shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart, from your whole soul, and from your whole power*' (5 Moses 6:4-5).

Let us recall that this exhortation is and always has been repeated at sunset daily in Jewish families, at the time of lighting the candles, and it is led by the mother of the family. Our Saviour will, of course, have been aware of this, and He will have experienced it daily. He knows how

these words affect our whole life. With His help, we love the Lord with our whole being. We then apply this in the manner our Saviour shows us :

> '"*And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength* [5 Moses 6:5]. [...] *You shall love your neighbour as yourself*"' [3 Moses 19:18] (Mark 12:30-31).

Therefore, we pay attention both to the exhortation to Israel, and to the words of our Lord. With this attitude, we fulfil naturally and willingly every one of the Ten Commandments, which are, in fact, simply "barometric" indications of the living practice of our love for God. Doing this also applies to our own hearts the evangelical words of the Apostle Paul, "*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (Romans 10:17). In environments in which people are unable to read for themselves (there are many, even nowadays), hearing is crucial. I know of many such persons who, having heard the Scriptures throughout their lives, and having heard the words of the services of the Church, are able to repeat large portions of these accurately by heart. Whether or not we can read, hearing has a strong impact on the heart. Indeed, it is often better for us simply to hear what is being read and sung in services than to feel obligated to read everything with our eyes. The eyes and the reading can sometimes distract us from hearing, listening and absorbing.

Regularity of time, and stability of place of prayer are also very important. When the feeling arrives that the prayer is monotonous, it is salvific to recognise the activity of the tempter, and to ask for the Lord's help to persevere. The point of the prayer is to maintain the communion of love with the Lord. The holy Bishop Ignatius stresses this as he reminds us of the activity of the Holy Spirit in prayer. He reminds us that prayer is properly associated with the Sword of the Spirit, referring to the Apostle Paul's description of the Armour of God (see Ephesians 6:10-18, p. 108 *&c.*). We see this association at the time of the tonsuring of a monk, when the prayer-rope is given for the purpose of praying the Jesus Prayer. As we have previously noted, this prayer itself is a summary of the whole Gospel, and it invokes the Word of God Himself. He further reminds us that prayer is, by its very nature, communion with the Lord our God. Prayer increases the union between the human being and the Lord our God, reconciling human beings with the Lord. Prayer serves as a bridge to cross over turbulent temptations, and as a wall of protection from all attacks. Prayer is a spring of life, purity, and spiritual gifts. Prayer is a release from sorrow. Prayer cuts away despair. Prayer is food for our souls. Prayer cleans out and washes us from the influences of the "old man" of sin. Prayer heals all that is wounded and broken. Sometimes, because of the obstacles, we have to force ourselves to pray, he says, but this forcing must always be in the context of asking the Lord to help us. By simple self-will and self-determination we are in danger — in danger particularly of pride — as illustrated by the Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee told by our Saviour :

> *Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess." And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me the sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather*

than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted' (Luke 18:9-14).

This parable comes to us every year as we begin to prepare for Great Lent and its focus on repentance. It is through constantly calling on the Lord that the assaults and distractions thrown at us by the powers of darkness may be overcome.

The holy Bishop Ignatius recommends that prostrations, accompanied by some form of the Jesus Prayer, be practiced every day, according to the measure of our physical health and strength. A prostration consists of making the Sign of the Cross, kneeling, bowing the head to the floor, and again standing. This also is to be undertaken only in the context of obedience to a spiritual father, or some similar person, in order to avoid the pit-fall of pride. The holy Bishop Ignatius also recommends that we make bows from the waist in an unhurried manner, and in some quantity, before we begin our prayers. These may be accompanied by the prayer, "O God, cleanse me the sinner, and have mercy on me", or by some form of the Jesus Prayer. These bows help us to prepare for prayer, and they help us to begin in a focussed manner. They help to renew our physical energy, with which to sustain our prayers.

The holy Bishop Ignatius warns us against using the imagination to "picture" the presence of the Lord or of some holy person. This should never be done. He says that it can quickly lead us into delusion. If it ever happens, however, that someone should appear to us during prayer or sleep, then this experience should be monitored under the careful guidance of an experienced elder, and in the context of obedience. Any such appearance is quite dangerous, because of the subtlety of the tempter. Should visual images come into one's prayer, it is imperative immediately to bring this to the spiritual father. Such an experience should never be sought, but if it is ever given by the Lord, it must first be carefully weighed under the guidance of the spiritual father, in order to be sure that it is truly from the Lord. If it is from the Lord, it must be received ; but one must always be wary of any accompanying sense of fear, coldness, division, and any other characteristic opposite to the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Discernment must be also applied on several levels : whether or not what has been presented conforms to Scripture and Tradition ; whether, over a period of time, it permeates the being of the person who has the experience ; whether it continues to remain as fresh in the heart as it was at the first encounter ; whether it lacks any real personal encounter, and vanishes just as the memory of yesterday's television programme. There are other criteria, but these can be discerned by the spiritual father. It is for the spiritual father to observe carefully what are the fruits of this encounter in the life of the one disclosing his/her thoughts to him, discerning whether or not these fruits are life-giving. They must always be life-giving, or they are not from the Lord. The holy Bishop Ignatius reminds us that it is really quite enough to know in the heart that the Lord is with us at all times, and that, because of Christ's love, any saint to whom we may pray is also present with us in Christ. This awareness is more than sufficient. A person who is recognised as a saint is one who has made Christ manifest during his/her life. Veneration of any holy person or of any icon always passes on to Christ, just as Saint John of Damascus (see p. 19) has reminded us.

Concluding this summary, therefore, we should now be able to see and understand from the words of the holy Bishop Ignatius, that the way of the life of a bishop is and always must be a way of spiritual watchfulness, a way of prayer, a way of love. It must be a way of daily repentance : the way of repentance that we see in the Apostle Peter (see Matthew 26:74-75 ; Luke 22:61-62 ; see also the accounts of the Resurrection, and the first chapters of Acts), and in his

teaching (see 2 Peter 3:9). It must be so for each of us. The bishop's responsibility is to encourage and to show that such repentance can be done by a human being. This means that he must always be careful to listen to the movement of the Holy Spirit in his heart, and be wary of the presence of anger, resentment, greed, envy, jealousy, selfishness, egocentrism, and more. These (and their relatives) produce a crack in the heart, as it were, because attention has been taken away from Jesus Christ. It is Jesus Christ alone who can heal such cracks in the heart.

We see frequently in the Holy Gospels (and also in the lives of many saints) that it is truly our Saviour who heals shattered, cracked and broken hearts. The great and holy Apostle Peter, to whom there was just previously a reference, and the great and holy Apostle Paul (see 1 Timothy 1:12-16) are outstanding representatives of the way of repentance, the fruits of whose repentance we are frequently meeting in the Scriptures. Indeed, all the apostles give the living example of life-giving repentance in Christ as they leave their nets, as they rise and walk out of a tax-office, as they leave all and follow our Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. It is this whole-hearted following of Christ in repentance that every bishop today and every day is called to show to all people. In our westernised and sanitised cultures, people live in denial of God, in denial of sin, in denial of death. People deceive themselves into believing that they can establish some sort of utopia here on earth (or worse, on Mars). They also live in a state of paralysis because of one sort of fear or another, precisely because of all the denial. It could be said that we suffer from the disease of "utopia-itis". In this environment (which is also one without hope), only retribution seems to be known ; and when anyone strays from conformity, there are immediate consequences and punishments. It is urgently necessary that every bishop boldly persevere in his own personal life of repentance and spiritual struggle. He must imitate and emulate the repentance of the holy apostles, and their boldness in revealing the love of Christ. He is our Life. He is our Hope. He is our Protection.

All are tempted by sin, but precisely because he is in the lead, a bishop is well-known to receive more attention "from below". Saint Barsanouphius of Gaza writes the following response to a *chorepiscopos* (a type of assistant-bishop) who wanted to retire :

> I do not counsel you to abandon the care of the holy churches of God which have been entrusted to you, but keep your soul in the fear of God. Do not receive presents from anyone. Judge [discern] without partiality. Do not be ashamed before the powerful. Do not acquit the blame-worthy, and do not condemn the innocent. Keep away from avarice, which is the root of all evils (see 1 Timothy 6:10). It is called, and in effect it is, a second idolatry (see Ephesians 5:5). Do not have delusions of grandeur, in order to be a disciple of the Apostle who says: '*Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble*' (Romans 12:16). Do not seek to please men; for you know what is reserved for someone who is suffering from this passion. He becomes a stranger to the service of Christ, as the Apostle says: '[...] *do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ*' (Galatians 1:10). Be submitted to the Lord, who says: '"*Learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls*"' (Matthew 11:29). Extinguish anger in yourself, for that is the ruination of man. Do everything in accordance with God, and you will have Him as your support. Always fear death, because it must come to us. Remember the hour of departure, and you will not sin against God. If you reach stillness, you will find rest with Grace in this stillness everywhere that you live.

This exhortation of Saint Barsanouphius about extinguishing anger is a significant element in perpetual watchfulness. Anger plays too great a rôle in the life of most of us, as we react to various situations. Anger arises mostly from pride, and it is poison to our hearts. Anger can be

extinguished, weeded out, only by asking for our Lord's help, and, in Him, forgiving the other. The way of a bishop must be the way of Him who is the Way, Christ the Lord. That way is rooted in forgiveness.

The arch-pastor, revealing the love of Christ, must always be approachable ; he must be available to the flock entrusted to him (at least in the context of the limits of his personal strength). He must have contact with his spiritual children and, in the way of Christ, reach out to bridge the gap of their unreasonable fear. It could be called reasonable fear when we do not want to disappoint or betray our Lord in any way. It is clearly an unreasonable fear if we fear that God is waiting at every moment to punish us, or if we fear that everyone hates us. The way of Christ is the way of self-emptying love, which requires of the bishop non-stop interior vigilance concerning the state of his heart, of his mind, of his thoughts. His priority is to unite his being with Christ, to allow Christ, who is the Life, to keep increasing in his own life (see John 3:30). In like manner, the "royal priesthood", the faithful flock, must follow the same path. The shepherd's responsibility is to teach the sheep about this, and to show them the way clearly. If the sheep have not taken at least some similar steps, they will not even be able to recognise the good and living food that is being offered to them by their priests and high-priests. This food is provided in very many ways, but the ultimate way is in the Body and Blood of Christ at the Divine Liturgy. Let us remember in the midst of all this that when the pastor or arch-pastor gives the Body and Blood of Christ to the person receiving, he names that person specifically. The shepherd knows the sheep by name (see John 10:3). The pastor conveys to the sheep the fact that they truly are beloved of the Lord, and that they are members of His flock for eternity. As His adopted children and members of His household, we stand eternally in His presence, in ever-increasing love and life.

Through the centuries, pilgrimage has always been a pivotal and significant element in the life of Christians, and it has always fostered deep and loving prayer. It is in this that the arch-pastor can give a good example, especially when he takes others along with him when he makes a pilgrimage. Many people manage to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and they bear witness to the positive support that this experience gives. Already in the fourth century, the well-known Spanish woman Egeria (who might have been a monastic) made an extended pilgrimage to the Holy Land and to many holy places, and she left us her written account. This account inspires many of us to this day. In European countries, where the Orthodox populations are much higher than in North America (and the physical distances much less), the traditional way of making a pilgrimage — on foot — is more feasible. There, it is accepted as usual that faithful people will still undertake such a pilgrimage, and do so over distances mostly unthinkable to many a Canadian. For instance, many pilgrims young and very old will walk annually, even now, as far as 750 kilometres to participate in the name-day celebrations of the Dormition Monastery in Pochaiv in Ukraine. This is but one of many such pilgrimages. The Dormition Monastery of the Kyiv Caves is another major destination. Every year, in the Ukrainian diocese of Bukovina, Metropolitan Onouphriy of Chernivtsi walks with pilgrims from the provincial capital on several pilgrimages (a shorter one being about 25 kilometres, another being about 80 kilometres). He is accompanied every time by many thousands of other pilgrims. He and his vicar-bishop also annually take bus-loads or aeroplane-loads of pilgrims to holy places in the Balkans, Greece and the Holy Land. In Romania, it is just the same. People can be seen walking great distances along the highways and roads (sometimes in Cross-procession) to venerate the relics of saints and to receive the blessing of worshipping with a monastic

community that receives them. There are now more than 800 monastic communities in Romania. The best-known of these pilgrimages may be the one on 14 October, the feast-day of Saint Paraskeva in Iaşi, when hundreds of thousands go to venerate her relics. When people make such a pilgrimage (even if not on foot), the journey is undertaken in the environment of prayer. It is usual that frequently there be formal and informal moments of prayer and worship in the course of the pilgrimage. Any pilgrimage is also accompanied by the usual temptations and obstacles. The visible example of the arch-pastor (who walks with them as he leads the pilgrims on the way) can have a greater positive, strengthening and encouraging effect, by the Grace of the Holy Spirit, than books full of words. This experience itself is life-giving food.

Although in this book there has been frequent reference to prayer and to intercession, until now, the actual prayer-life of the bishop himself has not been much addressed (except indirectly). Indeed, nothing very specific can be written about this, because prayer is so personal. What must be a major factor is that the bishop have a lively and living relationship with our Saviour. (This is the same, of course, for everyone.) His heart must be constantly in loving communion with our Saviour. He must be able to turn to the Lord constantly for help in everything without exception, and for help in understanding what the Lord wills to be said and done in each and every situation. The bishop's day must not only begin and end with prayer, but it must also be, in one or another manner, filled with prayer, with communion in his heart with the Lord. Of course, there is the custom of having bishops who were monks before their ordination. All this is likely to be in the background of their spiritual formation and development. Monks, by their very tonsure, are those who have given up everything to follow Christ. Their lives are to be a living image of repentance. To do and be so clearly means that they have been and are being healed by the Lord of every interior and exterior obstacle and wound. It is all this (and their having been thus formed in loving obedience in a loving brotherhood in Christ) which would provide the resources to live effectively and fruitfully as bishops. We Orthodox do not by any means have a perfect record in this ; but after so many centuries, it is still generally the case throughout the Orthodox world. The Church in North America has considerable work facing her in this regard, however. We are as yet unable to provide very well for such healing and nurturing environments for the development of healthy monks, and we therefore cannot expect our bishops to have had any other special opportunities than what does exist now. It is very necessary that we ask the Lord for an increase in both monastic vocations and communities, and that we co-operate with Him when He does provide.

The life-giving reality that is prayer is at the core of the life of every Christian. It is necessary that prayer be at the centre of our lives so that we might truly live. The reality of the centrality of prayer is renewed and reinforced many times every day. Morning, evening, and many other times throughout the day, we begin our prayers thus :

> O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, everywhere present, and filling all things, Treasury of good things, and Provider of Life, come, and abide in us, and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O Good One (Psalter According to the Seventy, p. 1).

Because our prayer-books are approximately the same everywhere, all Orthodox people everywhere, as one, are daily praying the same things, and worshipping our Saviour in essentially the same way.

Prayer is the daily foundation of our communion of love with the Lord. However, this communication of prayer, this determination to draw near to the Lord and to be constantly faithful to Him, has consequences : there are many subtle and not-so-subtle temptations that arise. What is crucial for every high-priest and priest to keep in mind is that they are, themselves, not separated from or different from any of their flock, either in this relationship of love with the Lord and with each other, or in the different ways in which all are being tempted. Before anything and everything else, the high-priest and the priest have the responsibility to keep themselves in harmony with Scripture and Tradition in the context of their own experience and struggle. It is their responsibility to teach and show the sheep how to do the same. The shepherds have the responsibility of understanding prayerfully and lovingly the hearts of their sheep, who struggle similarly. The arch-pastor and the pastor have the responsibility of keeping the flock united, healthy, whole, and directed on the right path towards and in our Saviour. It is their responsibility to help the sheep in every way open to them in Christ, in order to lead them in and to Christ. In response to the life-giving leadership of the shepherds, it is for the sheep, having listened and seen, to do likewise themselves. Doing may be as simple as organising a day-time coffee-gathering with parishioners, and with other people as the Lord may provide. This time of sitting together and talking about the Lord not only strengthens our interior unity, but it also helps to welcome others, encouraging them to draw near to our Saviour amongst us. Each one's action will likely be different, according to each person's unique rôle in the Body of Christ, and in accordance with the gifts given by our Lord.

Faith without works is dead (James 2:26).

16

The bishop re-presents Christ

> We ought to receive everyone whom the Master of the house sends to be head of His household as if he were the Sender Himself [see Matthew 21:33-44]. Therefore, it is obvious that we are to look upon the bishop as the Lord Himself ("Letter to the Ephesians", 6 ; see p. 10).

These words from the Martyr and God-bearer Ignatius of Antioch express an apostolic understanding of the bishop's responsibility to re-present Christ in the body of Christ's Church. They express also the responsibility of the faithful people to respond directly to that apostolic understanding.

The bishop, the arch-pastor/shepherd, the high-priest, must guide, must lead, must feed, must, in Christ, serve the people given to his care by the Lord. This is what re-presenting Christ entails. For the love of Christ, and in imitating Christ, the arch-pastor must not only be ready to empty himself in love, but he must also be ready to do this at any and every moment in which the Lord asks it of him. He must do everything possible to bring the sheep he leads to the real and true Food, to the Living Water, to our Saviour. He must lead them to Life, to Christ. As his predecessors, he must be ready to do this at the cost of his own life, in whatever form this may take. Saint Ignatius of Antioch writes :

> All of you, give heed to the bishop so that God may give heed to you. I am giving my life in exchange for those who are subject to the bishop, the presbyters, and the deacons ; and may my portion be with them in God. Toil together with one another, strive together, run together and suffer together (Letter to Polycarp", 6).

The arch-pastor may not be killed for his faith, but there is no bishop who does not, because of love, suffer from attacks of one sort or another, from within or from without the Church. He must always understand that Christ alone is his only strength and his only shield, recalling daily the exhortation of the Apostle to put on the full armour of God (see Ephesians 6:13). Because the liturgical investiture of a bishop happens so frequently to him (see Part C-7), the arch-pastor will be accustomed to associating this vesting with God's armour. However, it can help him in his daily life to associate his daily habiliment with this very armour, also. It would be helpful for every Christian to do likewise. As the faithful daily dress themselves, they can, with the bishops, recall the Apostle's exhortation :

> *Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints* (Ephesians 6:14-18).

When the faithful people put on the belt, they can associate it with girding their waist with truth. For bishops and monks, this is the intent of a monastic belt. If people don't wear a belt, then they can certainly gird themselves prayerfully. Then the bishop-monk puts on the

paraman (a Greek word meaning "added to the *mantiya*", an item worn by every tonsured monk), which can be as the "*breastplate of righteousness*". This is a cloth embroidered with the Image of the Holy Cross and with the words "*I bear on my body the marks of my Lord Jesus Christ*" (see Galatians 6:17). It is worn on the back and it is joined by fabric tapes to a wooden Cross on the chest. Some wear it only on the chest, with no other Cross attached. The people can all do something similar by touching and kissing their baptismal Cross, which everyone always wears. Arch-pastors and people alike can put on the Gospel-shoes of peace. The "*shield of faith*" can be directly related to the *panagia* which the arch-pastor puts on, or to a medal of the Mother of God that people might wear. The Mother of God does shield us, indeed. If a person doesn't use such a medal, the Cross worn on the chest can be recalled and kissed again. "*The helmet of salvation*" is for a bishop-monk the *skouphia* (soft hat) which he daily puts on. For the people, it would be the daily head-covering, if one is worn. If the head is not usually covered, then the people can place their hands on their heads to recall this helmet and God's protection. "*The sword of the Spirit*" is the the prayer-rope (*chotki* or *komboskini*) which the bishop kisses and puts around his wrist. Many people do this as well, or they keep it elsewhere. It is, with the prayer that goes with it, "*the sword of the Spirit*" for bishop and people alike. Having thus prepared ourselves, everyone can be consciously aware of having put on the armour of our Lord. The bishop can emerge from his cell, and everyone from his/her quarters, in the confidence that Christ is with us, and that we each are with Christ in everything that may come that day. If the high-priest and every believer can remember to do this daily, it will help every one of us always to remember our baptism, and always to remember that in this baptism we have put on Christ (see Galatians 3:27 ; Apostikha, Thursday Vespers, Lent I). Such recollection is particularly important for a bishop.

Every arch-pastor must always understand and remember that it is Christ Himself who is leading, feeding and healing His sheep through his sacramental and prayerful acts. He must understand that our Saviour does this in and through him despite his own weaknesses, distractedness, resistance because of pride, fears, fragility, foibles, failures and sins. He must be prepared to be put to the test in every aspect of his life because of his confession of Christ. The words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 2 reveal the real stress that the Apostle faced as he tried to balance the need to keep discipline and order in the Church, while keeping the flock united in love, and assured of his paternal love. As one wise parishioner used to say about her own life (she had spent time interned in a Japanese detainment camp in Hong Kong), so it is with a bishop : his life and work are "not just a walk across a field". It is also "not just a walk in the park". In this vein, the determined unwillingness of many human beings to comprehend the enormous responsibility of the episcopate may at least allow for such humans to accept a saying such as this : If the life of a bishop be perceived to be a picnic, then there are certainly plenty of army ants in attendance. The following exhortation from Saint Ignatius of Antioch stands the bishop in good stead :

> Stand firm, as does an anvil which is beaten. It is the mark of a great athlete to bear up under blows, and yet to conquer. And especially, we ought to bear all things for the sake of God, that He also may bear with us. Be more zealous than you are ("Letter to Polycarp", 3).

It appears to be inevitable that in general people will consider the bishop at the least with awe. Even more frequently, whether they know him or not, they will likely consider him to be intimidating. To them, he can appear to be something unusual, odd and different. Usually a bishop seems to be regarded by people as a strange entity, as a person without reference to

family or friends. He is just there. With the priests and deacons, he could be said to participate in the humorous but perhaps poignant saying that there are three genders : male, female, clergy. This is likely yet another expression of the divided and compartmentalised environment in which we live, the perpetual environment of the tempter's distortions. If we can recognise that this misunderstanding comes from the tempter, then we, as Orthodox Christians who have the eyes of our hearts open, can help to bridge this imaginary gap. We can recall that the arch-pastor is what and who he is because of Christ. After all, liturgically, he asks God to bless the vine/vineyard planted in this particular place (see Psalm 79:15). By approaching the bishop and asking for the blessing and introducing themselves, the faithful people can help him and themselves the better to live in the relationship of love that our Saviour gives to them.

The clergy may be set apart for their service in the Church, but they are not separated from everyone else — even if the clergy may, in temptation, behave as if they were. How often it is that even when the bishop is well-known and familiar, his visit (and especially the hierarchical service) can introduce a sort of paralysis of fear — even when people are accustomed to the hierarchical services. The arch-pastor nevertheless has to be prepared to bear the following joke with humour and with love : that the priest's favourite view of the bishop is that of the rear of his vehicle as he is leaving (this is a very old joke). This response is, of course, in stark and paradoxical contrast to the freedom that our clergy and people usually, properly and naturally feel about crowding close to the bishop in order even to touch him so as receive Christ's blessing. Too often also, when the Christ-loving arch-pastor is speaking to them about the way a Christian ought to live, and about the joy there is in Christ, he may be disappointed to hear someone say to him : "We pay you to say that". Cut to the heart he may be, but for the sake of Christ he must continue to bear his Cross and continue on in Christ. The arch-pastor at all times must remember that he is not leading members of a club, or a society of the perfect. Rather, he leads a flock of rational sheep, all of whom are wounded in some manner by life, just as he is.

The arch-pastor may well respond in his heart (or even verbally) that he is a beggar, and that he depends on the prayers of the people under his *omophor* for his support and sustenance. In his own apostolic service, he will do well to recall the words and experience of the Apostle Paul, which reflect his own experience :

> [...] *I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved (*2 Corinthians 12:14-15*).*

The rational sheep also do well to recall that, keeping in our hearts the words of the Wise Thief, every time we are bowing to each other in response to a prayer, a blessing, an act of loving remembrance, we respond in the heart, with the voice (or both), "May the Lord God remember you in His Kingdom, always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages". Further, it is necessary that we take care to respond in just this manner, even verbally, especially at times such as at the conclusion of the Great Entrance of the Divine Liturgy, when the high-priest or priest asks that all Orthodox Christians be remembered in Christ's Kingdom. Then it is extremely appropriate that we quietly say, "May the Lord God remember your high-priesthood (or priesthood) in His Kingdom, always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages". This is no mere formality. We all, clergy and laity, pray this for one another sincerely, from the bottom of our hearts.

The Orthodox Christian high-priest is also arch-pastor. It is prudent that he keep always mindful of the fact that he is, himself, one of the sheep : he comes from the sheep. In a manner akin to that of the Old Covenant high-priesthood, the New Covenant high-priest stands before the Face of the Lord, at the head of the flock ; but he, himself, remains one of the sheep. With them, and on their behalf, he offers the Sacrifice of Praise to the Lord. Different from the Old Covenant high-priesthood, this New Covenant high-priesthood has another function. The high-priest stands before the sheep, standing in the place of Christ, the Good Shepherd. This high-priest therefore stands both with and before the sheep. He reveals Christ to them. The bishop is "set apart" in his being ordained (as is everyone who is ordained to anything), in order to serve the Lord and to feed the sheep. This being "set apart" is his dedication to serve the Lord and His people. It must not be taken by anyone to mean that there is something drastically different or alien about this person.

The following extract from the Epistle to the Hebrews introduces a passage explaining the significance of Christ the Great High Priest (see p. 301) in the context of the Incarnation. Christ Himself experienced everything about the condition of us human beings (except sin) by becoming a Human Being through the *Theotokos*, the Ever-virgin Mary. Because of the Incarnation, He, whom we confess to be the Way, the Truth and the Life (see John 14:6), remains even now sensitive to our weaknesses and vulnerabilities. After His Death and Resurrection, He ascended bodily into Heaven, and, as the Apostle writes, He remains united with us :

> *Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin* (Hebrews 4:14-15).

One way in which some bishops are able, on their part, to mitigate the falsely-perceived distance between them and the sheep they lead, is to get up from the "head table" at the meal after the Divine Liturgy, and go to talk to at least some of the people at their tables. In a similar fashion (and in order to foster a closer relationship between the shepherd and the sheep), perhaps a less formal and a less usual positioning of himself could help to accomplish this to some extent. During liturgical services, it is customary nowadays for a non-serving high-priest or priest to stand in the Altar area, and this has its legitimate foundation. However, it is not an obligatory placement, and non-serving clergy often do stand with the faithful in the nave. Therefore, if the bishop is not serving at a particular service, for instance, and if he is not overly-fatigued at the time, he might stand (dressed simply in his monastic habit) in the nave with the people, as might any monk. His doing this would give them the opportunity to be near him as their father, and to approach him for blessings, and to make requests for prayers whilst he stands there. It would be prudent that he keep pen-and-paper handy for those cases when people forget to give names to him already written out.

An arch-pastor, like a pastor, is quite able personally to make home and hospital visits when it is appropriate. We can take as an example John "the Merciful", Patriarch of Alexandria (see p. 207), whose life was characterised by this behaviour. He distributed a vast fortune to the poor and the afflicted. When he was given gifts, he sold them and gave the money to the needy. He is known to have sold many other things for the sake of the needy, and he was criticised for this. He also made himself available to anyone who had a petition, grievance or request. He made no distinction between persons, faith or politics as he gave unstintingly. He is far from

alone amongst our saints, and far from alone amongst saints who are bishops. These characteristics in the holy patriarch are similar to those of the unmercenary medical work of the Apostle Paul's cousins and disciples, the Virgin-Martyrs Saints Philonella and Zenaida of Tarsus, and also of Saint Hermione, daughter of the Apostle Philip, all of whom reposed in the first century.

It is useful for any bishop encountering the falsely-perceived gap between the shepherd and the sheep to remember that the Apostle Paul himself encountered a somewhat similar attitude in some places (see 2 Corinthians 12). He was therefore determined to support himself by his ability in the tent-making trade (Acts 18:3). He did this work in order to reduce the occasions on which people might have the opportunity to think and say that the apostle or bishop is an employee, or that his presence amongst them might be a begrudged necessity. The Apostle Paul obviously lived with this sort of lack of understanding :

> *Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. My defense to those who examine me is this: Do we have no right to eat and drink? Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain'* [5 Moses 25:4]. *Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the Gospel of Christ. Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the Gospel should live from the Gospel. But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it would be better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void. For if I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the Gospel! For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. What is my reward then? That when I preach the Gospel, I may present the Gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the Gospel* (1 Corinthians 9:1-18).

In a similar way of mis-perceiving things, it can easily happen in our days that beautiful liturgical items and liturgical surroundings might be misinterpreted as being egotistical displays of opulence. These beautiful items and surroundings have nothing to do with self-interest or lavish display. There is very little in personal convenience in wearing in July an ancient and elaborate *phelon* that weighs 25 kilograms. Rather, they are all part of our common offering of our best to the Lord whom we love. The items and surroundings belong to Him, and they in return help us to have a rudimentary appreciation of that beauty and joy in which we hope to participate in His Heavenly Kingdom. The beauty of the church, its icons, its lamps and

vestments involve all who are present and visually participating in this present glory, and this beauty refers us all to the Heavenly Kingdom.

Where do all these previously-mentioned mis-perceptions come from, and why do they happen ? In part, they happen because the arch-pastor is serving as Christ's representative. Chapter 53 of the Prophecy of Isaiah is focussed on the Christ (the Messiah) to come ; and by extension, the prophecy concerns Christ's re-presentative, the bishop, and all who follow Christ :

> *He bears our sins and suffers for us, yet we considered Him to be in pain, suffering, and ill-treatment. But He was wounded because of our lawlessness, and became sick because of our sins.* [...] *All we like sheep have gone astray.* [...] *He was led as a sheep to the slaughter.* [...] *He committed no lawlessness, nor was deceit found in His mouth.* [...] *The Lord wishes to take away the pain of His soul, to show Him light, to form Him with understanding, and to pronounce righteous the Righteous One who serves many well; and He shall bear their sins.* [...] *He was reckoned as being among the lawless, and He bore the sins of many, and was delivered over because of their sins* (Isaiah 53:4-5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12).

Related to the prophecy are these following words to the Corinthians :

> *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him* (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Saint John expands on these words :

> He has allowed Him who did no wrong to be punished for those who had done wrong. [...] '*Him who knew no sin*' [2 Corinthians 5:21], Him who was righteousness itself, '*He made to be sin*', that is, He allowed Him to be condemned as a sinner, as one cursed to die. '*Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree*' (5 Moses 21:23). For to die thus was far greater than to die ; and implying this he also elsewhere says, '*He* [...] *became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the Cross*' (Philippians 2:8). For this thing carried with it not only punishment, but also disgrace. Reflect, therefore, what great things He bestowed on you ; for a great thing indeed it were for even a sinner to die for anyone whomever ; but when He who undergoes this is both righteous, and dies for sinners ; and not only dies, but even as one cursed ; and not only as cursed but thereby freely bestows upon us those great goods which we never looked for, for he says '*that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*' [2 Corinthians 5:21] ; what words, what thought shall be adequate to realise these things ? ("Homily on 2 Corinthians 5")

In another homily, Saint John continues :

> '*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us* (*for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree*"' (Galatians 3:13 [5 Moses 21:23]). In reality the people were subject to another curse, which says, '*Cursed is every man who does not abide in all the words of this law to do them*' (5 Moses 27:26). To this curse, I say, people were subject ; for no man had continued in, or was a keeper of, the whole Law, but Christ exchanged this curse for the other, '*Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree*'. As then both he who hanged on a tree, and he who transgresses the Law, are cursed, and as it was necessary for him who is about to relieve from a curse, himself to be free from it, but to receive another instead of it, therefore Christ took upon Himself such another, and thereby relieved us from the curse. It was like an innocent man's undertaking to die for another sentenced to death, and so rescuing him from punishment. For Christ took upon Himself not the curse of

> transgression, but the other curse, in order to remove that of others, '*because He committed no lawlessness, nor was deceit found in His mouth*' (Isaiah 53:9 ; 1 Peter 2:22). And since by dying He rescued from death those who were dying, so by taking upon Himself the curse, He delivered them from it ("Homily on Galatians 3").

Holy monks and others such as Saint Lot of Egypt (whom we have already encountered, see p. 138), would take upon themselves the sins of others and overcome the tempter on behalf of the other. This specific undertaking is one aspect of intercessory prayer which is not for everyone. When it is undertaken, it must be done only under the protection of a blessing to do so. However, a hierarch may well find himself doing this simply because of who he is. The following three citations show what must be both expected and embraced by the bishop who has accepted to take up his responsibilities in the foot-steps of Christ :

> [...] *the reproaches of those reproaching You have fallen on me* (Psalm 68:10).
>
> '*If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!*' (Matthew 10:25)
>
> '*If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you*' (John 15:20).

Saint John Chrysostom explains what comes with a leader's being identified with Christ. He cites the example of Moses, who refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter :

> '[...] *esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt*' [Hebrews 11:26]. [He then rhetorically asks what is this reproach. Answering, he says that] '*the reproach of Christ*' is to be ill-treated to the end, and to the last breath : as He Himself was reproached, and who heard, '"*If You are the Son of God*"' [Matthew 27:40], from those for whom He was crucified, from those who were of the same race. Again, this is '*the reproach of Christ*' when a man is reproached by family-members, or by those whom he is benefitting. Moses also suffered these things from the man who had been benefitted (by him). [...] What then do you wish — '*the reproach of Christ*', or ease ? ("Homily on Hebrews 11")

Like human beings in general, many of our Orthodox people are very damaged. They have been deformed by the materialistic and hedonistic attitudes and mentalities of the unbelieving or even anti-Christian societies of our days. They are also broken by the behaviours (or perceived behaviours) of inadequate or abusive parents, or persons in authority. Because of their brokenness, they find themselves reacting to persons or situations in ways that surprise even themselves. They do not always understand why they do something or say something, and these reactions are usually happening by an involuntary reflex.

In some circumstances, the brokenness can express itself in anger. As a protective measure, it can be used by a person (deliberately or reflexively) against principals and teachers in schools, physicians, policemen, bosses at work, and spouses. Through expressing anger, perhaps people think that they can protect themselves, thus scaring off a perceived attack (much in the manner of a cat that fluffs itself up and arches its back). Some people use such a technique of anger offensively as a defence, thinking that they can use this anger to protect themselves or someone else. In this particular context, the maleness of our Lord can sometimes frighten and alienate many abused persons. Males and females alike frequently shift the blame for their painful experiences onto any authority figure that they meet, whether male or female. We pass this damage and brokenness on to our children as well, even though we do not intend to do so.

The high-priest or priest, who is a truly loving father, often has this painful brokenness (as we now regularly describe it) extended to him by projection from such damaged persons. This brokenness can be further extended, and it has been extended even to God Himself. Metropolitan Jonah, the former metropolitan of The Orthodox Church in America, has referred to this condition many times in his speaking, particularly during his first year in that responsibility, when leading a Lenten Retreat at Saint Vladimir's Seminary. Abbots and abbesses, parish priests and bishops all have experience of this painful transference as an under-current in the lives of the flock of Christ. Sadly, this form of brokenness can take the form of apparent hatred by a wounded person against anyone who resembles in some way the person or persons who caused the pain. Sometimes, a particularly wounded person can appear to hate everyone. Sometimes, the person is not even aware that this is the case. Such a background history is an unhealthy under-current in many relationships, in parishes, in monastic communities, in dioceses. I have myself been told by some persons not only once, sometimes as a report from behind my back, sometimes to my face, that I am and have been both autocratic and abusive. I have obviously caused pain to some persons, and have trod on toes in some manner or other, although I cannot remember ever intending to cause pain. For any such pain that I have caused, I am nevertheless truly sorry. Whenever I encounter this, I do try to remember to ask for forgiveness. I do try to be reconciled wherever and whenever possible.

Very many injured persons are frightened of God. They do not believe that they can be loved. Therefore, they believe that they cannot be worthy of anyone's good attentions, of any counsel, of any prayer. The natural extension of this is that they feel unable to be loved even by God. It is understandable that their woundedness, pain and alienation from normal society would be projected towards God Himself. The question : "Why did God not protect me ?" is often asked. The unspoken, fearful question is : "Are You going to abuse me too ?" These questions are asked of God Himself as well as of the pastor. Along with this is the question : "What happens to the bad guys, to those who hurt me ?" There is a deep feeling of distrust, of betrayal of trust, when those who are in authority are the ones who have become perpetrators of pain rather than a wall of protection. Such a sense of often multiple betrayals produces fear at the root of a person's being. Such a deeply-rooted fear can take a great amount of time and patience to overcome in Christ's love on the part of pastors and other supporters. It can take a considerable amount of time for such a wounded person to accept that he or she is truly not only loved by our Lord, but that he or she lives and exists because of His personal love for that person. Our Lord never betrays.

Even if the bishop is trying to live in Christ as faithfully as possible, and trying to help and to heal the flock entrusted to him, the brokenness of the people can be constant and persistent. Often enough, for instance (particularly at general or annual meetings), one or another person will provoke the high-priest or priest repeatedly, hoping to produce in him a reaction which enables that person to be able to say : "There, I knew it all along. He's like everyone else, so why should I follow him ?" My mother often repeated the saying : "There's none so blind as those that won't see". This inability (or refusal) to see or to understand is rooted in the pain of life. Fundamentally, it stems from not knowing that real healing can be found. Thus, the Christ-loving high-priest or priest may well take the high-road in such a circumstance by acknowledging that he has heard what has been said, and understood it, and that he will pray about it, but that the matters at hand on the agenda of this present meeting will now continue. Perhaps this would also allow for the one presiding or someone else to take the person aside to

talk about what is really troubling that person. After talking and praying together (particularly the Our Father), the person might be able to return to the meeting and speak more constructively. This is possible because speaking about the pain to someone who is compassionate, and naming the pain with words, actually can lessen that pain.

In Christ's love, the compassionate pastor receives the expressions of deep pain felt by one or another, or even of many of the sheep entrusted to his care. What is the pastor's response to all this pain ? He offers the pain to our Saviour for His healing. Part of this response is keeping in mind that the Lord does not trample on anyone's free will — not that of the betrayer nor of the betrayed. He does not force us. Because He is Love and Truth, He also does not, and cannot lie. The Lord's Parable of the Wheat and the Tares can help us to understand His loving and patient disposition towards us all (although we, along with the apostles, do need to ask the Lord to help us to understand) :

> *Another parable He put forth to them, saying: 'The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, "Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?" He said to them, "An enemy has done this." The servants said to him, "Do you want us then to go and gather them up?" But he said, "No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn'"'* (Matthew 13:24-30).

> *Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.' He answered and said to them: 'He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the Kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!'* (Matthew 13:36-43)

These things further underscore the need of the sheep to have shepherds who are personal, living examples of the Truth (Christ) : the need for truth about the Truth, and for truth about His love. Christ's love is life-giving. His love is not coercive. He created us to love Him, but He always waits for us to respond by returning this love to Him freely, voluntarily, indeed with a free will. There is nothing we can do to make the Lord love us more, and nothing we can do to make Him love us less. It is living examples — bishops living a repentant life — who will, themselves, reveal the prayerful proximity between the shepherds and the sheep, which is rooted in this same character-forming nature of Christ's love.

It is true that a bishop is a human being just like everyone else, and, like everyone else, he is inclined to fall into sin. However, as is everyone else, he is (God grant) repenting daily, and

being an example of doing what our Saviour exhorts us to do : turning from darkness to the Light. The following words about the Eucharist, the Divine Liturgy, are useful to consider when we are seeing that we are ourselves broken, and also when we have to help those who are broken. These words refer to "*our daily bread*" (Matthew 6:11), which words in turn refer us to the Eucharistic Bread :

> We thank You, our Father, for the life and knowledge which You made known to us through Jesus Your Child ; to You be the glory unto the ages. Just as this broken bread was scattered over the mountains and was gathered together and became one, so let Your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Your Kingdom (The Didachē, 9).

Because of the eucharistic reference (and in the context of the preceding long consideration of brokenness), these words carry re-assurance and hope for us. Our own brokenness as persons and our brokenness as communities can be and are healed through participation in the Holy Mysteries. It is to this that we direct ourselves and all others in need of healing. Participation in the Holy Mysteries brings the scattered and broken parts of ourselves back into unity in Christ. Participation in the Holy Mysteries brings the scattered and broken parts of communities back into unity in Christ. The words of the prayer at ordinations : "The divine Grace, which always heals what is infirm, and fulfils what is lacking [...]" deeply apply to the healing work of the Body and Blood of our Saviour in our hearts and minds and in our communities, when we are participants in the Holy Mysteries and in eternal Life. When people on their own hold themselves back from receiving the Holy Mysteries, they are, in fact, judging themselves as unworthy. This is in itself an act of co-operating with the tempter. We cannot be the judge of ourselves. Whether or not we are receiving the Holy Mysteries cannot be our own arbitrary decision. It is for this reason, and for our protection from temptation and lies, that we have been given the Sacrament of Confession, and that we have been given spiritual fathers and mothers. It is crucially important also that we recall what we say to our Lord every time we are approaching the Holy Mysteries, and particularly the last petition of the Prayer of Saint John Chrysostom, which recalls the words of the Wise Thief (see Luke 23:42) :

> Of Your Mystical Supper, O Son of God, accept me today as a communicant ; for I will not speak of Your Mystery to Your enemies, neither like Judas will I give You a kiss ; but like the thief will I confess You : Remember me, O Lord, in Your Kingdom.

The Christ-loving shepherd is one who has personal experience of having come to be at peace with all. Because of his experience, he can and must help the greatly wounded sheep to see the joy, life, love, health and healing that is flowing in abundance from the loving Chief Shepherd, our Saviour Jesus Christ. The priest-psychologist Dr. David Fontes of California has written an as-yet unpublished book on personality, in which he brings to bear on our life the personality of Christ Himself. The fruit of the Holy Spirit which the Apostle Paul enumerates can, he says, be regarded as one nine-fold fruit which reflects the personality-characteristics of Christ Himself. The nine-fold fruit of the Holy Spirit is :

> *love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control* (Galatians 5:22-23).

If this is the case, then having put on Christ at our baptism, all we Christians potentially have this very set of personality-characteristics in which we all may live and love. The Grace of the Holy Spirit enables these very personality-characteristics (which we all recognise in the Person

of Christ) to be manifested in our lives as we co-operate with this Grace. This understanding is very much supported by the words of the Beatitudes (which we sing so frequently in church), and which themselves express both Christ Himself and all who follow Him :

> *'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you'* (Matthew 5:3-12).

When considering the imperative of being at peace with all, our Saviour told us that the meek shall inherit the earth (see Matthew 5:5). Contrary to popular misunderstanding, the word "meek" means a combination of being good, cheerful, forbearing, kind, and not resentful. Meekness is not weakness, but strength. It implies not fighting back, because fighting back actually incites more disharmony. It also implies not speaking back, not engaging in an argument. Our Saviour Himself set us the example of meekness. In the Gospel accounts of the Passion, we see that our Saviour is silent before Herod as He is questioned (see Luke 23:9) ; and when He is questioned by Pilate, He is mostly silent. When He does respond, it is in few words :

> *Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus said to him, 'It is as you say.' And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, 'Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?' But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marvelled greatly* (Matthew 27:11-14 ; see Mark 15:1-5 ; Luke 23:1-5).

In the Gospel according to John (John 18:28-19:16), the exchange is somewhat prolonged, but our Saviour's responses are nevertheless simple and factual. There is no debating. He is our pattern, as He is the paradigm for all who suffer for His sake. The witness of myriads of martyrs follows this, Christ's pattern. His steadfastness in His not fighting back in any way, in His steady and peaceful confidence in the Father's love, in His constant living in forgiveness and hope, shows His strength in His meekness. The roots of this strength-in-meekness are in the living and dynamic relationship of love within the Holy Trinity. The strength of meekness in Christ is written about by Saint Ignatius of Antioch, and we all should be able to say with him :

> I have received the embodiment of your love and have it with me, in your bishop, whose deportment itself is a great lesson : his meekness is power ; he is revered, I reckon, even by the atheists ("Letter to the Trallians", 3).
>
> Therefore I need meekness, by which the ruler of this age is destroyed ("Letter to the Trallians", 4).

The meekness that we require is that of Christ — His silence, His patience, His long-suffering, His unity with the Father. Further evidence about how seriously meekness is regarded is also found in this early text :

> Therefore, elect for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord : men who are meek and not lovers of money — true, and approved (The Didachē, 15).

The "ruler of this age" (Trallians, 4) refers to the enemy of our race (the devil), together with all the powers of darkness, not to a particular human being. If we engage the enemy of our race in any way, and pay any attention to his suggestions, threats and fears, we immediately become as flies on fly-paper. Everything from the devil is lies and deception — everything. How many times I have sadly encountered sentimental persons who naïvely equate the enemy of our race with a charmingly mischievous little boy. He is not mischievous. He is not charming. He is the "father of lies", and he is death. How deadly is such a naïve attitude about evil ; and people who have this attitude are not easily dissuaded : proof of the fly-paper. Using the language of the metaphors of modern literature, we might try to compare him with the Ice Queen of The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe by C S Lewis, or with the Dark Emperor of Star Wars by George Lucas. However, evil as they may be, these are both weak comparisons. We must leave everything to Christ, who by His love and light overcomes every wile of the devil for us. Our salvation is in complete unity with Him. This does not mean that we cannot participate in Christ's work of healing what has been damaged and poisoned by the enemy of our race. We can help Him in rebuilding. Our part, however, must always be in co-operative working together with Him as He heals the wounds of His children, and not in trying to do it ourselves alone. We really have always known this (albeit that we are forgetful sometimes) :

> *Then Moses said to the people, 'Be of good courage. Stand still and see the Lord's salvation which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace'* (2 Moses 14:13-14).

> '*Then I said to you, "Do not be terrified or afraid of them. The Lord your God, who goes before your face, He will fight them with you in all things, as He did for you in Egypt and in this desert, where you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way you went until you came to this place"'* (5 Moses 1:29-31).

> *Then David said to the Philistine, 'You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a shield. But I come to you in the name of the Lord Sabaoth, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you reproached today.* [...] *Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and the Lord will deliver you into our hands'* (1 Kingdoms 17:24, 26).

> *'Thus says the Lord to you: "Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.* [...] *You will not need to fight in this battle. Understand that the salvation of the Lord is with you, Judah and Jerusalem!" Do not fear or be dismayed. Go out against them tomorrow, for the Lord is with you'* (2 Paraleipomenon 20:15, 17).

We can see from the events to which these extracts refer that the people trusted the Lord, and He did indeed accomplish everything for them. They willingly co-operated with Him. This was done by actively and confidently standing with the Lord, by trusting Him to accomplish everything for them. Our Saviour has definitively defeated Satan and crushed him under our feet (see Romans 16:20). It is for us to unite ourselves to Him in love and confidence, and He will overcome all on our behalf.

The bishop himself is re-presenting Christ. The Apostle Paul shows us an aspect of what this means :

> *Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God* (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Saint John Chrysostom helps us better to understand what is meant by this ambassadorship. He makes reference to the missions of the Twelve and of the Seventy (see Matthew 10:11-13) : how the apostles were to bring peace with them, how they were to preach repentance, and how the Grace of God works through them, despite any unworthiness or limitation :

> When he that is over the Church comes in, he immediately says, 'Peace be unto all' ; when he preaches, 'Peace be unto all' ; when he blesses, 'Peace be unto all' ; when he requests us to greet, 'Peace be unto all' ; when the Sacrifice is finished, 'Peace be unto all' : and again in the middle, 'Grace to you and peace'. How then is it not monstrous, if, while hearing so many times that we are to have peace, we are in a state of feud with each other ; and receiving peace, and giving it back, are at war with him [*i.e.* the bishop] that gives it to us ? You say, 'And to your spirit'. And do you betray him in the open ? Woe is me ! that the majestic usages of the Church have become forms of things merely, not truth. Woe is me ! that the watchwords of this army proceed no further than to be only words. [Here he cites Matthew 10:11-13.] We are therefore ignorant ; because we look upon this merely as a figure of speech ; and we do not assent to them [these words] in our minds. For do I give the Peace ? It is Christ who deigns to speak by us. Even if at all other times we are devoid of Grace, yet we are not now, for your sakes. For if the Grace of God wrought in an ass and a diviner, for the sake of an œconomy and the advantage of the Israelites (4 Moses 22), it is quite clear that it [Grace] will not refuse to operate even in us, but for your sakes will endure even this. [He shows how the Lord acts through human beings despite their deficiencies, for the sake of the needs of the many.] Do not, I pray you, think that these things are spoken from us ; it is the Grace of God which works in the unworthy, not for our sakes but for yours. [...] So long as we sit upon this throne [*i.e.* the episcopal throne of Constantinople in Hagia Sophia], so long as we have the first place, we have both the dignity and the power, even though we are unworthy. If the throne of Moses was of such reverence, that for its sake they were to be heard, how much more the throne of Christ. It, we have received by succession ; from it we speak, since the time that Christ has vested in us the ministry of reconciliation. Ambassadors, whatever be their sort, because of the dignity of an embassy, enjoy much honour. [He notes that ambassadors are thus honoured even in the midst of hostile territory.] We now have received a word of embassy, and we have come from God, for this is the dignity of the episcopate. We have come to you on an embassy, requesting you to put an end to the war ("Homily on Colossians 1").

Saint John Chrysostom's words are about the living application of the ever-present reality of the ever-present love and ever-present activity of our Lord Jesus Christ in our lives. His words clearly and obviously apply to us now, today. If we have put on Christ in baptism, then we bear Him in and round about us at all times and in all places. We bring His love. Our lives (as with the Seventy Apostles) always bring with them the peace of Christ. This is the natural way of every Christian. In bringing the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in pronouncing His peace, we open our hearts to let this peace flow out through us to the others we address. However, if we admit forgetfulness to our hearts and lives, and fall into division with each other, then our ambassadorship becomes a mockery and a betrayal of Christ, and we are covered in shame. When we consider our righteousness to be simply our own righteousness, it has already become

unrighteousness, because we have not given the credit and glory to the Lord. We have always known this to be so (albeit that we can be forgetful) :

> *We all are become as unclean, and all our righteousness is like a filthy rag. We fall off like leaves because of our wrongdoings; thus the wind will carry us away* (Isaiah 64:5).

These are not the only comments by Saint John on the responsibility of ambassadorship. He makes these focussed comments on the subject, comments which make us all quake with awe :

> What sort of man ought someone to be, who is an ambassador for a whole city — no, not just a city : the whole world — and begs God to be merciful to the sins of all men, not only the living, but the departed too ? I do not think that even the confidence of a Moses or Elijah is adequate for this great intercession. He approaches God as if he were responsible for the whole world, and himself the father of all men, praying that wars everywhere may end and tumults cease, supplicating for peace and prosperity, and a speedy release from all ills, private or public, that threaten any man. He must so far surpass all those for whom he intercedes in all qualities, as one in authority ought properly to surpass those under his charge (Six Books on the Priesthood, p. 140).

All that happens regarding the bishop liturgically and otherwise is not happening because of the person himself. It is happening because of Jesus Christ Himself. This whole section concerns itself with this point, that the bishop is re-presenting Christ. The bishop must never take to himself (that is, he must not steal) what is for and of the Lord. It truly is theft when we take for ourselves the gratitude due to God for His activity of love, healing and reconciliation. It is theft when we take for ourselves the glory that is rightfully the Lord's. It is theft when we take for ourselves the credit for any good deeds, good works, works of compassion : credit which belongs to the Lord.

Because one of the most important theological focuses of the Church is the Incarnation of Christ, the architecture and decoration of our Temples, along with the liturgical worship that is offered in them, all reflect this. Usually our Temples are constructed in the form of a Cross (although not always). Sometimes they are round, hexagonal or octagonal. Very often they are in the shape of a basilica. The basilica was a characteristic rectangular hall used throughout the Roman Empire for civil purposes, but it was then adapted and "baptised" to be used for Christian worship. It usually had an apse at one end (and in Christian times, the eastern end). In the archaeological excavations of the House of Peter in Capernaum by the Sea of Galilee, the many layers of flooring and foundation reveal how the site had been used first as a small home with a courtyard ; and how, upon this foundation, the site of the home itself became a small meeting-place for Christians. A plaque erected by the Israel Institute of Archaeology on the site states that in the earliest levels of the structure, this is the only house on the territory of Israel that has ten layers of olive-wood flooring. The presumed reason for this unusual phenomenon is that the place was in such constant use for Christian worship that there was no time to be spared for floor-replacement, but only for adding new wood above and upon the worn wood. Later, other larger buildings were constructed over the original home, upon the same site, and using architectural forms which we now would recognise as a Christian Temple.

The form of the Holy Cross is nevertheless the most typical architecture. In larger traditional Temples, it is easier to see more clearly how this can be. In Europe, there are many examples to which to refer. At the far eastern end of the Temple will be a large seat or throne,

sometimes raised up many steps. This is the High-place, which represents the Kingdom of Heaven, and the chair is the seat of the Great High Priest, our Saviour Jesus Christ. His representative, the bishop, the high-priest, alone stands in this place and sits in this chair. He is flanked by the presbyters, the priests, who sit on either side of him. When the bishop stands there, he can be seen by the whole assembly, and he can see the whole assembly. Before him is the Holy Table, from which he feeds the assembled flock of Christ. Outside the Altar, outside the iconostas, may be a continuation of the *bema*, the whole raised Altar-area platform. This extension of the platform beyond the iconostas would stretch across the width of the iconostas. This iconostas is a screen which can be of various possible heights and widths, and which holds two or more icons. It usually holds also the curtain that has historically been used to close off the Altar-area when it is not in use. The platform may be of various depths and widths, and it is called the *solea* or *soleas* (a Greek word). Before the royal doors is usually a semi-circular projection, by which the faithful people come near to the Altar to receive the Holy Mysteries. It is sometimes called an *ambo(n)*, but that is not the best use of the term. *Ambo(n)* more accurately means an elevated place where the Gospel is read, and where preaching is done. The high-priest gives them the Holy Food under the arch of the royal doors. The people come close to the Holy Table. In front of that semi-circular projection can be a long, raised extension that reaches the raised dais in the middle of the Temple, where the bishop stands. In Europe, this raised extension is used also for various liturgical movements, which allows the clergy easily to come into the midst of the people. The people normally would assemble very near, and all around this projection. When the bishop stands in the middle of the Temple on the dais, at the traditional central chair or stool, he is surrounded by the people. In long-ago times, there were seats also for the presbyters around this seat, thus mirroring the arrangement in the High-place. Our architecture and our liturgical movements proclaim that Christ is in our midst.

As with us all, so it is with the bishop : everything about us all is only about Christ. Why, then, is it that the bishop sometimes may sit down at his place in the middle of the church a few times during the Divine Liturgy ? It is not by any means always done, but it is certainly an ancient custom often still seen in Europe. If the bishop sits down, it is not to relax (although he may do so because he is old). There exists a custom in which the bishop, since he re-presents Christ, sits down at times during which there is something being taught. The bishop is the ultimate teacher in every diocese. In long-ago times, it was usual for a Jewish teacher, a rabbi, to sit down to teach, and our Saviour did sit down as such a teacher. It is likely that certain philosophers would teach while seated. When the bishop might sit, the people might also sit, although many do not. Sitting truly has its dangers for us anyway, and it is important that we be wary of this. When we are sitting (unless it is because we are old or ill), it is most often because we want to relax. If we are relaxing, we are no longer attentive in our hearts to the worship of God, and we are no longer exercising our responsibility as His children. Also, if we are sitting, then we have an extremely strong tendency in our minds to become mere spectators at some theatrical production. We are not worshipping, we are merely observing. We become disconnected from the worship. This is why it is so dangerous for us simply to sit for our comfort. For Orthodox Christians who have "gotten their legs", standing in worship is not felt to be a hardship. Orthodox Christians properly understand that they are exercising their responsibility and privilege to be standing in the presence of the Lord God precisely because they are His children. They are members of our Lord's Body. Nevertheless, if the bishop has been sitting, he stands up as soon as the Gospel Book appears when it is brought out at the Entrance of the Gospel. We all ought to be careful to do so, too, even if there is no bishop

present. The Gospel Book bears the presence of our Saviour. At the completion of the entrance, the deacon fulfils his usual responsibility as he reminds us to be standing, saying : "Let us be up-standing", or "Let us stand upright". Especially during the Paschal season, and on every Sunday (each one of which brings us again to the Empty Tomb), we stand as much as possible precisely for such reasons.

The bishop is leading a double or triple life, one might say. A bishop is a regular Orthodox human being ; he is also a person with a responsibility before Christ for the flock ; and, as well, the bishop has to present Christ to the flock. It is a huge responsibility. However, it is very necessary for the bishop, along with everyone else, to remember that all the worship that we are offering to the Lord is not concerned with or directed to any one of us. It is concerned with and directed to Christ. Even our daily lives are not focussed on us, but on our Saviour, Jesus Christ. He loves us. He is always in the midst of us, precisely in the middle of us all, in the middle of our hearts. He is truly with us. Nevertheless, the point is that the bishop is a child of God who has the privilege to be able to stand in the presence of Christ our Lord, just as do all the other sheep in the flock.

In this context, it seems useful to draw attention to the former Roman Catholic Pope Benedict XVI, who wrote a book about the Divine Liturgy, which does have some good things included in it, although I really cannot agree with all that he writes. It begins, disappointingly, with the title <u>God Is Near Us</u>. In my opinion, from the Orthodox point of view this title is "a bust". The Divine Liturgy is not about God's being near us. Rather, God is *with* us. The Lord God is here in our midst at all times. It is the Lord who acts in all the sacramental and other works of a bishop ; and through these sacramental acts, He is, Himself, present. He is, Himself, nurturing and building up His flock. The manner of this presence is clearly set out for us in these words sung at Great Compline :

> God is with us. Understand this, O nations, and submit yourselves, for God is with us. [...] The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. For God is with us. To those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death, a light is risen. For God is with us. For unto us a Child is born ; unto us a Son is given. For God is with us. And the government shall be upon His shoulder. For God is with us. And of His peace there shall be no end. For God is with us. And His Name shall be called the Angel of Great Counsel. For God is with us. Wonderful, Counsellor. For God is with us. Mighty God, Eternal Ruler, Prince of Peace. For God is with us. The Father of the World to Come. For God is with us. God is with us. Understand this, O nations, and submit yourselves, for God is with us (Isaiah 8 *&* 9, as in the liturgical text).

The priest or high-priest needs to know the nature of the soil in which he is planting the seeds of the Gospel of Christ. It is for him to prepare this soil and to begin to sow the seeds, and to do anything else needed to nurture growth (especially prayer). He may never see the full result of this work ; but as we have seen, the whole work is filled with the joy of Christ, with whom we work. We cannot ourselves measure the progress and the quality of our work, and we dare not let ourselves feel that nothing happens when we think that we cannot see any activity.

> *Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, "There are still four months and then comes the harvest"? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he*

> *who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: "One sows and another reaps." I sent you to reap that for which you have not laboured; others have laboured, and you have entered into their labours'* (John 4:34-38).
>
> *I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labour* (1 Corinthians 3:6-8).

The bishop re-presents Christ. He re-presents God's love. God's love creates life. With and in Christ, the bishop's food is "*to do the will of Him who sent*" him (John 4:34). The bishop's service is to encourage and to nurture this God-created life within the flock, outside the flock and in all creation. God's love takes concrete, tangible form, most particularly in the Incarnation of the Word in Jesus Christ. The bishop's service is to make this love visible and tangible in and through his daily deeds and words. Saint Ignatius of Antioch describes Onesimus, such a bishop :

> who abides in ineffable love and is your bishop in the flesh — and I pray you by Jesus Christ that you love him, and that all of you be like him ("Letter to the Ephesians", 1).

Above all, the bishop is called to be that window, to be that door, through which all the persons around may be able to see and experience how deeply, how concretely, how immediately God loves us. Above all, together with the bishop, we all are to be those windows, those doors, those vehicles by which everyone and each one around us may encounter the Lord Himself by the Grace of the Holy Spirit.

17

The bishop re-presents the Church

> For the Church of Christ is Christ's own Body, according to Saint Paul [see Colossians 1:24], and the man who is entrusted with her must train her to perfect health and inexpressible beauty, by unremitting vigilance to prevent the slightest spot or wrinkle or other blemish of that sort from marring her grace and loveliness. In short, he must make her worthy, as far as lies within human power, of that pure and blessed Head to which she is subjected (Six Books on the Priesthood, p. 114).

Thus, Saint John Chrysostom shares with us his understanding of how this responsibility is lived out. To try, then, to summarise the rôle and responsibility of the bishop, suffice it to say that the bishop bears the responsibility in Christ to maintain the unity in love of the Body of Christ under his care, and to centre everything and everyone on Christ. When Saint John uses the word "subjected", he is not suggesting anything negative, punitive or enslaving (as we may too easily conclude). Rather, he knows in his heart that the Apostle Paul uses this image of the body in a very life-giving way (see 1 Corinthians 12). The head of any living body guides, directs, co-ordinates, harmonises, and protects the body over which it has responsibility. Its purpose is harmonious, loving, supportive and life-supporting. It is important that we always keep this in mind when we see such terms used. If the head were behaving in any negative way, the body could not function properly, and could easily become deformed or die :

> *For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many* (1 Corinthians 12:12-14).

> *But God composed the body, having given greater honour to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it* (1 Corinthians 12:24-26).

From liturgical and other evidence, we can see that the bishop re-presents the Church. He reveals the Church. He reveals Christ. He reveals himself as a limited human being, chosen by Christ to fulfil this responsibility. Nevertheless, the bishop is re-presenting Christ in the same manner that an icon re-presents Christ. As the icon of Christ is not separate from Christ, but Christ is personally present to the one venerating it, so Christ is in the bishop and present to His own rational sheep through this bishop. I believe that this is the gist of what Saint Ignatius, the God-bearer, is telling us in his writings. The characteristic emblem of a bishop is the *engolpion*. Nowadays, it is almost always an icon of the Mother of God, the *Theotokos*, who is called the All-holy (see p. 88). This is why the bishop's *engolpion* is usually called a *panagia*, because of the Mother of God. She is all-holy. She lovingly and voluntarily submitted her will to God throughout her whole life, and chiefly in agreeing to bear His Son. Without her, there would have been no Incarnation and consequently, no Redemption. Through her life of prayer and fasting, she grew in holiness to become a pure vessel to contain the Uncircumscribable One. After Christ's birth, she remained Ever-virgin, and she continued her подвиг, *podvig* (a Russian

word with a broad meaning, including "spiritual struggle", "doing more", "self-denial", "repenting", "exploit", "heroic deed"). In doing so, she became as we are always hymning her, "more honourable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim". She is for us the supreme example of a Christian. Because of her life, we know that being truly united to Christ is possible for a human being. She is herself a human being just as we all are, born into our fallen and rebellious world and subject to death as a result. Fallenness and brokenness is our condition, our situation. Borne on the prayers of all those who preceded her, by the Grace of the Holy Spirit, she was enabled to be the one who could, in her perpetual "yes" to the Lord, be able to give to her Son true and full humanity in its fallen condition. It was necessary that she be able to give to the Son of God the fulness of humanity. He came to save us from all the consequences of our Fall. He did so because the Most Holy Mother of God was fully a human being. However, this fallen condition is not an inherited disease. Rather, it is the situation which resulted from the disobedience and rebelliousness of our First Parents. We are all born into this situation of disobedience and rebelliousness, which characterises our behaviour as a race. We perpetuate this in ourselves when we act against our Lord's life-giving and loving will. When she gave her Son this fallen humanity, He became identical to us in every way, as the Apostle demonstrates, except that His obedience is perfect ; the union of His will with the Father's will is perfect in perfect love. He did not yield to the tempter. He did not sin. He does not sin. He is fully human and fully God. He is our perfect and compassionate High Priest :

> *Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted* (Hebrews 2:17-18).

> *For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin* (Hebrews 4:15).

Despite the fact that she was born into the fallen condition of the world, the Mother of God was, throughout her life, able to be completely obedient to the will of God. All those who had gone before her had prepared the way for her. They enabled her obedience ; and she obeyed and obeys on their and our behalf. Her perpetual "yes" is the fulfilment of the meaning of the word "repentance". There is no time or situation in which her whole being strays in the slightest from saying "yes" to the Lord's loving will. She was and is able always to say "no" to the tempter. This is another, perhaps unexpected, aspect of repentance. She keeps her whole being turned constantly towards the Lord : her whole being, radiant with God's love, is always mightily doing His will and mightily helping us in our weakness to do the same. Thus she is the image of the Church for us. Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos explains how this obedience led to the fulfilment of God the Father's planned preparation for the redemption to be wrought by His Son. Citing the Mother of God's words in Luke 1:38, he then continues :

> Here we see the obedience of the *Panagia* to the words of the archangel, and also her obedience to God in respect of an event which was astounding and strange to human reason. Thus she subjects her reason to the will of God. Some people maintain that at that moment all the righteous men of the Old Testament, and all mankind were waiting anxiously to hear the *Panagia*'s reply, fearing that she would refuse and not obey the will of God. [...] But the *Panagia* could not refuse, not because she did not have freedom, but because she had real freedom (The Feasts of the Lord, p. 28).

The bishop himself bears the responsibility of maintaining, revealing and perpetuating the four major characteristics of the Church as presented in the Symbol of Faith. It is not possible that I dare to write further about the unity, apostolicity, holiness and catholicity of the Holy Church without first letting the dominical words themselves speak our Saviour's prayerful guidance for us all, which succinctly summarise everything :

> *'I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me*' (John 17:9-23).

The Church is one.

That the Church is one gives expression to the divine unity in the harmony of love that characterises the Holy Trinity, the unity which is already expressed in the Old Covenant. This unity is shown to us at the very beginning of the creation of human beings, when God speaks in the plural (not with the royal "we"), and where we see the first indications of the Holy Trinity :

> *'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of heaven, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth'* (1 Moses 1:26).

This unity is strongly stressed to us by Moses later (in words I have known from childhood), when we are told emphatically that our Lord is one, and that we are created to be one with Him :

> '*Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. You shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart, from your whole soul, and from your whole power*' (5 Moses 6:4-5).

In re-presenting Christ, the bishop carries the responsibility of embodying and presenting the unity and harmony of love and will that is amongst the Persons of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Because of the nature of his service, a bishop himself may not have the personal experience of the Holy Trinity, and personal encounters with the Mother of God, as did Saints Alexander of Svir (†1533), Sergius of Radonezh (†1391), Archimandrite Sophrony (†1992) (see <u>On Prayer</u>, pp. 155-156), and others who were hermits. However, the bishop's own

love for Christ can convey enough of this love, so that the people might begin to understand and experience something of this love themselves. In his high-priesthood, the bishop also embodies the unity that exists between the Old and New Covenants. The Apostle shows us that Christ fulfilled the Old Covenant in which there was always one high-priest, a Levitical descendent of Aaron, and He became once and for all the One High Priest according to the order of Melchisedek (see Psalm 109:4 ; see 1 Moses 14:14-24) :

> *Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need* (Hebrews 4:14-16).
>
> *And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest 'according to the order of Melchizedek'* (Hebrews 5:9-10).

The bishop as a high-priest reveals to us Christ the Great High Priest. He also is responsible for maintaining visible unity in the Church, the Body of Christ : within the diocese under his *omophor* ; in the relationship between himself and other bishops, and also between his diocese and other dioceses. It could be said that this unity reflects the Holy Trinity. Moreover, the necessity for unity in the Church's life is reflected in our Lord's words :

> '*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me*' (John 13:20).
>
> '*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*' (John 13:34-35).
>
> *'Because I live, you will live also. At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him'* (John 14:19-21).

The necessity for unity is reflected also in these Pauline and Petrine words :

> *Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, 'I am of Paul,' or 'I am of Apollos,' or 'I am of Cephas,' or 'I am of Christ.' Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptised in the name of Paul?* (1 Corinthians 1:10-13)
>
> *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you*

all. But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift (Ephesians 4:1-7).

Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus [...] (Philippians 2:1-5).

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection (Colossians 3:12-14).

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light [...] (1 Peter 2:9).

The Church is one because Christ is one. This necessary unity is repeated in our canonical Tradition as well. Unity is necessary, and it is our responsibility to maintain it. Our differences in mentality and our temptations sometimes break the unity. Then the unity must be regained, regained through repentance. Such unity may be attained and maintained very greatly on the basis of the personal experience of bishops, one with another and all together. This is but one of the reasons that bishops need to meet face-to-face rather regularly (and not only for meetings with agendas). True, such meetings can be costly, especially in the context of our physical distances. This does not lessen the need. Nevertheless, it is possible for some neighbouring bishops to meet more easily because of lesser distances. They do meet, sometimes just for tea, and these meetings seem to help greatly. Glory be to God.

I have cited so many references precisely because of the importance of this visible unity of love, respect, repentance and mutual forgiveness. The main adhesive by which unity can be maintained is, truly, repentance, mutual forgiveness and "*lowliness of mind*", as the Apostle wrote to the Philippians. This means that each person (and each group of persons) must be careful always to remember that everything comes from the Lord, not from ourselves. We are, as he says, to consider everyone else to be better than ourselves (see Philippians 2:3). True humility, "*lowliness of mind",* sets us free from slavery to our own opinions, desires and passions. It opens our hearts to be filled with Christ. As we cultivate this servant-mentality in the context of the absolute freedom that comes to us in Christ, we co-operate with Christ, and He, Himself, accomplishes and maintains this unity. This visible unity is also required of the Church as a whole.

In their synods, the bishops are responsible together for Church unity in all its aspects throughout the world. It is the responsibility of the presidents of these synods to accomplish this, because it is physically and fiscally not possible for all the bishops to be meeting and talking constantly at international levels. It is these presidents, these heads of autocephalous Churches, who have the responsibility to serve the Divine Liturgy all together as one, and on behalf of all the others, in order to give the needed concrete and visible expression to the eucharistic unity for which we are all responsible. These presidents of synods also speak with one another and act in

harmony with one another in order to keep stable the living unity in the Church, the Body of Christ. Part of their responsibility includes the guarding of the existing unity of the whole Church, the increase and spreading of the Gospel, and also the recovering of any and all broken unity. These words cited earlier (see p. 290) are appropriate here, too :

> Just as this broken bread was scattered over the mountains and was gathered together and became one, so let Your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Your Kingdom (The Didachē, 9).

This passage addresses the evangelical scattering throughout the world of the Gospel of Christ. Yet, in the midst of this scattering, the scattered parts continue to be gathered into one, into one united Body of Christ. Saint Ignatius, the God-bearer and Bishop-Martyr, writes about unity :

> For if I was able in so short a time to have had such close fellowship (not human but spiritual) with your bishop, how much more do I deem you to be blessed, you who are joined with him as the Church is with Jesus Christ, and as Jesus Christ is with the Father, so that all things may be symphonic in unity ("Letter to the Ephesians", 5).
>
> Love one another in Jesus Christ continually. Let there be nothing amongst you that might divide you, but be at one with the bishop and with those who preside, as a type and teaching of incorruptibility ("Letter to the Magnesians", 6).
>
> Let there be one prayer amongst you as one : one supplication, one mind, one hope in love and in blameless joy, which is Jesus Christ. Nothing is more excellent than Him. All together, run, as into one Temple of God, as to one Altar, to one Jesus Christ, who came forth from one Father and is one with Him and has gone forth to [the] One ("Letter to the Magnesians", 7).
>
> Love unity ; flee divisions ; be imitators of Jesus Christ, even as He is of His Father ("Letter to the Philadelphians", 7).

This unity is stressed in the *anaphoras* of the Divine Liturgies of Saints Basil the Great and John Chrysostom (although these words are usually said quietly) :

> Broken, and distributed is the Lamb of God, who is broken, yet not divided ; who is ever eaten, yet never consumed, but sanctifies those who partake thereof.

It is good for us to recall and to understand that, in these previous citations, the words about scattering and dividing do not in any way imply disunity. Rather, in all cases, the scattering and the dividing are for the purpose of increasing, while at the same time maintaining unity. Thus, the Body of Christ is broken and distributed so that Christ, Himself, may feed His flock, and through this feeding reinforce their visible unity in the one Body of Christ. In the *anaphoras* of the Divine Liturgies of Saints Basil the Great and John Chrysostom, we hear this :

> Remember amongst the first, O Lord, our (Arch)bishop n, of n and n. Grant him, for Your holy churches, in peace, safety, honour, health, and length of days, rightly to divide the word of Your truth.

In this petition, the word "divide" first conveys the meaning of distinguishing between truth and falsehood, as guided by the Holy Spirit, so as to teach only the whole, straight truth about Him who is the Truth. But this expression could be understood as dividing the Word of Truth for the purpose of increasing.

If we are to consider seriously the concept of dividing for the purpose of increasing (while maintaining unity), then we also cannot but bring to the fore of our hearts and minds the actions of our Saviour in feeding the multitudes, which have their own eucharistic references :

> *And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children* (Matthew 14:19-21).

> *And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children* (Matthew 15:36-38).

It is the responsibility of the bishops to do these things : to feed the flock, to heal the flock, and to increase the flock. The feeding of the flock and its proper nurture also require that the flock be kept together as one in the fields of life-giving food, and under the watchful and protecting gaze of the shepherd. This feeding, of course, always includes nurturing the flock through the Scriptures ; but it also includes the nourishment that comes through the many sacraments, through the work of practical love in giving alms and helping those in need, through intercession, through correction, and through a myriad of other means given by our Saviour. On these occasions we just encountered, our Saviour asks the disciples and apostles to suggest how to feed the multitude. It is possible that His followers took care to carry some bread with them. Nevertheless, they certainly did not have any at the time when our Saviour met the Samaritan woman, since his disciples had had to go shopping. In John 6:5-14 we see another occasion when there was nothing available but what a boy could contribute (the few loaves and fish). It is sometimes said by skeptics that alms-giving itself enabled the feeding of the multitudes through sharing. Giving alms is sharing what we have with those who do not have ; but in this case, it means a lot of bread ! This idea tries to avoid the truth that the obvious, stated reason for this multiplication was the utter lack of food amongst them (Matthew 15:32-38 ; Mark 8:1-9 ; Luke 9:10-17). It is still truly most likely that He, Himself, met the pressing need, and multiplied the little that was offered. He, Himself, fed all who were hungry. He does this all the time. When we forget, and we lose our focus (as we regularly seem to do), our Saviour again reminds us :

> *Then Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' Then they said to Him, 'Lord, give us this bread always.' And Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst*' (John 6:32-35).

The flock is thus fed by our Lord Jesus Himself, the Christ, the Bread of Life. He feeds the flock with Himself, the Bread of Life. In this way, the unity of the Church is kept alive, growing and shining. In such a unity, the Church, as the Body of Christ, continues to serve the whole of the Lord's creation with His life-giving Food. Saint Ignatius of Antioch again addresses this central matter of unity, which has as its focus the unity at the Holy Table :

> Therefore be keen to have only one Eucharist. For there is one Flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one Cup for the unity of His Blood, and one Altar, as there is one bishop together with the presbytery and the deacons, my fellow bond-servants ("Letter to the Philadelphians", 4).

The Apostle Paul reinforces our determination to be faithful to our Saviour's leading and direction in maintaining this vital unity :

> [...] *speaking the truth in love,* [*we*] *may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love* (Ephesians 4:15-16).

Saint John Chrysostom helps us to understand the implications of these apostolic words as he writes to us :

> The love Paul requires of us is no common love, but that which cements us together, and makes us cleave inseparably to one another, and effects as great and as perfect a union as though it were between limb and limb. [...] This is unity of faith, when we all are one, when we shall all alike acknowledge the common bond. 'Til then you must labour to this end. [...] When we shall all believe alike, then there shall be unity ; for it is plain that this is what he calls '*a perfect man*' [Ephesians 4:13]. [...] He made Himself indeed the source of his dependence, and has constituted them fellow-workers with Himself. Some He has appointed to one office, and others to another. For example, the apostle is the most vital vessel of the whole body, receiving everything from Him ; so that He makes eternal life run through them to all, as through veins and arteries ; I mean, through their discourse. [...] Love builds up, and makes men cleave one to another, and be fastened and fitted together. [...] Nothing so provokes God's anger as the division of the Church. Yes, though we have achieved ten thousand glorious acts, yet shall we, if we cut to pieces the fulness of the Church, suffer punishment no less sore than they who mangled His Body. [...] Therefore, I assert and protest, that to make a schism in the Church is no less an evil than to fall into heresy. [...] Let the Church be one ("Homily on Ephesians 4").

We see how emphatically the Fathers, firmly rooted in the Scriptures and the Tradition, make it clear to us all that the unity of the Church, the unity of the Body of Christ, is not an option. Saint Cyprian of Carthage writes in clear and compelling terms :

> Who then is so profane and lacking in faith, who [is] so insane by the fury of discord, as either to believe that the unity of God, the garment of the Lord, the Church of Christ can be torn asunder or to dare to do so? He warns us in the Gospel, and teaches, saying, '"*And there will be one flock and one shepherd*"' [John 10:16]. And does anyone think that there can be either many shepherds or many flocks in one place? Likewise the Apostle Paul, introducing this same unity to us, beseeches and urges us in these words, '*Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement*' [1 Corinthians 1:10]. And again he says, '[...] *bearing with one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*' [Ephesians 4:2-3]. Do you think that you can stand and live, withdrawing from the Church and building for yourselves other abodes and different dwellings? ("The Unity of the Church")

The Church is holy.

Indeed, the Church is holy. The holiness of the Church is that of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. The Apostle Peter has written, "*you also be holy*" (1 Peter 1:15). It is necessary that we understand this as a command, not an option. God Himself has given us the direction about holiness from the beginning. This apostle, who was raised to know the Scriptures from his infancy both by heart and by reading, simply repeats the divine command. As the Church is holy, so the bishop is called to be holy, and so are we all called to be holy. We are, because of our loving relationship with the Lord, giving our whole being to Him. We live in Him who makes us whole. The following citations are relevant to this call to be holy :

> '*For I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I, the Lord your God, am holy*. [...] *For I am the Lord who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I, the Lord, am holy*' (3 Moses 11:44, 45).
>
> '*You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy*' (3 Moses 19:2 ; see also 3 Moses 20:7, 26).
>
> *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy'* [3 Moses 11:45]. *And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot* (1 Peter 1:13-19).

The word "holy" means, essentially, "dedicated or devoted (given over by vow) to the service of God" (see p. 12). Significantly, the dictionary points out that there is a direct historical relationship between the English words "holy" and "whole". There is also an implication of health in this word. We can see a similar and parallel link in the French language between the words *saint(e)* (holy) and *sain(e)* (healthy, wholesome). In both languages the words are even almost homonyms. These words also have a relationship to the Latin word *sanus*, which means "healthy", "whole", or "sound" (of body or mind). In English, therefore, the word "sane" (mentally healthy) can be considered to be a near relative. All these extensions with regard to holiness are certainly legitimate implications.

Saint John Chrysostom addresses the holiness of the Church in this manner ("her", here, being the Church) :

> '*While we were still sinners, Christ died for us*' [Romans 5:8]. And though such as this, He took her ; He arrayed her in beauty, and washed her, and refused not even this, to give Himself for her ; '*that He might sanctify and cleanse her'*, he proceeds, *'with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish'* [Ephesians 5:26-27]. '*With the washing of water*', He washes her uncleanness. '*By the word*', he says. What word ? "*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*"' [Matthew 28:19]. And not simply has He adorned her, but has made her '*glorious* [...] *not having spot or wrinkle or*

> *any such thing*'. Let us then also seek after this beauty ourselves, and we shall be able to create it. [...] Let us wipe off the spot that is within. Let us smooth the wrinkles that are within. Let us do away with the blemishes that are on the soul. Such is the beauty that God requires. Let us make her fair in God's sight [...] ("Homily on Ephesians", 5).

Regarding this understanding of holiness, in the regular, daily life of the Church there are many reminders provided for us, because we are so easily distracted, and because we so easily and quickly forget. Saint John exhorts us to clean spots and smooth out our inner wrinkles. These can refer to spots and wrinkles not only in the Church's life in general, but also in our interior lives. The health of our interior life (or the lack of it) affects the life of the whole Church. In our maintaining of ourselves and of our whole life in the Church in purity and spotlessness, "*which is* [*our*] *reasonable service*", we are following the exhortation of the Apostle :

> *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God* (Romans 12:1-2).

This exhortation itself recalls the Mosaic direction about sacrifices in the Law :

> *Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year* (2 Moses 12:5 ; see 3 Moses 1:3 ; 5 Moses 15:21, *&c.*).

Every day of the Church's year, there is on the daily calendar a reminder of the multitude of holy persons who have gone before us. Every Temple to the Lord is constructed with indications of this holiness of Christ, of the Church, of the faithful. Everything about the Temple ought to point towards the Kingdom. Usually, the Temple is directed towards the east, with the Holy Table at the east, which enables us always to be mindful both of the Resurrection of Christ, and of His Second Coming. From the earliest days of our Faith, Temples were built over the relics of holy martyrs, and to this day there are relics of holy martyrs under every consecrated Holy Table. Every Orthodox home normally is focussed also on this holiness, and is connected with the Temple. The table at which we eat is a reflection of the Holy Table in the Temple, which is itself a reflection of the Altar in Heaven. The eating at that home table is a reflection of the Eucharistic eating at the Holy Table in the Temple, which itself is a reflection of the eternal Heavenly Banquet. The icons in the home are related to those in the Temple, and all these icons refer both to holy persons, and to Christ who shines in these persons. In many a home, just as in the Temple, there is an attempt made to place the icons on an east wall (or corner). At home, as in the Temple, we attempt to offer our prayers while facing east. We consciously decide and intend to imitate and emulate Christ. Therefore, as we pray daily, and as we come to bless all the details and actions of our life every day, from our icon-corner (or icon-wall) flow blessing and the consecration of our homes, and everyone and everything in them. Likewise, as we consciously bless our food and give thanks to the Lord for everything, this blessing is united with the blessing flowing from the Holy Table. This blessing is extended from that Holy Table through the hospitality we offer to others both at our home-tables, and in the many details of daily life. Blessings and fruitfulness flow out from the consecration of our lives and from the consecrated life that we live in our home. In turn, further blessing and fruitfulness, which grow up from the original fruitfulness and blessings, flow back into our home, and further consecrate the home.

The consecration of the whole of life, the referring of everything to Christ, being constantly aware of Christ and emulating Christ in everything, is not something that happens instantly. It is a life-long progressive process which is rooted in love that increases in selflessness. We call that progressive process *theosis*. *Theosis*, the identification with Christ, progresses throughout our earthly life ; and after our death, it continues on eternally in the Kingdom of Heaven. People find this fact to be both a consolation and a source of hope, knowing that they are not cut off from God's loving mercy, and that they never shall be. At the heart of *theosis* is love. Because we are one with Christ ; because we have put on Christ in baptism ; and because we are identifying ourselves with Him and emulating Him, we are then becoming one with, united with God who is Love. We become love. This is not the special work of any particular persons. This is the way and the work of us all. As the Apostle Peter reminds us, the Lord long ago gave this direction : "'*Be holy, for I am holy*'" (1 Peter 1:16 [3 Moses 11:45]). Holiness, obviously, means being love and loving. This love is the major characteristic of the saints. However, a bishop has a special responsibility in *theosis*. At his ordination, the bishop is set apart, devoted, and dedicated for the purpose of revealing Christ. He is ordained in order to enable the faithful Christians, along with him, to become progressively more like Christ. It is for him, the arch-pastor, to show the way.

The Church is catholic.

According to the standard dictionaries, the word "catholic" means : universal in extent ; involving all ; of interest to all ; pertaining to the whole Christian body or Church. It comes from the Greek adjective καθολικός, *katholikos*, which means "concerning the whole" (this word is applied to the principal Temple, usually the largest, of a monastery, and sometimes to the head of a local Church, such as that of Georgia). The Bishop-Martyr and God-bearer Ignatius of Antioch uses the world *katholikos* in his "Letter to the Smyrnæans" 8 with exactly the same meaning that we have already considered : "*Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic Church*" (see p. 82). We can benefit from paying attention to the words of Saint Cyril (†386), Archbishop of Jerusalem :

> [The Church] is called catholic, then, because she extends over all the world, from one end of the earth to the other. [She is catholic] because she teaches universally and completely one and all the doctrines which ought to come to men's knowledge, concerning things both visible and invisible, heavenly and earthly. [She is catholic] because she brings into subjection to godliness the whole race of mankind, governors and governed, learned and unlearned. [She is catholic] because she universally treats and heals the whole class of sins, which are committed by soul or body, and possesses in herself every form of virtue which is named, both in deeds and words, and in every kind of spiritual gifts (Catechetical Lectures).

We can see the appropriateness of the word "catholic" to describe the Church, because the Church is not exclusive. It is inclusive. Because the Church is Christ (I mean the Body of Christ), then the Church is the fulness : for all, embracing all, in the context of the truth about Him who is the Truth. Indeed, the Church is the Body of Christ, and the Church is therefore visible. But this Church, this Body, is not in any way static in size. Our Saviour tells us that His Body, the Church, is to grow unceasingly. Because the Church, the Body of Christ, lives in complete harmony with our Saviour, and reveals Him clearly and truly, she is whole, she is healthy, and she is therefore holy. Because the Church is, as Christ, always the same (yet at the same time the Church is ever growing), she is also catholic. We can perhaps, then, see the

relationship of the word "catholic" with the word "holy". Catholic holiness is expressed very well by Saint Cyril, as we have seen, when he says that in Christ, the Church is given the gifts and the ability to treat and heal every sort of wound from which we might suffer.

To this day, we continue to follow the fundamental direction given to us by our Saviour after His Resurrection from the dead :

> *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age*' (Matthew 28:18-20 ; see also Acts 1:8 about witnessing).

In fulfilling this directive, it is helpful that we all keep in mind at all times the well-known words of Saint Vincent of Lérins († *ca.* 445), who wrote :

> Now in the catholic Church herself we take the greatest care to hold that which has been believed everywhere, always and by all. That is truly and properly 'catholic,' as is shown by the very force and meaning of the word, which comprehends everything almost universally. We shall hold to this rule if we follow universality, antiquity, and consent. We shall follow universality if we acknowledge that one Faith to be true which the whole Church throughout the world confesses. [We shall follow] antiquity if we in no wise depart from those interpretations which it is clear that our ancestors and fathers proclaimed. [We shall follow] consent, if in antiquity itself we keep following the definitions and opinions of all, or certainly nearly all, bishops and doctors alike (The Commonitorium 4:3).

Through his words, Saint Vincent reminds us that in the fifth century the leaders and the people were intently concerned to keep in harmony and unity with the faith, understanding and practice of all who had gone before them. This is the meaning of holy Tradition.

The following words from Saint Tikhon of Moscow's farewell homily at Saint Nicholas' Cathedral in New York on the Sunday of Forgiveness, 17 March, 1907, give a good clarification of the implications of the bishop's responsibility to be a "lamp to the world" :

> '[...] Orthodox people must care for the dissemination of the Orthodox faith among the heterodox. Christ the Saviour said that men lighting a lamp do not put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house (see Matthew 5:15). The light of Orthodoxy also is not lit for a small circle of people. No, the Orthodox faith is catholic; it remembers the commandment of the Founder: "*Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15). [...] "*Make disciples of all the nations*" (Matthew 28:19). It is our obligation to share our spiritual treasures, our truth, our light and our joy with those who do not have these gifts. And this duty lies not only on pastors and missionaries, but also on lay people, for the Church of Christ, in the wise comparison of St. Paul, is a body, and in the life of the body every member takes part. [...]
>
> 'For each of us the dissemination of the Christian faith must be a favourite task, close to our hearts and precious to us; in this task each member of the Church must take an active part — some by personal missionary effort, some by monetary support and service to the "needs of the saints," and some by prayer to the Lord that He might "establish and increase His Church" and that He might "teach the word of truth" to those who do not know Christ, [that He] might "reveal to them the Gospel of righteousness, [that He might]

> unite them to His Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church"' [see the Litany of the Catechumens] (Orthodox America 1794-1976, p. 100).

The following petition (from the Great Litany in the services that contain it) understands this concern for the baptism of all, and for the embracing of the whole of the Lord's creation :

> For the peace of the whole world ; for the stability of the holy Churches of God ; and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

It is very important that we expand our understanding of the extent of the work of God's love from being focussed on us human beings alone. "All", in this petition, embraces all creation, which we learn to love and to respect in the same manner as the Lord, who creates all, who loves and nurtures every creature and all creatures. The following exclamation from the heart, from the actual heart of the *anaphora* of the Divine Liturgy underlines this, confessing that the Offering is made for all :

> Your own, of Your own, we offer to You, on behalf of all, and for all.

The present Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, shows us how to embrace this salient point. This is why he has been given the epithet "the green patriarch". By this, I mean that he lives out and embodies the standard set forth by Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia :

> Love is the only true answer to our ecological crisis, for we cannot save what we do not love. But there is no genuine love without costly self-sacrifice (Through the Creation to the Creator, p. 27).

Creation itself is the product of love. Out of love, which is the fundamental characteristic of the Most Holy Trinity, all things were brought into being. We human beings were created by God through love. He created us to be co-workers with Him through love within all this creation. At the beginning, we were given the responsibility of developing and maintaining good order in this creation. We were gardeners, as it were. We were even given the responsibility of naming the animals. This responsible co-operation understands a living relationship of life-giving love both with the Creator Himself and also with the creation. Instead of this, we have chosen the path of pride and arrogance. We chose to accept the temptation to become usurpers. We developed a sort of unrealistic dream-land of self-gratification, and (most recently) instant self-gratification. We have forgotten patience. We have forgotten and even rejected relationship with God, with other human beings, and with the creation. In our selfishness, we have become wasteful. We have become poisoners of this creation.

All these negative characteristics do not at all describe the usual ways in which Orthodox peoples have, in the past, lived. I do not want, however, to suggests that this way of life is all in the past. Some still manage to live in the way of life. These days we are being reminded by indigenous peoples about things that we Orthodox have known and practiced from the beginning, as we were informed by the Grace of the Holy Spirit. Now we fall into forgetting the meaning of the sacred cosmos. We have largely abandoned this awareness. It has been our inheritance that in Christ we remember the proper, living, life-giving, creative and loving relationship with the creation. This is reflected in the annual Theophany blessing of waters : rivers, lakes and oceans. The prayers of the blessing of waters show that we understand how this blessing is also the blessing of all creation. This means the renewal of the consecration of the universe to the Lord, and its healing. In some places, such water-blessings happen monthly. We have remembered (until lately) that the creature is not the Creator. However, we are more and

more forgetting, even rejecting, the Creator. We are turning our backs on the Creator and substituting ourselves for Him. Now we are ignoring the frequent and insistent reminders that are given us through the Divine Liturgy (and through our patriarchs and bishops), because we, still in our pride, believe that our modern technological and so-called scientific ways are superior. We are forgetting. We are forgetting that we are to be stewards, not consumers. For the sake of our self-satisfaction, we turn a blind eye to the damage done to God's creation and to human beings both near and far away from us. For instance, we cause all sorts of minerals and metals to be extracted from the earth for our convenience, while the process indiscriminately poisons the water and kills people, animals, fish and plants. It may not be too late to stop this slide towards great catastrophe. There may yet be time to repent and to recover at least some of our former authentic Orthodox awareness of our stewardship in Christ of the creation.

Professor Sergei S Verhovskoy addresses the meaning of catholicity :

> If we are in Christ we are one, because He cannot be divided (1 Corinthians 1:12-15). Variety is not division. The catholicity of the Church implies not only the churches on earth but also the heavenly Church, with which we are in communion [Ephesians 1:10, 2:5-6; Philippians 3:20; Colossians 1:20, 3:1-4; Hebrews 12:22-24; Revelation 1:19-20, 4, 6:9-11, 7:9-17, 14, 15, 19:1-18]. This unity is built on the unity of the Kingdom of God, in which all members of the Church both on earth and in heaven participate. The unity of the earthly and the heavenly Church is probably one of the best expressions of catholicity, inasmuch as this union includes such extremely different forms of Christian life as the life of the Kingdom of Heaven and life on earth (The Light of the World, pp. 133-134).

Father Dumitru Staniloae expresses yet another facet of catholicity in "the prayer of all for all" :

> The relations which exist, directly or indirectly, between all men are vehicles of the imperfections common to all; it is our desire that at least within the Church these relations, which endure beyond death, should be no less inevitably vehicles of forgiveness mutually sought and granted, the prayer of all for all, so that God may pardon all. This is an essential element in the catholicity of the Church. In this prayer of all for all, this penitence undertaken by all on behalf of all, the Church is continually being cleansed. The purity or the holiness of the Church is a dynamic aspect of her life. Sinners are not separated from the Church, nor has she any members who are without sin; all are taken up into this movement of purification through penitence, through the mutual exchange of forgiveness, through the prayer addressed to God by all that all may be forgiven. The Church is not a static society, fixed in immobility, but a dynamic communion made up of men and women who are sinners and who, at the same time, are being cleansed by their prayer for one another. [...] Thus the Church is renewed through the Holy Spirit by mutual forgiveness and prayer. She is constantly renewing herself, repairing the inner bonds of love between her members. In other words, she is re-creating her inner unity, her harmony and catholicity (Prayer and Holiness, pp. 26, 27).

The Church is apostolic.

The Church, the Body of Christ, is founded on the eye-witness testimony, experience and service of the Holy Apostles, as Saint Nikolai (Velimirovič) writes :

> 'All is given to the apostles', says Saint John Chrysostom. This means: all gifts, all powers, all the fulness of the Grace that God gives to all the faithful is given to the apostles (The Prologue, 30 November).

The apostolic service continues throughout historical time as we, each and all, together as one, share our experience of and encounter with the one, the same Lord Jesus Christ, by those who were ordained by the apostles through the laying-on-of hands (and also of the Gospel Book) in constant succession until this present day.

Professor Sergei S Verhovskoy gives us these words :

> God, through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, transmitted all the treasures of perfection and salvation to the apostles [Acts 5:32; 1 Corinthians 7:25, 11:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:1-6, 4:1-6, 13:3; Galatians 1:6-12, 16; Ephesians 2:20, 3:5-13]. The apostles kept it in the unity of their college and in the apostolic community (Acts 2:42, 5:32; Galatians 1:18-2:10 [...]). From the apostolic Church, Christianity spread by Holy Tradition throughout the world, in order to accomplish its universality (1 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 3; Philippians 3; Colossians 1:23-29; 2 Timothy 3:10-17) (The Light of the World, p. 141).

The word "apostle" comes to us from the Greek verb ἀποστέλλω, *apostellō*. This word means "to send off" ; "to dispatch on some service" ; "to send forth a messenger, agent, message or command". The apostles (the Twelve and the Seventy) are those who were sent forth by the One who was sent forth from the Father as we hear in the Holy Gospel :

> *'Peace to you. As the Father has sent Me, I also send you'* (John 20:21).

Although at that moment our Saviour spoke these words to the Holy Apostles, at all times and at every single time He speaks the words to us all, the Church, the members of the Body of Christ, who live everywhere in the world. To be sent forth with the message of the words of life is the nature and purpose of the whole Church. Each one of us is Christ's agent. However, because of their particular call, the arch-pastors have this responsibility at the foundation of all that they do and all that they are. Saint Nikolai (Velimirovič) clarifies for us the importance and the meaning of the laying-on-of-hands in ordination :

> By the laying-on of their hands on those chosen from among the faithful, the apostles consecrated bishops, priests and deacons. It is evident from this that the Christian faith is not merely dogma, but spiritual power. It is not enough merely to know: it is also necessary to possess spiritual power. And it is not enough merely to be chosen from among the people; one must be set apart by God. If spiritual power were not needed for the priestly calling, the laying-on of hands would not be needed: teaching would be passed on from mouth to ear. The laying-on of hands signifies the handing-on of authority and the descent of this power upon those chosen. This power is indeed that Grace of God that strengthens a man, sanctifying and enlightening him. It is truly a divine Grace, which teaches and guides the flock of Christ, tending it and strengthening it through the Mysteries. A priest is a vessel of the ineffable, fearsome and all-sufficing power of Grace (The Prologue, 30 May).

Healing, through the laying-on-of-hands, is one of the main responsibilities of those ordained to the priesthood and the high-priesthood, as they follow in the foot-steps of our Saviour :

> *When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them* (Luke 4:40).

Ordination includes this healing element, although it may not be obvious. The laying-on-of-hands is for the purpose of conferring the Holy Spirit for the fulfilling of a particular service. In the ordination of priests and high-priests, the Holy Spirit is prayed for and given (in apostolic succession) to those who are called to serve in the Lord. As we see, the prayer recognises that every person being ordained (whether it be to the diaconate, presbyterate or episcopate) has limitations because he is a human being. The Grace of the Holy Spirit provides what is lacking both at the time of the ordination and in the course of the candidate's daily pastoral service thereafter. The following prayers are from the ordination of a presbyter, and from the ordination of a bishop :

> The divine Grace, which always heals what is infirm, and fulfils what is lacking, through the laying-on-of-hands, appoints __n__, the most devout deacon, to be a presbyter. Therefore, let us pray for him, that the Grace of the All-holy Spirit may come upon him (Bishop's Service Book, vol. 2).

> By the election and approbation of all the God-loving bishops of the Holy Synod, and of the consecrated council : The divine Grace, which always heals what is infirm, and fulfils what is lacking, through the laying-on-of-hands, appoints you, most beloved of God Archimandrite (or Hieromonk) __n__, duly elected, to be the bishop of the city(ies) of __n__, (and the diocese of __n__), which has (have) the protection of Almighty God. Therefore, let us pray for him, that the Grace of the All-holy Spirit may come upon him (Bishop's Service Book, vol. 2).

Saint Hippolytus of Rome (†235) provides an early alternative prayer of episcopal ordination :

> Let the bishop be ordained after he has been chosen by all the people. When someone pleasing to all has been named, let the people assemble on the Lord's Day with the presbyters and with such bishops as may be present. All giving assent, the bishops shall impose hands on him, and the presbytery shall stand by in silence. Indeed, all shall remain silent, praying in their hearts for the descent of the Spirit. Then one of the bishops shall, at the request of all, impose his hand on the one who is being ordained bishop, and shall pray thus, saying: 'God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of mercies and God of all comfort [see 2 Corinthians 1:3], who dwell on high and attend to the lowly, who know all things before they come to pass: You that have given boundaries to Your Church through Your Word of Grace, predestining from the beginning the just offspring of Abraham, making them princes and priests so as not to leave Your sanctuary without a ministry; from the beginning of the world You have been well-pleased to be glorified in those You have chosen. Pour forth now that power which comes from You, from Your Royal Spirit, which You gave to Your beloved Son Jesus Christ and which He bestowed upon His Holy Apostles, who established in every place the Church of Your sanctification for the glory and unceasing praise of Your name. You that know the hearts of all [see Acts 1:24], grant to this Your servant, whom You have chosen for the episcopate, to feed Your holy flock and to serve without blame as Your high-priest, ministering night and day to propitiate unceasingly before Your face; and to offer to You the gifts of Your holy Church; and by the Spirit of the high-priesthood to have the authority to forgive sins, in accord with Your command; to assign lots, in accord with the authority which You gave to the apostles; and to please You in meekness and purity of heart, offering to You an odour of sweetness: through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom be glory, might, and honour to You, to the Father and the Son with the Holy Spirit, both now and through the ages of ages. Amen' (The Apostolic Tradition).

Saint John Chrysostom speaks about the continuity of the apostolic service through ordination :

> He [Luke] does not say in what manner it was done, but that they were ordained with prayer ; for this is the meaning of ordination : the hand of the man [apostle, bishop] is laid upon the person, but the whole work is of God. It is [God's] Hand which touches the head of the one ordained. [...] The apostles prayed over them so that power might be given to them ("Homily on Acts 6").

As we clearly can see, the Tradition is literally handed on in ordination through the laying-on-of-hands. Saint John reminds us firmly that it is the Lord Himself who lays His hand upon the head of the one ordained. It is He who truly acts in every one of the mysteries (sacraments). The Apostle Paul writes clearly about this receiving and handing on : "*For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you* [...]" (1 Corinthians 11:23). These Pauline words are related to the following three chronological occasions in which we see the laying-on-of-hands in ordination in the Acts of the Apostles :

> *And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them* (Acts 6:5-6).
>
> *Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit* (Acts 8:14-17).
>
> *Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away* (Acts 13:1-3).

The first citation is about the laying-on-of-hands for the ordination of those who are to serve as deacons. This serves as the pattern which all other ordinations to the three major orders (bishop, priest, deacon) have followed ever since. The second citation is about the laying-on-of-hands for the reception of the Holy Spirit at the time of baptism. The third citation is about the laying-on-of-hands, referring to the ordination of Barnabas and Saul (Paul). This ordination includes a particular blessing in obedience to the Lord, an ordination to undertake a particular work that was directed by the Holy Spirit, and about which much is written later in the Acts. Any laying-on-of-hands is done to enable the believer to serve in accordance with the responsibility given at the time. In the second citation, each one is ordained to live and to serve as a Christian, to bear witness to Christ, and to enable those around to come to Christ by seeing Him and encountering Him in the one who was baptised. Any ordination is an ordination to act as yeast and salt (see Matthew 5:13 and 13:33 ; see also p. 166, and other comments in that section). It is yeast and salt which give life and flavour or character to bread. This is what our Saviour has asked us all to be in our lives. It is for those who are ordained, by the Grace of the Holy Spirit, to renew the life of the yeast in each of us, and to refresh and renew the Christian character in each of us as we receive from the Lord through them His life-giving Grace in each of the mysteries. Such an awareness underlies the traditional presenting of bread and salt to a visitor to our homes, and

the same to especially honoured guests in church or on other public occasions. It reveals how our Lord's presence permeates all aspects of our life. Behaving in such a way also refreshes our own God-given attitude of Christian hospitality, service and love.

About ordination to the so-called major orders, the Apostle Paul warns his disciple Timothy about haste : "*Do not lay hands on anyone hastily* [...]" (1 Timothy 5:22). This particular instruction has for us several implications. One who is newly converted to Christianity should not be ordained too soon. In our day, this may be extended to be understood that even one who has converted from heterodox Christianity should not be soon ordained. In both cases, there is considerable time required to become truly one with what may be called "Orthodox mentality (φρόνημα, *phronēma*)". The Greek word's foundation includes the concepts of "understanding, wisdom, prudence", "right-thinking", "purpose", "knowing through experience". This last aspect really lays the foundation and leads to the over-arching Orthodox mentality. The old saying : "experience teaches" applies very directly to the development of Orthodox mentality. Most importantly, there should be no ordination of anyone without serious prayer and concern to discern what is the Lord's will regarding each candidate. The bishop is always technically chosen by the people of the Church (diocese) he will serve. They have a voice to contribute, and this element ought not to be left out of any such process. It is true that the bishops do the actual election, but the people also know who it is that they prefer to be in the lead amongst them. According to canonical Tradition, this choice (election) by the people was, because of their knowledge of the person, witnessed and approved by other, neighbouring bishops. It was these bishops who would ordain the candidate (there being no impediment in the candidate). To ensure the participation of the whole Church in each episcopal ordination, three was considered to be the minimum number of bishops required to participate in the ordaining. However, the preference was always that as many as possible participate.

The Apostle shows us that he understands ordination (laying-on-of-hands) to be an integral part of the foundation, and not separated from what brings the structure to perfection. The Mystery of Ordination and the Mystery of Healing both come with laying-on-of-hands. They both affect the whole of our life in Christ. This, too, requires maturity to comprehend :

> *Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgement* (Hebrews 6:1-2).

The divine Grace, which is conferred through the prayers and laying-on-of-hands by the bishops, is not given by them, themselves, but by the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who unites the one ordained to the continuously-flowing river of Grace which comes from the Lord, and which flows eternally unto the ages of ages. When I lived at the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in New Valamo, Finland, I was acutely aware of this reality. The monastic brotherhood of the Transfiguration, being spiritually rooted in the Valaam Islands of Lake Ladoga nearby, has given us many saints. The one and the same brotherhood (which sent us Saint Herman) has in the past been wiped out repeatedly by wars. Yet this river of Grace (which includes the prayers of the saints) has repeatedly renewed the monastic brotherhood throughout history, just as happened a few decades ago, when a new monastic brotherhood was established on those islands. Valaam is one example of the monasteries in Russia, Greece, Mount Athos, Georgia and elsewhere that have been thus repeatedly renewed. They are renewed because our Saviour never ceases to say

to us : "'*Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*'" (Matthew 11:28). Grace unites the ordained man to the living Tradition of Christ Himself. Living Tradition (*i.e.* handing-on), then, is based upon the living experience of the personal witness of the apostles, as we have already encountered in the testimony of the Apostle Peter (2 Peter 1:16-18 ; see p. 92). The Apostle Paul expresses this in the context of the depth of his love in Christ :

> *For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the Gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you* (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

The holy Martyr-Bishop of Antioch, Ignatius, the God-bearer, is the second bishop of Antioch. His predecessor was ordained by the Apostle Peter. These words show how he is in harmony with this apostolic ordination and confidence :

> Ignatius, also the *Theophorus* [*i.e.* God-bearer], to the Church of God the Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is in Philadelphia of Asia, which has received mercy and is established in the harmony of God, and rejoices unwaveringly in the suffering of our Lord, and is filled with all mercy by His resurrection ; which I greet in the blood of Jesus Christ, who is eternal and enduring joy, especially if they are in unity with the bishop, and with him the presbyters and deacons, who have been appointed in accordance with the will of Jesus Christ, whom He has securely established, in accordance with His own will, by His Holy Spirit ("Letter to the Philadelphians", Introduction).

In this context, the Apostle James writes about the importance of our being distinct from the fallen ways of the world, and of our being a living witness for Christ and His Way. He reminds us strongly that this Way, the Way of the apostles, must be our Way at all times and in all places. We must always be seeking to know, and to do the will of the Lord. We do well to read carefully, to remember and to understand this apostle's strong admonition to us. It is, after all, a catholic letter, a general letter to everyone :

> *Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, 'The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously'? But He gives more grace. Therefore, He says: 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble'* [Proverbs 3:37]. *Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up* (James 4:1-10).

The Lord uses many means in order to lift us up, and to help us to be more like Christ, and to rescue us from being like those who are the darkened and distorted fallen. The chief of these means is that He has enabled us to participate in the Divine Liturgy. Thus, we are expected to be regular and frequent participants in the Holy Mysteries, in Holy Communion. This does, indeed, lift us up. Our Lord lifts us up. These words from the *anaphora* of the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great suggest why, as the Apostle Peter did, so also for more than two millennia Christians have been reaching out and taking hold of our Saviour's hand :

> For You, O Lord, are the Help of the helpless, the Hope of the hopeless, the Saviour of the storm-tossed, the Haven of the voyager, the Physician of the sick.

There is no avoiding the fact that, as far as possible, the bishop is called to be and to do all that has been written here : helping, supporting, and defending all in need of any sort. Yet, there is much more that is his calling and his responsibility. Indeed, the immensity of this apostolic responsibility substantiates the saying that without a doubt the episcopate is inexpressible. Saint Gregory the Theologian makes this ineffability obvious to us as he attempts to finds words adequate to describe the great Patriarch Athanasius of Alexandria :

> [...] He was sublime in action, lowly in mind ; inaccessible in virtue, most accessible in conversation ; gentle, free from anger, sympathetic, sweet in words, sweeter in disposition ; angelic in appearance, more angelic in mind ; calm in rebuke, persuasive in praise, without spoiling the good effect of either by excess, but rebuking with the tenderness of a father, praising with the dignity of a ruler ; his tenderness was not dissipated, nor his severity sour ; for the one was reasonable, the other prudent, and both truly wise ; his disposition sufficed for the training of his spiritual children, with very little need of words ; his words with very little need of the rod [see 1 Corinthians 4:21], and his moderate use of the rod with still less use of the knife. [...] Let one praise him in his fastings and prayers as if he had been bodiless and immaterial ; another, his unweariedness and zeal for vigils and psalmody ; another, his patronage of the needy ; another, his dauntlessness towards the powerful, or his condescension to the lowly. [...] Let the youths celebrate their instructor ; the poor, their resource ; the wealthy, their steward. It seems to me that even the widows will praise their protector ; even the orphans, their father ; even the poor, their benefactor ; strangers, their host ; brothers, the man of brotherly love ; the sick, their physician in whatever sickness or treatment you will; the healthy, the guard of health ; yes, let all men celebrate him who made himself all things to all men that he might gain almost, if not quite, all [see 1 Corinthians 9:22] ("Oration on Saint Athanasius the Great").

The gist of these words is that the shepherd-bishop, revealing Christ, is to be a loving, self-emptying and life-giving father to the diocese under his *omophor*, in the foot-steps of Saint Athanasius. He is to provide all that is necessary for life and growth in the diocese.

However, the bishop is not omnipotent, nor omniscient, nor omnipresent (although intercessory prayer does help greatly to make up for these limitations). As the prayers at an ordination reveal, the Grace of the Holy Spirit makes up for our lacks. Often there are personality problems that present a great challenge to the bishop. Sometimes (perhaps even often) the bishop may make a mistake. Sometimes he may try to make the best provision possible with insufficient personnel and/or financial resources. Sometimes the results of his having to make such decisions can cause pain in some (or many) quarters. This pain may be acutely felt by the faithful, but the Christ-loving high-priest/shepherd/father will likely feel this pain at least as much as they do (or perhaps even more). A father who wishes to feed his family

and does not have the necessary resources at hand at the time to do so, feels that he himself is lacking because he cannot provide for his family. He feels that he has failed. I recall in this regard what may be a sort of metaphor. During times of war (and particularly in this case World War II in Europe), there have been parents who tried to stave off hunger in their family with whatever could be found. I am told that because there was so little food available during World War II, what was frequently provided in addition to what the people had was cellulose : cellulose in the form of saw-dust, which was mixed with the rest of the meagre supplies in order to try to satisfy temporarily, even without managing to nourish. By our miserliness, we can make this not a metaphor but a painful reality for needy clergy and others, even nowadays. Christians, nevertheless, do know from experience that the Lord is able to supply our need, even at times when we may not be able to recognise just how He is doing it.

We can see throughout our Church history that bishops have been treated in many different ways, often reminiscent of how Moses and Aaron were treated, and of how one or another Old Covenant prophet was treated (because of fear, or brokenness, or selfishness, or lust-for-power, or some other reason). Like all the beleaguered prophets, it is the part of the Christ-loving bishop to remain faithful to Christ. The Christ-loving arch-pastor remains in harmony with our Lord, and he perseveres in leading and feeding the sheep, despite all obstacles. This shows all the more the necessity of living in the way of repentance ; of living in the way of intercession before the Lord ; of keeping as a high priority the meeting of the practical needs of the people. The way of repentance includes being aware of our falls and faults : being aware of the frequency and nature of short-falls in doing and being good. Repentance includes our work of learning, with His help, to do and to be better in Christ. In the context of this necessity, we must not overlook or forget the lives of Saint Nicholas and other such holy persons, and the practical ways in which he and they cared for particular persons in their need.

The question : "*Do you love Me*", which our Saviour asks the Apostle Peter, introduces an important element to be considered when we are reflecting on the apostolic service of a high-priest or priest. It is a question which each Christian might well ask him/herself daily, a question each Christian might well expect to hear at the time of the Judgement. This element is that of the living relationship of love with Christ, and its yeast-like work. Our Saviour, after the Resurrection, gives the Apostle Peter the opportunity to clear his conscience of any guilt or sorrow for his previous betrayals (Luke 22:57-62) in the following significant series of questions, with their important answers. In this case, there are three questions to match the three betrayals. These questions also apply to every bishop. Every bishop must be able to answer from his heart along with the Apostle Peter, as we participate in the following dialogue :

> *Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.' He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep*' (John 21:15-17).

Although some persons mistakenly consider that these words are simply an isolated conversation, this is not the case. Clearly, the Lord was making a point when He questioned the apostle in this manner. The point is made all the clearer if we recall that this dialogue happens

not in private, but in the company of the other apostles. Not only is the Apostle Peter strengthened in his love through this exchange, but the other apostles also are strengthened in their selfless, brotherly love, both for our Saviour and for one another. By understanding a subtle under-current, we can perceive an increase in intensity in our Lord's questions to the Apostle Peter. One indication of this is found in how this apostle, receiving the questions as being increasingly intense, responds to them increasingly insistently. His second response, although using the same words as in the first, may be understood both to emphasise by repetition, and also to be spoken with greater emphasis in the voice. Who would not increase the emphasis in desiring to convince anyone asking in this manner that the answer is sincere ? Following each response, our Lord each time increases the resulting responsibility that comes with such love. This change in intensity may not be self-evident when looking at the Greek words. The first two times, our Saviour uses the same Greek verb ἀγαπάω, *agapaō* (which means to love completely and unconditionally, to love with the maximum love possible). The third time our Saviour "turns down the heat", as it were, by using the verb φιλέω, *phileō* (which means to love affectionately, as we might love a family-member or a friend).

Each time, the Apostle Peter replies to our Saviour using the verb *phileō*. We may well understand here that the reason that he avoided using the verb *agapaō* for love could have to do with his acute awareness of his triple denial, and his not daring to presume to say that his love for our Saviour could be so complete and unconditional. It is possible to say that the Apostle Peter (along with many saints) would not admit that his love would be ἀγάπη, *agapē*, even if it were true. He was truly humble. It is not insignificant that our Saviour asks him the first time : *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?"* This question opens a door for the apostle to answer including the phrase, "*more than these*", which would reveal that some darkness remains in his heart. If he were to include the phrase, it would show that he is prideful in saying that he loves our Saviour more than the others do ; or it would make a different and seemingly innocuous comparison by implying that he loves our Saviour more than he loves them. Instead, he omits that phrase. He simply confesses Jesus to be Lord, and that he loves Him. Our Saviour sees more than the simple words in the responses. Our Saviour, then, is underlining to the Apostle Peter (and to us also) that He sees that this apostle is a truly repentant man. He implicitly shows the Apostle Peter that he is completely accepted, completely forgiven, and completely loved. With every question and response, then, by increasing increments, our Lord shows him what is his responsibility. There are many implications accompanying the phrases "'*Feed My lambs*'", "'*Tend My sheep*'", "'*Feed My sheep*'". Saint John Chrysostom contributes his understanding of the third question :

> Jesus asks him the third time, and the third time gives him the same injunction : to show at what a price He sets the care [*i.e.* leadership] of His own sheep, and that this especially is a sign of love towards Him ("Homily on John 21").

In the context of this conversation in the midst of all the apostles, the Lord gives a clear example of the extent to which forgiveness can reach. Not only does our Saviour take away any possible opportunity for the Apostle Peter to feel ashamed for his betrayals, but without reproach, He also reveals the same forgiveness to the other apostles (who had also abandoned Him), to release them from shame. What is good for us all to understand here is that the Apostle Peter, in his response to the Lord's questions, is making a confession of his faith and of his love for our Saviour. Twice he responds, "'*Yes, Lord; You know that I love You*'", and the third time he insistently says, "'*Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.*'" He is not responding

impatiently, as some might suggest. Rather, he is emphatically affirming his absolute confidence in our Saviour. As he is saying these things aloud, he is accepting the Lord's forgiveness, and allowing the complete healing of his heart to be achieved. This conversation reveals the loving confidence that the Apostle Peter certainly has in our Saviour. The dictionaries tell us that to have confidence is to have full trust and certitude and assurance. It can be helpful to understand that the confidence and the trust of the apostles in Christ can include what I was long ago told about trust. The metaphor was presented that when I prepare to sit down in a chair, I trust that it is there as I see it, and I trust that it will support me when I sit upon it. There is such certitude and assurance about this that I take it as a given in everyday life. Such is our trust, confidence, assurance and certitude in Christ's love for us and ours for Him. We know that He supports us no matter what our weight might be.

This strong emphasis on the depth and the extent of the Lord's forgiveness is very necessary for each of us Christians. As we live amidst the stormy seas of distraction and temptation, there is such a strong tendency in many of us to doubt that the Lord will forgive us and heal us in His life-giving and nurturing love. Likewise, such events as great earthquakes, tsunamis, fires, floods, wars, serious accidents and the like are often a part of the stormy sea that is our life. Even if we are not directly involved in such terrible events, they easily produce in us a horror, or an emotional or spiritual pain which lingers on with us. We have a tendency to dwell on our past confessed and cleansed sins, to call them to mind as if they had not been forgiven. In doing so, we re-open old wounds, and renew the poison from them. Thus we revive their death-dealing work in our hearts. The Archpriest Paul Lazor rightly has said that any recollection of past sins and events without the remembrance of the love and presence of our Lord comes from below, from the powers of darkness (see p. 200). This is why the arch-pastors and pastors have such a need, themselves, to know and to experience in their own hearts the extent of the Lord's love, His forgiveness and His accompanying healing of them. Thus they are able to assure the sheep they lead of the truth of this reality.

In the conversation with the Apostle Peter, our Lord does not stop with the three questions. After this apostle's third, insistent reply, our Saviour adds these words as He speaks to him :

> '*Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish*' (John 21:18).

Reflecting on these words, Saint John Chrysostom points out that our Lord Jesus does not mention the denial nor reproach him for anything that had taken place ; but rather, He says :

> [...] the life which you said you would lay down for Me, now give for My sheep. [...] Since Peter had continually said, '*I will lay down my life for Your sake*' (John 13:37) and '*even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You*' (Matthew 26:35) : He has given him his desire ("Homily on John 21").

The previous words of our Saviour from John 21:18 show the consequences of professing such love. Many a Christian has experienced these consequences. Certainly, in all manners, these words apply to every bishop. They are applicable even to the regular liturgical investiture of a bishop and to his liturgical movements, as well as his daily responsibilities. He is constantly mindful of emptying himself as he lovingly tries to do what is the will of the Lord. In making

this attempt to do the Lord's will in everything, every high-priest must constantly recall that even the drudgery of the desk (it may well feel as if it were drudgery), and all the paper-work and the communications-work that is required, must be undertaken with perpetual blessing. It is good that each bishop try to develop the habit of blessing with his hand this work at its various stages, and blessing each call arriving by telephone or by computer before touching anything. The habit of invoking Christ's blessing on himself with the sign of the Cross before undertaking any work is very life-giving, protecting and helpful. It is very useful, too, to include blessing with Holy Water. It is good also that each bishop recall these crucial words of the Apostle Paul, which must constitute the foundation and the back-ground of every undertaking of any sort in his apostolic service :

> *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away* (1 Corinthians 13:1-8).

The consequences of living in the service of our Lord and doing His will have often included death for many a bishop, death before the expected time. Indeed, much about the life of a bishop may be said to reflect that he has from the beginning (for love of the Lord, and for love of the Lord's flock) laid down his life in self-emptying love. Being unceasingly aware of death is a central element of a bishop's life and service, because he remembers that in baptism he has died to the world and he now lives in Christ. In this unceasing prayer, he therefore constantly remembers the hope that is expressed in 1 Corinthians 15. He lives in this way because he perpetually keeps in his heart the following words of our Saviour, words expressing how he, himself, must daily live in love :

> '*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father*' (John 10:11-18).

A bishop is also a monk, and would likely have had a monastic formation : a formation by example and instruction. Thus, his daily life includes being mindful always of death and of the fragility and the shortness of life. For himself, this awareness keeps fresh his understanding

of the urgency of daily repentance, and of forgiving everyone for everything at all times. This awareness of death is an awareness full of hope in Christ. That a bishop lives in such hope (which includes compassion for those left behind) is expressed in part by the words of the services before burial. These following words from the funeral service of a priest express the on-going and living relationship in Christ that ever exists between those living and those departed :

> In thought I beg you : hearken to me, for with difficulty I announce these things. For your sakes I have moaned ; perhaps it may profit one of you. But when you sing these words, make mention now and then of me whom you once knew. For often have we walked together, and together in the house of God we have sung : Alleluia.
>
> Why these bitter words of the dying, O brethren, which they utter as they go hence ? I am parted from my brethren. All my friends do I abandon and go hence. But where do I go, and what shall become of me there, I do not know ; only God, who has summoned me, knows. But make commemoration of me with the song : Alleluia.
>
> Nothing is so easily forgotten as a mortal from his brother-mortal parted. If for a brief space we remember, yet straightaway we forget death, as if we had not ourselves to die. Parents, also, utterly forget their children, whom from their own bodies they have borne and reared ; and they have dropped tears with the song : Alleluia.
>
> I will remember you, O my brethren ; and O my children, and my friends : forget me not, when you pray to the Lord. I beg, I beseech, I implore, that you learn by heart this thing, and mourn for me night and day. As Job said to his friends, so I also say unto you : sit again, and say : Alleluia.

In addition to all this, it seems to be very prudent to cite the words of the Confessor-Bishop Saint Barnabas (Nastić) (†1964) of Hvosno, Serbia at the time of his ordination in about 1947. As do all other bishops when they are being ordained, he made a statement in his own words. In the manner of the apostles, he said :

> All that I can say is that I will climb Golgotha with joy, and that I will never place that honour below any other under God's sun! A bishop has no personal joys, any more than he has personal sorrows, and the Church's suffering is his also. [...] Every blasphemy uttered against God falls on the bishop as a personal insult. Yes, the episcopate is a Golgotha, for a bishop must place Truth above his own life — and we know that, many times in history, to speak the truth means to lose your life (The Synaxarion, 30 October).

This confessor-bishop did, indeed, experience much, much pain, but he was always true to Him who is the Truth. Always, the communist authorities were in fear of him, and they kept him as isolated as possible.

In summary about the bishop and his re-presenting the Church, it is necessary to stress once again the union between the Church and Christ Himself, and the Church's identity with Him. The Church is truly the Body of Christ. This is not some abstract principle or idea. The Church always has been, as is our Saviour, one and the same (see Hebrews 13:8). Certain peripheral details (such as language) change because of her situation in this or that culture throughout the world, but she is, as is Christ, always the same. The Incarnation of the Word of God reveals in human flesh God's love to and for us. The Church, led by her arch-pastors, has always been revealing to the whole world this ever dynamic yet ever unchanging incarnate Word of God. She shares the reality of the Incarnation, and enables human beings everywhere and at all times to come to experience the life-giving love of our Saviour. So we Christians in

every century and in every place know the love of the one Lord Jesus Christ, and respond to His love with our love, and with our praise of Him. There are no surprises or new "revelations" or discoveries about Jesus the Christ. His self-revelation in the Incarnation was full. When human philosophies and "bright ideas" have tried to alter the teaching about Him in order to make Him "easier to accept", the one Church has always turned away from these diversions and maintained her fidelity to the universal and one experience that she has always had in Christ. As Christ is faithful to the Church, so she is faithful to Him. Now we find the Orthodox Church on every continent in the world (including Antarctica). So it is that it does not now matter where one is in the world, or what time it is anywhere in the world, the one Church of Christ is constantly praising and giving thanks to the Lord, and bringing His life-giving love to all human beings and to all creatures. The joy we have in the life-giving love of Christ is being shared more and more ; and sad, wounded and broken-hearted human beings are given hope.

✠

I wish to indicate that what I have written here in these pages is the expression of my understanding of the life and work of an arch-pastor in the Church. It is directly the result of my own life and experience, and integrally connected to it. I have greatly fallen short in the very things I have been writing about. I often find myself wishing that I had known a quarter-century ago even some of the things that I now know and understand. What I have written is an attempt to share what I have learnt. In sharing what I have learnt, I see how deficient has been my own service in Christ, and that more repentance is needed on my part. I have true hope in the process of repentance, because it is in this that I have come to understand our Saviour's love much better. Although we can see the past so much more clearly from the perspective of the present, we nevertheless can only do the best we can with what we have at the time, always with our hearts turned to Christ.

Glory to God that in His loving mercy there is yet time to repent.

PART C

Preamble

'*He who has ears to hear, let him hear*' (Matthew 11:15).

With these words, our Saviour shows us that it is for us to see and to hear, and then to do. Our Saviour repeats these very words seven other times in the Gospels. So it is necessary that we learn how to orient ourselves constantly towards Him, so as to be listening to Him at all times. It is essential that our response to the Lord be the same verbal response as that of Saint Herman, the Elder and Wonder-worker of Alaska, which we see at the conclusion of the following conversation between him and some Russian officers aboard a ship (as recorded by his disciple Symeon Yanovsky) :

> 'But do you love God?' asked the Elder. And all answered: 'Of course we love God. How can we not love God?' 'And I, a sinner, have tried to love God for more than forty years, and I cannot say that I perfectly love Him,' answered Father Herman, and began to explain how one must love God. 'If we love someone,' he said, 'then we always think of that one; we strive to please that one; day and night our heart is preoccupied with that object. Is it in this way, gentlemen, that you love God? Do you often turn to Him; do you always remember Him; do you always pray to Him and fulfil His Holy commandments?' We had to admit that we did not. 'For our good, for our happiness,' concluded the Elder, 'at least let us make a vow to ourselves, that from this day, from this hour, from this minute, we shall strive above all else to love God and to fulfil His Holy Will' (Little Russian Philokalia, vol. 3, pp. 31, 33).

"From this day, from this hour, from this minute, we shall strive above all else to love God and to fulfil His Holy Will", said Saint Herman, and with him we are also to implement this response in our lives. These words, which many of us North Americans repeat very often, are quite related to the following exhortation of Saint Basil the Great. The intention of these very words and this same attitude of focus on the Lord and of loving devotion to Him have sustained many a person who has suffered for this love :

> I exhort you, therefore, not to faint in your afflictions, but to be revived by God's love, and to add daily to your zeal, knowing that in you ought to be preserved that remnant of true religion which the Lord will find when He comes on the earth. Even if bishops are driven from their churches, be not dismayed. If traitors have arisen from amongst the very clergy themselves, let not this undermine your confidence in God. We are saved not by names, but by mind and purpose, and genuine love towards our Creator. Cause yourself to consider how in the attack against our Lord, high priests and scribes and elders devised the plot, and how few of the people were found really receiving the word. Remember that it is not the multitude who are being saved, but the elect of God. Do not then be terrified at the great multitude of the people who are carried hither and thither by winds like the waters of the sea. If but one be saved, like Lot at Sodom, he ought to abide in right judgement, keeping his hope in Christ unshaken, for the Lord will not forsake His holy ones. Greet all the brethren in Christ for me. Pray earnestly for my miserable soul ("Epistle to the Monks Harassed by Arians").

Harassment such as that endured by the unnamed monks is not something that Saint Basil himself ever escaped. During his life, he was constantly under considerable pressure by Arians, and particularly after his ordination to the Holy Episcopate in 370. The Arian bishop

Eustathius (formerly his friend) was one of those exerting such pressure. The Arians did not accept, as we accept, that Jesus Christ is truly the Word of God. They believed that He is created by God, and therefore not God. It was the saying of Arius (†336), the founder of this system, and of Eusebius of Nicomedia (†341), that "there was a time when the Son of God was not". Some people in our days believe this still. Of course, this is a heresy. "Heresy" comes from the Greek noun αἵρεσις, *hæresis*, which means "taking for oneself", "choosing", "a choice". If there is a choice, it may be presumed that there are available equal alternatives to choose from, and even more, that the choice can have to do with personal preference. Both of these aspects of choosing are not part of the Orthodox Christian way, because Orthodox Christians are not followers of a philosophy chosen out from other philosophies as a preference. We keep in mind :

> *Trust in God with all your heart, and do not exalt your own wisdom. In all your ways know wisdom, that she may cut a straight path for you; and your foot will not stumble* (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Orthodox Christians are followers of the Word of God, God's Love Incarnate, who has revealed Himself to us to be this very Love Incarnate. We are people who are in love with God as He has revealed Himself, and as He has given Himself to us. We love God in Three Persons, not a system of logic. We do not accept logical systems such as Arianism which try to simplify the reality that is God's love and make it somehow more digestible and controllable to us limited humans. We live in such a relationship with our Saviour that we are completely identified with Him. Therefore, as Saint Basil reminds us about Lot, we who are united to Christ apply to ourselves the words from the Psalms which are prophetically looking forward to our Saviour Jesus, the Christ, the Messiah. Lot looked forward towards Christ with the attitude of this following psalm. We, who live after the Incarnation of the Word of God, have the same confidence that the Lord is with us :

> *Moreover, on hope shall my flesh pitch its tent ; for You will not abandon my soul to Hadēs, nor will You give Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life* (Psalm 15:10-11).

It is for us to be perpetually mindful of Whom we serve, and of those who have served before us. We must remember that our world is fallen, and that its environment is not friendly to Christ and His disciples. In this environment, it is often difficult for us to remember that through baptism we are truly brothers and sisters in Christ, and members of His Body. It is difficult to remember that in Christ we truly are more closely related to one another than even to our blood-relatives. It will do us good if we keep constantly in mind these following phrases of encouragement which are excerpted from the exhortation by Saint Basil which we have just seen, keeping our "hope in Christ unshaken, for the Lord will not forsake His holy ones", letting ourselves "be revived by God's love", not being terrified by worldly chaos, not letting others shake our confidence in God, not being dismayed when we are deserted or driven out. We "abide in right judgement" as we encounter it in the Scriptures and in Tradition. We can take particular hope in Saint Basil's exhortation : "We are saved not by names, but by mind and purpose, and genuine love towards our Creator". We keep unshaken our hope in Jesus Christ. How do we do this ? Saint Basil helps us to answer this in his "Homily on the Martyr Julitta" :

> Ought we to pray without ceasing? Is it possible to obey such a command? These are questions which I see you are ready to ask. I will endeavour, to the best of my ability, to defend the charge.

> Prayer is a petition for good addressed by the pious to God. But we do not rigidly confine our petition to words. Nor yet do we imagine that God requires to be reminded by speech. He knows our needs even though we ask Him not. What do I say then? I say that we must not think to make our prayer complete by syllables. The strength of prayer lies rather in the purpose of our soul and in deeds of virtue reaching every part and moment of our life. '*Whether you eat*', it is said, '*or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*' [1 Corinthians 10:31].
>
> As you take your seat at table, pray. As you lift the loaf, offer thanks to the Giver. When you sustain your bodily weakness with wine, remember Him Who supplies you with this gift, to make your heart glad and to comfort your infirmity. Has your need for taking food passed away? Let not the thought of your Benefactor pass away too.
>
> As you are putting on your tunic, thank the Giver of it. As you wrap your cloak around yourself, feel yet greater love to God, Who alike in summer and in winter has given us coverings convenient for us, at once to preserve our life, and to cover what is unseemly.
>
> Is the day done? Give thanks to Him Who has given us the sun for our daily work, and has provided for us a fire to light up the night, and to serve the rest of the needs of life.
>
> Let night give the other occasions of prayer. When you look up to heaven and gaze at the beauty of the stars, pray to the Lord of the visible world; pray to God the Arch-artificer of the universe, Who in wisdom has made them all.
>
> When you see all nature sunk in sleep, then again worship Him Who gives us even against our wills release from the continuous strain of toil, and by a short refreshment restores us once again to the vigour of our strength. Let not night herself be all, as it were, the special and peculiar property of sleep. Let not half your life be useless through the senselessness of slumber. Divide the time of night between sleep and prayer. Yes, let your slumbers be themselves experiences in piety; for it is only natural that our sleeping dreams should be for the most part echoes of the anxieties of the day. As have been our conduct and pursuits, so will inevitably be our dreams.
>
> Thus, thought will pray without ceasing. If thought prays not only in words, but unites itself to God through all the course of life, then your life can be made one ceaseless and uninterrupted prayer.

The following items in this third section are provided to help us keep our hearts focussed on the Lord, no matter how difficult our life-situation may become. These items include a reminder about Saint Nicholas of Myra ; a reflection on the episcopate by Saint John Chrysostom, from his "Homily on the Acts of the Apostles 1" ; an Injunction by Saint Basil the Great ; the contemporary prayer of Archimandrite (Saint) Sophrony (Sakharov) ; the 55 Maxims by Father Thomas Hopko ; Four Creeds ; a consideration of the meaning of vesting a bishop ; a proposed rhythm of prayer for busy bishops and people ; Three Psalms ; a part of the Apologia of Saint Aristides ; and a consideration of the necessity of supporting the leaders of the flock. All these can serve to help to keep every one of us (whether high-priest, priest, deacon, or lay-person) on the good and right path. We have to remember, too, that high-priests, priests, deacons and lay-persons are all together part of the *laos* (λαός), that is to say, the people of God. These helpful supports are given for our mutual strengthening in our daily life in Christ. They are sign-posts of our proper path in Him.

1

Saint Nicholas of Myra

Saint Nicholas the Wonder-worker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia in Asia Minor (†343), is a primary example to all the rest of the bishops of what it is to be a bishop. Because of his life of loving service in Christ, he is a significant and important model for all bishops and for all Christians. After he was called to the Heavenly Kingdom, he showed himself to be for us all a loving intercessor and helper. He was both a serious defender of Orthodoxy, and a loving father who gave alms freely to the needy. His way of Christian living is so profound, so influential on people, and his response to prayers for help so quick, that he is deeply loved throughout the world. Indeed, it is hard to find places in which a Christian Temple is not dedicated in his honour and memory. Those who sail the sea (and also those who sail in air-ships) are especially grateful dedicators of such Temples. He has interceded successfully for the rescue of many sailors in dire circumstances at sea. His relics have come to rest in Bari, Italy. The Greek Orthodox Church of Saint Nicholas in Manhattan, which was destroyed with the World Trade Centre there, was one of the churches established by and for sailors. It has been reported that when this church will be reconstructed, then the Church of Saint Nicholas in Bari, Italy will give a portion of his relics to this Temple. In Italy, there developed an affectionate Italianisation of his name, which eventually became "Santa Claus" through Dutch (for whom "Klaus" is a short form of the name Nicholas). However, the modern fictions developed though commercial enterprises have nothing to do either with the saint or with this affectionate version of his name.

There are many historical accounts of his compassion and honesty in Christ, two of which are shared here :

> While Nicholas was visiting a remote part of his diocese, several citizens from Myra came to him with urgent news: the ruler of the city, Eustathius, had condemned three innocent men to death. Nicholas set out immediately for home. Reaching the outskirts of the city, he asked those he met on the road if they had news of the prisoners. Informed that their execution was to be carried out that morning, he hurried to the executioner's field. Here he found a large crowd of people and the three men kneeling with their arms bound, awaiting the fatal blow. Nicholas passed through the crowd, took the sword from the executioner's hands and threw it to the ground, then ordered that the condemned men be freed from their bonds. His authority was such that the executioner left his sword where it fell. Later Eustathius confessed his sin and sought the saint's forgiveness. Nicholas absolved him, but only after the ruler had undergone a period of repentance (Jim Forest, In Communion, Summer 2007, p. 46).

There was a poor man who had three daughters, but he could not afford an adequate dowry for them. This meant that they would remain unmarried, and they were in danger of having to be sold into prostitution because of lack of alternatives (such things happen even in our days). Having heard about this, Saint Nicholas decided to help him. Because of his humility and also his sensitivity about the man's dignity, he borrowed the clothes of a poor man, and he went to the house at night. He quietly dropped three purses filled with gold coins, one for each daughter, through the window that opened into the man's house. The daughters were able to be married with dignity.

The second of these examples can be found in a fuller form in the writings of Saint Dmitri of Rostov (†1709).

I cannot but include the following *tropar* (which is always also a prayer) to Saint Nicholas, in which the Church distils the truth about him :

> The truth of your deeds revealed you to your flock as a rule of faith, an image of humility and a teacher of abstinence. Because of your lowliness you possessed high things ; because of your poverty you possessed wealth. O Father, Hierarch Nicholas, pray to Christ God to save our souls (The Menaion, 6 December).

The Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, Saint Nicholas

2

Saint John Chrysostom

Saint John Chrysostom gives us this solemn reflection on the seriousness of the service of the episcopate, and its onerous responsibilities :

> Let me say why it is that the thing [to be a bishop] has become a subject of competition : it is because we come to the episcopate not as unto a work of governing and superintending the brethren, but as to a post of dignity and repose. If you but knew that a bishop is bound to belong to all, to bear the burden of all ; that others, if they are angry, are pardoned, but he never ; that others, if they sin, have excuses made for them, but he has none ; you would not be eager for the dignity, would not run after it. So it is that the bishop is exposed to the tongues of all, to the criticism of all, whether they be wise or fools. He is harassed with cares not only every day, but also every night. He has many to hate him, many to envy him.
>
> Do not talk to me about those who curry favour with all, of those who desire to sleep, of those who advance to this office as for repose. We have nothing to do with these ; we speak of those who watch for your souls, who consider the safety and welfare of those under them before their own. Tell me now : suppose a man has ten children, always living with him, and constantly under his control ; yet he is solicitous about them. Now a bishop, who has such great numbers, not living under the same roof, but owing obedience to his authority — what does he not need to be ? But he is honoured, you will say. With what sort of honour, indeed ? Why, the paupers and beggars revile him openly in the market-place. [...] Again, if he does not give to all, the idle and the industrious alike, then look : a thousand complaints on all sides. None is afraid to accuse him, and speak evil of him. [...]
>
> Why speak of the anxiety connected with the word and doctrine ? the painful work concerning ordinations ? [...] The soul of a bishop is for all the world like a vessel in a storm : lashed from every side, by friends, by foes, by one's own people, by strangers. Does not the emperor rule the whole world, the bishop a single city ? Yet a bishop's anxieties are as much beyond those of the emperor, as the waters of a river simply moved by the wind are surpassed in agitation by the swelling and raging sea. And why ? because in the one case there are many to lend a hand, for all goes on by law and by rule ; but in the other there is none of this, nor is there authority to command ; but if one be greatly moved, then he is harsh ; if the contrary, then he is cold. And in him these opposites must meet, that he might neither be despised, nor be hated. Besides, the very demands of business preoccupy him : how many is he obliged to offend, whether he will or not ; how many to be severe with. I do not speak otherwise than it is, but how I find it in my own actual experience.
>
> I do not think that there are many among the bishops who will be saved, but that many more will perish : and the reason is, that it is a matter that requires a great mind. Many are the exigencies which throw a man out of his natural temperament ; and he would himself need to have a thousand eyes on all sides. Do you not see what a number of qualifications a bishop must have : to be able to teach, to be patient, holding fast the faithful word in doctrine (see 1 Timothy 3:2-9 ; Titus 1:7-9). What trouble and pains does this require ? And then, others do wrong, and he bears all the blame. To pass over everything else : if one soul departs unbaptised, does not this subvert all his own prospect of salvation ? The loss of one soul carries with it a penalty which no language can represent ; for if the salvation

of that soul was of such value that the Son of God became man, and suffered so much, think how sore a punishment must the losing of it bring. [...]

If then, there were only the responsibility of the office itself for people to run after in the episcopate, none would be so quick to accept it. But as things go, we run after this, just as we do after the dignities of the world. That we may have glory with men, we lose ourselves with God. What profit in such honour ? How self-evident its nothingness is ! When you covet the episcopal rank, put in the other scale the account to be rendered after this life. [...] Remember what Moses endured, what wisdom he displayed, what good deeds he exhibited : but for committing one sin only, he was bitterly punished ; and with good reason ; for this fault was attended by injury to the rest [see 4 Moses 20:7-13]. Not in regard that the sin was public, but because it was the sin of a spiritual priest ; for in truth we do not pay the same penalty for public and for hidden faults. [...]

The bishop cannot sin unobserved. Well for him if he escape reproach, though he sin not ; much less can he think to escape notice, if he do sin. Let him be angry, let him laugh, or let him but dream of a moment's relaxation, and then many are they that scoff, many are they that are offended, many are they that lay down the law, many are they that bring to mind the former bishops, and abuse the present one — not that they wish to sound the praise of those — no, it is only to carp at him that they bring up the mention of fellow bishops. [...] He that unwillingly, by compulsion and not with his own consent, was raised to the office, may have something to say for himself, though for the most part even such a one has no pardon to expect. [...] There is nothing I love more than you ; no, not even light itself. I would gladly have my eyes put out ten thousand times over, if it were possible by this means to convert your souls ; so much is your salvation dearer to me than light itself ("Homily on the Acts of the Apostles 1").

3

An injunction to every priest

Now we have an opportunity to consider a significant exhortation by Saint Basil the Great, which was translated by the Archpriests Eusebios Stephanou and Joseph Frawley, and given here for our information. This admonition may be found in many service-books, and it is intended to help to remind the priest or high-priest about the importance and the seriousness of his responsibility as he is serving. Saint Basil the Great surely wrote this injunction because the temptations towards forgetfulness, laziness, pride, or some similar distracting passion, were affecting the servants of the Lord at that time, in the fourth century, just as in the present.

I include this injunction here as a good reminder to myself, to be sure, but also to us all, about the fundamentals of the life of us all. This very useful reminder affects us, whether we serve Christ as a lay-person, reader, subdeacon, deacon, priest, or high-priest. These words can be turned to by a priest, or high-priest, or indeed any of us, when we feel weak and perhaps undeserving. In other words, this admonition (which really carries the force of an order) is helpful and supportive to everyone who is serving Christ, and supporting His sheep in any capacity.

An Injunction to Every Priest

1. Take heed, O priest, to present yourself as a labourer, who needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth. ["Divide" means rightly teaching the straight truth about the Truth. One could extend this meaning also to include increasing by dividing (see pp. 303-304), but this is not the primary, and most important meaning. However, see the Miracle of the Loaves and the Fishes in Matthew 14:14-21 ; Mark 6:34-44 ; Luke 9:10-17 ; John 6:5-14.]

2. Never stand at the Divine Liturgy having enmity against any man, lest you banish the Comforter [the Holy Spirit].

3. On the day of the Divine Liturgy, do not enter into a quarrel ; but abide in the church, praying, and reading, until the hour when you should conduct the service.

4. Stand with contrition, and with a pure heart, before the Holy Altar, refraining from looking here and there, but standing with awe and fear, before the Heavenly King.

5. Do not hasten, or shorten the prayers, or assume affectation to please Men ; but look only to the King, who is present, and the Powers, which surround you. [King, here, means Christ.]

6. Make yourself worthy of the Sacred Canons.

7. Do not concelebrate with those which they prohibit.

8. Watch with whom you are present, how you conduct the services, and to whom you administer Holy Communion. [This watching is not intended to conflict with serving with concentration. The main concern is to be careful to serve only with those who

are blessed to serve, and to administer Holy Communion only to those who have the blessing to receive it.]

9. Do not forget the Master's commandment, and that of the holy Apostles : "'*Do not give,' He said, 'what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine'*" (Matthew 7:6).

10. Watch that you give not the Son of God into the hands of the unworthy. [Holy Communion in the hands refers to the ancient way of receiving the Body of Christ, which was followed by receiving the Blood from the Chalice. Now, both are given together on the spoon. The intent of the words is the same. The priest or high-priest can know who is "worthy" to receive the Mysteries because of hearing confessions and knowing the condition of the life of the persons approaching. Sometimes a person approaching may not truly be a believer, sometimes not yet baptised. A person can approach in ignorance, or in defiance.]

11. Do not be shy before the glorious ones of the earth, nor even him who wears the diadem in that hour. [This means the emperor, or some other political potentate.]

12. Administer Communion to those who are worthy : freely, as you have freely received it.

13. Give not the Holy Mysteries to those whom the Sacred Canons prohibit.

14. See that neither fly, nor moth, nor anything else touch them ; neither permit that they be wet, or smoked, or touched by those who are unworthy and unholy. [It is necessary to remind us century after century that it is important to pay attention to what is happening with the Holy Things on the Holy Table. I have myself seen too often that we stand at the Holy Table, and let ourselves be absorbed in the prayers, the movements, or the behaviours of those around, and do nothing when flies or other insects come flying about the Holy Things. The Holy Things are to be protected at all times by those serving at the Holy Table. This is but one reason that a deacon is given a fan at his ordination. This fan's purpose is to keep away flies or other insects ; it is not simply fancy decoration. The veils that cover the Holy Gifts are partly for this purpose, also. Keeping the Holy Things dry is also achieved by keeping covers over the Gifts, and sometimes also by erecting a *baldachin* (a canopy over the Holy Table, supported by pillars). When Saint Basil mentions the hazard of the Gifts' being smoked, it is not incense that is referred to here. Smoke may come from the fire-place from which embers are taken for the censer.]

By observing these injunctions, and those like them, you shall save both yourself, and those who hear you.

4

Archimandrite Sophrony's Prayer

As a guide and a support for us all, Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov) of blessed memory wrote the following prayer for an abbot and/or a spiritual father. We would all do well to read this prayer every morning and every evening, and at any other time, so that we are never off guard. This prayer clearly is also that of a bishop (high-priest), who must, as such, be a father to all :

> O Lord Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour, You have taken me from the vanity of this world. You have set me in the service of Your heavenly Mysteries. You have given me the blessing to announce the ways of Your salvation to my brethren. O King Eternal and without beginning, I pray to You : Heal me from the death of sin which has attacked me, and by the strength of Your Holy Spirit render me capable of accomplishing this service. O Giver of Light, illumine the eyes of my heart and my soul by the uncreated Light of Your Commandments, that I may comprehend in what manner I must speak to my brother, for whom You have spilt Your blood on Golgotha. By the goodness of Your Holy Spirit, direct my feelings and my thoughts ; and by fear of You, guard me that I do not deviate from that pure stream which flows from before the ages. Purify my heart from every stain, that I may become worthy to hear Your still small Voice, and to be obedient with humility to this Voice. And when I open my mouth, make me capable of receiving from You a word which is in harmony with You, and which is saving for Your people. You that are the living and true Way, do not let me in any way betray Your Truth. Guard me from any misplaced movement of my heart and from every mistaken word, that my service may be in all ways holy and irreproachable before Your eyes. Yes, O Good Shepherd, who have given Your life for us, give me a broken heart and tears of compassion for every one who comes to me. Grant me to rejoice with those rejoicing, and to suffer with those afflicted, and to console by every means the suffering souls of Your people. Grant me the strength to carry always and to the end with gentleness and patience the burden of Your spiritual lambs, in a spirit of discernment and sympathy and evangelical love ; and thus may only this thought live in me : that all, by repentance, may be saved by You, and in You, our incomprehensible Lord, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen (La paternité spirituelle - La prière, pp. 42-43).

5

55 Maxims for Christian Living
(by Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko)

Father Thomas Hopko gained pastoral experience as a parish priest in Ohio and New York states, beginning in 1963. Then, while remaining a parish priest, he began teaching at Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, New York in 1968. He continued this dual-service for more than a decade. During these years, in addition to his teaching and serving, he heard the confessions of numerous students and others, and he helped many on their way as Christians. Then, as a protopresbyter, Father Thomas Hopko served as Dean of Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, New York, from 1992 to 2002.

The following maxims are useful for every Christian. No doubt they are distilled from Father Hopko's decades of experience as a priest. He taught, but he also bore gladly the great responsibility for the spiritual formation of those who came to him. The maxims were provided publicly on the internet in 2008.

A person could easily spend a considerable amount of time paying attention to the meaning of these maxims, one per day, one at a time.

55 Maxims for Christian Living

1. Be always with Christ.
2. Pray as you can, not as you want.
3. Have a keepable rule of prayer that you do by discipline.
4. Say the Lord's Prayer several times a day.
5. Have a short prayer that you constantly repeat when your mind is not occupied with other things.
6. Make some prostrations when you pray.
7. Eat good foods in moderation.
8. Keep the Church's fasting rules.
9. Spend some time in silence every day.
10. Do acts of mercy in secret.
11. Go to liturgical services regularly
12. Go to confession and communion regularly.
13. Do not engage intrusive thoughts and feelings. Cut them off at the start.
14. Reveal all your thoughts and feelings regularly to a trusted person.
15. Read the Scriptures regularly.
16. Read good books a little at a time.
17. Cultivate communion with the saints.
18. Be an ordinary person.
19. Be polite with everyone.
20. Maintain cleanliness and order in your home.
21. Have a healthy, wholesome hobby.
22. Exercise regularly.
23. Live a day, and a part of a day, at a time.
24. Be totally honest, first of all, with yourself.
25. Be faithful in little things.
26. Do your work, and then forget it.

27. Do the most difficult and painful things first.
28. Face reality.
29. Be grateful in all things.
30. Be cheerful.
31. Be simple, hidden, quiet and small.
32. Never bring attention to yourself.
33. Listen when people talk to you.
34. Be awake and be attentive.
35. Think and talk about things no more than necessary.
36. When we speak, speak simply, clearly, firmly and directly.
37. Flee imagination, analysis, figuring things out.
38. Flee carnal, sexual things at their first appearance.
39. Don't complain, mumble, murmur or whine.
40. Don't compare yourself with anyone.
41. Don't seek or expect praise or pity from anyone.
42. We don't judge anyone for anything.
43. Don't try to convince anyone of anything.
44. Don't defend or justify yourself.
45. Be defined and bound by God alone.
46. Accept criticism gratefully but test it critically.
47. Give advice to others only when asked or obligated to do so.
48. Do nothing for anyone that they can and should do for themselves.
49. Have a daily schedule of activities, avoiding whim and caprice.
50. Be merciful with yourself and with others.
51. Have no expectations except to be fiercely tempted to your last breath.
52. Focus exclusively on God and light, not on sin and darkness.
53. Endure the trial of yourself and your own faults and sins peacefully, serenely, because you know that God's mercy is greater than your wretchedness.
54. When we fall, we get up immediately and start over.
55. Get help when you need it, without fear and without shame.

6

Four Creeds

"Creeds" are "I believe" statements (from *credo* in Latin). They are confessions of our faith. We do well if we customarily describe them as confessions of faith rather than merely statements of what we believe. Their origin is not in our philosophical reflections, but in God's self-revelation. When we make such a confession of faith, we do it both personally and corporately, because none of us lives in isolation from the whole Body of Christ. This is why we first find these confessions in the midst of the Mystery of Baptism. That we recite or sing the Creed together indicates that we all do believe this same thing, and have the same experience and personal relationship with our Saviour Jesus Christ, the Holy Trinity, and the Church. This is why a creed is also called a Symbol of Faith, a Sign of our Faith. What we all experience and believe together must be personally confessed also. In these confessions, we express what we believe about our Saviour Jesus Christ, about the Holy Trinity, and about the Church. We make this common confession of our faith, which is based on our common personal experience of and life in the love of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ. This common confession of our common experience is a public statement that what we believe about God, the Trinity, creation, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Sending of the Holy Spirit, the Church, and other doctrines, is just the same as that which was believed by all the Holy Apostles, the martyrs, and all Christians from the beginning. Confession of faith, in time, began to be a regular part of our worship, and particularly of the Divine Liturgy. In this assembly, as a single body and as with a single mouth, we affirm together the essence of what we all together know to be the truth about our Saviour Jesus Christ, about the Holy Trinity, and about the Church.

As with the first of the creeds to follow here, the Symbol of the Apostles, these confessions mostly began in association with the Mystery of Holy Baptism. The Symbol of the Apostles confession of faith was already in use by the third century. Its simplicity suggests its antiquity. The simplicity of this creed speaks the truth clearly, but it does not correct deviations from the truth. It does not address later distortions in thinking, and it is seldom used.

The second creed, the Symbol of Faith of Nicæa, is the one that is used universally in the Orthodox Church at the Divine Liturgy, and at other services. It is also used by many other Christians, notably the Oriental Orthodox. Although this Symbol of Faith was first formulated with "we believe" at the beginning, it is now always begun with "I believe". This confession of faith was formulated at the First Ecumenical Council (325) and finalised at the Second Ecumenical Council (381). It is set out in Greek as one continuous sentence, which shows that the confession is altogether one unit. Every element of this confession of faith is connected and dependent upon every other element.

The third creed, the Symbol of Saint Athanasius, is a less-used and more carefully "spelt-out" confession of faith. Although the origin of this confession of faith is likely in the West (because it was written in Latin) in the fourth to fifth century, it is nevertheless attributed to Saint Athanasius of Alexandria, who, as a deacon, had participated in the First Ecumenical Council which first formulated the Nicene Creed. This very carefully-worked formulation helps us to understand clearly what we believe, and it can be a good help in discussing our Hope with others. We find this confession of faith in some versions of the Psalter. This confession of faith is

set out in a very different structure from the two previous. Longer and more detailed than the previous two, it is set out so as to help to refute the Arian heresy (which states in effect that the Son of God was a creature ; see pp. 324-325). This confession of faith is referred to by Saint Cæsarius of Arles. The Symbol of Saint Athanasius is seldom recited publicly, but when it is used, this would occur in some liturgical context on the Feast of Pentecost.

The fourth creed presented here does not have a specific title, although an unofficial one is provided in this section. This, another detailed confession of faith, is the second of three confessions or professions of faith made by a candidate who is about to be ordained to the Holy Episcopate as he stands before the assembled bishops and all the faithful people gathered there at the time (the third confession is even longer and more detailed than this one). In these professions or confessions of faith, the man who is about to be ordained to the Holy Episcopate answers questions posed by the presiding bishop (there usually would be three or more bishops assembled for this purpose) about his faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, about his faith in the Holy Trinity, and about the Church. This confession of faith, the one that precedes it, and the one that follows it, are confessions made by one man himself, standing alone in the presence of the bishops and others. It is a personal confession of faith : his personal confession of faith. In making this confession, the man is demonstrating to his bishop-brothers-to-be, and to the whole assembled body of the faithful, that he knows the correct path in Christ. He confesses that his faith is the same as that of the Holy Apostles. He confesses that as he is about to take up the responsibility of shepherding Christ's flock, he is doing so in succession to and in harmony with the Holy Apostles. He knows Jesus Christ : "*the Way, the Truth and the Life*", and he knows that "*No one comes to the Father except through*" Him (see John 14:6). Understanding this, he is able to say to Him : "*You have made known to me the ways of life. With Your Face, You will fill me with gladness ; there are delights in Your right hand unto the end*" (Psalm 15:11). If he lives this from his heart, his confession of faith has both life and substance, and he has the potential to be a good shepherd. If he lives this faithfully in Christ, he is clearly not lacking the central necessary element in succession to the Holy Apostles : being one with them in their experience of and faith in Jesus Christ (see pp. 93-94).

i The Apostles' Creed : The Symbol of the Apostles

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Maker of Heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried ;
He descended into Hadēs ;
on the third day He rose again from the dead ;
He ascended into Heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty ;
from there He will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life eternal. Amen.

ii The Nicene Creed : The Symbol of Faith

I believe in one God, the Father almighty :
Maker of Heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible ;
and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten,
begotten of the Father before all ages :
Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not made ;
of one essence with the Father ;
through whom all things were made ;
who for us Men, and for our salvation, came down from Heaven,
and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit, and the Virgin Mary, and became Man ;
and He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried ;
and the third day, He rose again, in accordance with the Scriptures ;
and ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father ;
and He shall come again with glory, to judge the living and the dead ;
whose Kingdom shall have no end ;
and in the Holy Spirit : the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father ;
who, with the Father and the Son together, is worshipped and glorified ;
who spoke by the prophets ;
in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church ;
I confess one baptism for the remission of sins ;
I wait for the resurrection of the dead ;
and the life of the age to come. Amen.

[In this and other confessions of faith, when "Man" or "Men" is used, this word with capitalisation translates the Greek ἄνθρωπος, *anthrōpos* (or *anthrōpoi*), which means a human being in general, not simply a male-gendered person. It is true, nevertheless, that in the Incarnation of the Word, the taking of flesh was in the male gender.]

iii The Athanasian Creed : The Symbol of Saint Athanasius

Whoever wishes to be saved must, before all things, hold the catholic faith.
Unless a person keep this faith whole and sacrosanct, without doubt he shall perish eternally.

And the catholic faith is this :
That we worship the one God in Trinity, and the Trinity in unity, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the essence ;
for there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Spirit ;
but of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit the Divinity is one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.
Such as is the Father ; such is the Son ; such is the Holy Spirit.
The Father is uncreated ; the Son is uncreated ; the Holy Spirit is uncreated.
The Father is limitless ; the Son is limitless ; the Holy Spirit is limitless.
The Father is eternal ; the Son is eternal ; the Holy Spirit is eternal ; and yet they are not three eternals but one Eternal.
As there are not three uncreated nor three limitless, but one Uncreated and one Limitless, so likewise the Father is almighty ; the Son is almighty ; the Holy Spirit is almighty; and yet they are not three almighties, but one Almighty.
Thus the Father is God ; the Son is God ; the Holy Spirit is God ; and yet they are not three Gods, but one God.
Thus the Father is Lord ; the Son is Lord ; the Holy Spirit is Lord ; and yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord.
Because as we are compelled by the Christian truth to confess every Person Himself to be God and Lord, so are we forbidden by the catholic faith to say that there are three Gods or Lords.

The Father is made by no-one, neither created nor begotten.
The Son is from the Father alone, not made nor created, but begotten.
The Holy Spirit is from the Father and by the Son : neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.
So there is one Father, not three Fathers ; one Son, not three Sons ; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.
And in this Trinity no-one is before or after ; no-one is greater or lesser ; but all the three Persons are co-eternal, and co-equal, so that in all things, as said before, the Unity is to be worshipped in Trinity and the Trinity in unity.
Therefore, the one who wishes to be saved must thus understand concerning the Trinity.

But it is necessary to everlasting salvation also to believe faithfully the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ ;
for the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man.
He is God, of the essence of the Father, begotten before the ages ; and Man of the substance of His Mother, born in the world.

He is perfect God and perfect Man, subsisting of a reasonable soul and human flesh.
He is equal to the Father according to His Divinity, and inferior to the Father according to His humanity.
Although He is God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ : one, not by conversion of the Divinity into flesh, but by taking of that humanity into God, one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person ; for as the reasonable soul-and-flesh is one Man, so the God-and-Man is one Christ, who suffered for our salvation.
He descended into Hadēs.
On the third day He rose from the dead.
He ascended into Heaven.
He sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead, and at whose coming all Men shall rise again with their bodies ; and they shall give account of their own deeds.
Those that have done good shall go into eternal life, and those that have done evil into eternal fire.

This is the catholic faith, which unless a person believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved.

[From the previous page, “The Holy Spirit is from the Father and by the Son” : see Luke 24:49 ; John 15:26.]

iv The Symbol of Faith at an Episcopal Ordination

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible : who is without beginning, unbegotten, and without cause, but is Himself the natural beginning and cause of the Son, and of the Spirit.

I believe in His only-begotten Son : without change, and without time, begotten of the Father, being of one essence with Him ; through whom all things were made.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the same Father : who with Him is glorified as co-eternal, and co-enthroned, being of one essence with Him, of equal glory, and the Author of creation.

I believe that the only-begotten Word, one of that same super-essential, and life-giving Trinity, came down from Heaven for us Men, and for our salvation. He was incarnate of the Holy Spirit, and the Virgin Mary, and became Man ; that is, He became perfect Man, yet remained God. In no manner was His divine essence changed by His participation in the flesh, nor was He transmuted into anything else. Without change, He assumed Man's nature, in which He suffered, and died, although in His divine nature He was free from all suffering. On the third day, He rose from the dead ; He ascended into Heaven, and He sits at the right hand of God the Father. Furthermore, I confess the one Person, the Word made flesh. I believe and proclaim that Christ is one and the same in two natures after His Incarnation, preserving those things which were in them, and from them. Therefore, I also adore two wills, in that each nature retains its own will, and its own action.

I believe those traditions and teachings of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, which have been received from God, and from men-of-God.

I reverence, but not in the way of worship, the icons of Christ Himself, and of the all-pure Birth-giver-of-God, and of all the saints, holy, and worthy of reverence. The honour that I address to them, I direct to their originals. I reject and deny those who think and teach otherwise, as persons ill-advised.

I confess truly and sincerely our Lady, Mary, the Birth-giver-of-God, as having given birth in the flesh to one of the Trinity — Christ our God.

May the same Birth-giver-of-God be my helper, protector, and defender, all the days of my life. Amen.

7

The vesting of the bishop before the Divine Liturgy : its meaning, our participation

From early times, the arch-pastor has been vested in the middle of the Temple every time he serves publicly (as is still the case). This did not and does not happen simply because the bishop might wish it to be thus done for his personal glorification. On the contrary, all this has been and is done because of Christ. When the bishop arrives at the time for serving, he arrives dressed as a monk, just as he will be later when he takes his leave. He enters, then, wearing the monastic mantle (in Greek, *mandyas*, in Slavonic, *mantiya*), which is an ample cape. Although it is elaborated, decorated and colourful, it is nevertheless the monastic mantle. This mantle is put on him either before he comes to the Temple, or immediately upon his entry.

The bishop is greeted and escorted into the Temple while the people sing a hymn to the Mother of God (in accordance with the season). He enters as all believers generally would do ; and he says the same prayers that believers would usually say on entering. He comes to venerate the principal icons, the special local icons and the relics (if there are relics present), just as all believers would. As he is doing these things, the people can walk with him in their hearts, as it were, because his path is the same as the path and pattern that they have just followed when they, themselves, entered the Temple, before his arrival. This is exactly what I saw people doing in Constantinople (Istanbul) in the Cathedral of Patriarch Bartholomew : entering, praying, venerating the iconostas and the relics. Then the bishop is escorted to the centre of the Temple, to the special place where the arch-pastor stands, and the articles of his outer monastic habit (the *mantiya*, *klobuk* and *riassa*) are removed from him by the subdeacons. The subdeacons are doing their work as representatives of the believers (not as merely "lackeys" of the bishop). Then the subdeacons and readers vest the bishop in the apparel of a high-priest, on behalf of the believers present. As they do this, the deacon proclaims the verses from Scripture which can help the hearers understand the significance of these items (as always, the myriad scriptural references and allusions in the texts of our worship presume that all those who are present are closely familiar with the whole text of the Bible). As this vesting proceeds, and as the bishop is being prepared to serve, so the rational sheep are being prepared. Along with him, they are being prepared to do their part in making this Offering to the Lord.

As the vesting proceeds, the under-current meaning of it is that the people are saying to the bishop, as it were : "We know that *you* are our high-priest, re-presenting Christ before our eyes ; *you* are our chief-shepherd, our arch-pastor. Supported by our presence and prayers, *you* will lead us in the Sacred Mystery of the Divine Liturgy : *you* will lead us in Christ to Christ". It is understood that in all this, the bishop is indeed re-presenting Christ, who is the one true High-priest. In the Divine Liturgy, Christ Himself feeds the rational sheep with His Body and Blood through His agent, the bishop. Thus it is, that in doing this, the arch-pastor continues in the foot-steps of the apostles and the fathers, and particularly of Saint Ignatius of Antioch :

> I exhort you to endeavour to do all things in harmony with God, with the bishop presiding in the place of God, and with the presbyters in the place of the assembly of the apostles, along with the deacons, who are most dear to me, and are entrusted with the ministry of

> Jesus Christ, who was with the Father before the ages, and at the end has been revealed ("Letter to the Magnesians", 6).

Many are the references suggested in the actions of the vesting, in the vesting prayers, and even in the vestments of the high-priest. There are references to the priesthood of the Old Covenant, to that of the New Covenant, and also to the spiritual armour of God described by the Apostle Paul. Since many are unfamiliar with the scriptural citations proclaimed during the vesting (sometimes the singing covers them up), they are given in writing here. At every stage of the vesting as follows, when the deacon proclaims the appropriate scripture-portion at the investiture with each item, he generally changes the grammatical person of these portions from the first (I/me) to the second (you), because he is addressing the bishop personally. However, were a bishop to vest himself without helpers, and to say these scripture-portions himself, they would all be said in the first person (I/me).

The bishop, as all other clergy, has the *stikhar* placed on him first. Although this garment is often nowadays made of coloured or brocade or embroidered material when worn by deacons and others, this garment was from the beginning intended to be white, and to remind us of our baptismal garment. Most often it is, in fact, a white *stikhar* that is worn by the bishop. This is why its name in western English usage is "alb" (from the Latin word for white). In reference to Christ, we quickly remember the brightness of Christ's garments, and of Christ's own brightness in the Transfiguration and in the Resurrection. The following prophetic citation is proclaimed by the deacon (it is read by all clergy donning the *stikhar*), and its implications are, indeed, many :

> *Your soul shall rejoice in the Lord ; for He has clothed you with the garment of salvation ; He has covered you with the robe of gladness ; as a bridegroom, He has set a crown on you, and as a bride adorns herself with jewels, so He has adorned you* (adjusted from Isaiah 61:10).

This baptismal garment may remind us about the whole armour referred to by the Apostle in Ephesians 6:10-18 (already cited in the section about the fearful responsibility). There are other references to this during the vesting of the bishop.

After the *stikhar*, the bishop receives the *epitrakhil* (in western English usage, the word for this is "stole"). This is a developed form of the *orar*, and its meaning in Greek implies "on the shoulders". The following citation is proclaimed :

> *Blessed is God, who pours out His grace upon His high-priests, as sweet-oil upon the head, running down the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down to the fringe of his raiment ; always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen* (adjusted from Psalm 132:2).

This obviously refers to the Grace from God which for our sake comes upon the high-priests and flows through them to us all. It may well also refer to the breast-plate mentioned in Ephesians 6:14 : "*having put on the breastplate of righteousness*". In this context, it may well also be taken to refer to the ephod that was worn in various forms by the Old Covenant high-priests, as we see, for instance, in 2 Moses 28:4-25 ; 29:5 ; and in 3 Moses 8:7-8. One of the purposes of the *ephod* was to enable the high-priest to bring the names of all the patriarchs and tribes, literally and visibly on his heart, before the Lord in the Temple.

Next, the belt (called ζώνη, *zōnē* in Greek) is placed upon the high-priest. A belt is referred to in 2 Moses 28 along with the ephod. The following citation is then proclaimed :

Blessed is God, who girds you around with power, and has made your way blameless : He, strengthening your feet as those of a deer, setting you on the high places ; always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen (adjusted from Psalm 17:33-34).

This could remind us immediately about the belt referred to by the Apostle in Ephesians 6:14 : "[...] *having girded your waist with truth* [...]".

Next follow the cuffs, which are fastened by the subdeacons to the right and left wrists of the high-priest. Usually such cuffs have long cords for this purpose. Cuffs serve the practical purpose of decoratively covering the sleeves of the *stikhar*, and ensuring that the sleeves will not come untied. However, these cuffs have a military history. They were formerly of thick leather and/or metal, and they protected the wrists from sword-slashes by an enemy. The spiritual implications of such a defence will be obvious. The following citations are then proclaimed :

Your right hand, O Lord, has been glorified in strength ; Your right hand, O Lord, has broken the enemies in pieces ; and in the multitude of Your glory, You shattered the adversaries ; always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen (adjusted from 2 Moses 15:6-7 [from Canticle 1 of Matins]).

Your hands have made and fashioned me ; make me understand, and I shall learn Your commandments ; always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen (adjusted from Psalm 118:73).

Although the cuffs are not directly referred to by the Apostle in his references to armour, it is obvious from these words that it is the Lord who is in charge, who protects us, and who both accomplishes everything and enables us to work together with Him. The first citation is from the canticle that Moses and the children of Israel sang just after the crossing of the Red Sea and the deliverance from Pharaoh. The second citation is our confession that the Lord is our Maker, that He makes us understand, and that our ability to know His will comes from Him.

The next item is the *epigonation* or *palitsa*. This diamond-shaped article hangs by a strap from the left shoulder, and rests by the right knee, which can be seen in the meaning of the Greek word, *epigonation*. *Palitsa* is the Slavic word for the same item. The deacon proclaims the following words :

Gird your sword on your thigh, O powerful one ; in your comeliness, and in your beauty, stretch out, prosper and reign, for the sake of truth, meekness, and righteousness. Your right hand shall wonderfully lead you on the way ; always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen (adjusted from Psalm 44:4-5).

These words, originally addressed to the king, are here transferred to the King of kings through the person of the high-priest standing in the midst of the people. These words may immediately refer us to the words of the Apostle :

And take [...] *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints* [...] (Ephesians 6:17-18).

The true, powerful, sharp and effective weapon is that of prayer and unity with the Lord, not simple brute force and steel. All the vestments to which we have so far referred are vestments

which are, or may be worn by priests as well. In former times, when it was the *phelon* which came next, this was the last of the vestments in common between the high-priest and the priest.

Next, the subdeacons put the *sakkos* on the high-priest. This was when the *phelon* was formerly put on. The change over to the *sakkos* came about very gradually after 1453 and the sack of Constantinople. The *sakkos* came into universal usage only a couple of hundred years later. Although the *sakkos* resembles a deacon's *stikhar*, it is actually a reminder of the emperor's robe, which came to be used by bishops after the time of the Turkish conquest of Constantinople. Nevertheless, the scriptural reference as it was for the *phelon* did not change. Even so, in our days, some bishops do sometimes wear the *phelon* instead of the *sakkos* (of course, also wearing the *omophor*). The deacon proclaims these words :

> *Your high-priests shall put on righteousness, and Your holy ones shall exult ; always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen* (adjusted from Psalm 131:9).

Along with this, because of the fact that either the *sakkos* or the *phelon* cover the other vestments, we could include in our understanding of the meaning of this vestment the two following citations from the Apostle (which are not read at this time) :

> *Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand* (Ephesians 6:13).

> [...] *above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one* (Ephesians 6:16).

There is a third reference also, which is not included in the investiture. Even so, how can the reference be neglected ? This Gospel of peace is what we all proclaim :

> [...] *having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace* [...] (Ephesians 6:15).

This complete and thorough covering of the high-priest is a strong reminder to us all that it is the Lord Himself who is our salvation, our protection, our covering (see pp. 281-282). It is He who truly does the fighting for us ; and, as the Apostle reminds us, it is for us to be praying constantly, to be in constant conversation and communion with the Lord.

Next, it is the *omophor* which is placed upon the shoulders of the high-priest by the subdeacons. The word means to bear upon the shoulders. Bishops have always worn it. It is accompanied by the following proclamation by the deacon, which is addressed as to Christ :

> *When You had taken upon Your shoulders human nature, which had gone astray, O Christ, You bore it to heaven, to Your God, and Father ; always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen* (see Luke 15:5).

Christ took human beings upon His shoulders just as the shepherd picked up and carried the sheep in the Parable of the Lost Sheep. The sheep is carried thus, because it is presumed to be wounded, weak, or both. Just as Christ, the bishop goes in search of the straying and lost sheep, and he brings that sheep back into unity with the fold. This is not an optional factor in the life of any bishop. He is responsible for the whole flock. He searches out the strays, and he simultaneously keeps the rest together. In doing this, in imitating Christ by uniting the lost and wounded to Him who is Life and Healing for us all, every priest (and all other Christians) does

likewise. So great is the identification between the *omophor* and the sheep, that historically and traditionally the *omophor* has most of the time been made of sheep's wool, and most of the time it is white. Our Saviour addresses us with this matter twice in the Gospels :

> '*What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish*' (Matthew 18:12-14 ; see also Luke 15:4-7).

Next, the *engolpion* (or *panagia*) is placed on the breast of the bishop, over his heart, and the following words are proclaimed :

> *May God build in you a pure heart, and renew an upright spirit in you ; always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen* (adjusted from Psalm 50:12).

As with us all, the bishop's heart is the centre of his being, and where Christ is encountered in prayer. It is He who builds the pure heart, and renews an upright spirit. It is He who enables everything in the bishop, and in each of us also. In the past, the *engolpion* was also used to carry Holy Communion to the home-bound. This *engolpion* may bear the image of either Christ or of the Mother of God, or even some other saint or feast. The fact that the arch-pastor usually bears visibly on his chest the *panagia* (the icon of the Mother of God, the All-Holy) is to keep himself and all others mindful that he is to imitate the Mother of God both in her complete obedience to the will of our Saviour, and in her embodying the Church. We remember that the Mother of God is herself an image of the Church in her own purity, love, humility, obedience and strength. She is the true Abbess of every monastery, and, indeed, she is clearly called the Abbess of Mount Athos by the monks there. There are plenty of stories about her behaving as the true Abbess in the personal experience of monks and nuns who have seen and encountered her love and care for each person in every community on a personal basis. This encourages us all to depend on the Mother of God, and to seek her strengthening, consolation and wisdom.

If the bishop is a metropolitan who wears two *panagias* (or some other bishop with a blessing to do so), the reference to the heart is doubled through the content of the accompanying words from the psalm, as this *engolpion* is placed on the right side of the bishop's breast with the following proclamation by the deacon :

> *Your heart has poured forth a good word ; you shall speak of your works to the King ; always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen* (adjusted from Psalm 44:1).

Then, as the Holy Cross is placed upon the breast of the bishop, to the right of the *engolpion* or between the two, the deacon proclaims these following poignant words to the bishop :

> '*Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me', says the Lord ; always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen* (amplified from Mark 8:34).

The words of all the proclaimed citations apply to the bishop, and to each of us Christians as well. We, ourselves, do well to take all these scriptural passages to heart. In doing so, when

these citations are proclaimed, anyone familiar with the Scriptures may well recall and understand a reference to these following words :

> '*Therefore, you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be immovable before your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house and walk by the way, when you lie down and rise up*' (5 Moses 11:18-19).

Of course, the Cross and the *panagia* may be considered further to be extensions of that "*breastplate of righteousness*" and also of that "*shield of faith*" cited previously from Ephesians 6:14, 16. Now that the bishop has the images of Christ and of the Mother of God upon his breast, he becomes a sort of iconostas. It is because of this that when many people approach the bishop to ask for the blessing, they also kiss the Cross and *panagia(s)* by taking them with their hands to do so. The wise and pastoral bishop will resist any fears of theft or mistreatment when this occurs. Saint John of Damascus wrote strongly in defence of the veneration of icons, and he demonstrated clearly how all veneration does not stop at the wood, stone or metal itself, but transfers to the original saint or feast-day event. Indeed, all veneration is referred to Christ Himself. Icons are certainly to be venerated. The bishop is venerated in this same spirit. He is not venerated in, of, or for himself, but because he stands in the place of Christ in our midst. Whether he be a very good bishop, or not, he nevertheless stands in the place of Christ, and it is Christ Himself whom we venerate when we venerate a bishop.

After this, the subdeacons bring the mitre to the bishop as the deacon proclaims the following :

> *The Lord has placed on your head a crown of precious stones. Life did you ask of Him, and He gave you a lengthy span of days ; always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen* (adjusted from Psalm 20:4-5).

This "crown" is certainly reminiscent of the crown of victory and life :

> *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him* (James 1:12).
>
> *Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life* (Apocalypse 2:10).

The bishop will surely be recalling the events of the Passion of Christ :

> *And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe* (John 19:2).

Indeed, sometimes a mitre that is improperly made can feel like thorns. Regardless, the bishop will also surely be aware of the words of the Apostle regarding the armour of God : "*And take the helmet of salvation* [...]" (Ephesians 6:17).

With regard to the mitre, there is a double reference, historically. First, there is for us the identification of the bishop with Christ as the Great High-priest, and this from the beginning of our history. Certainly it is remembered from 2 Moses 29:6 that the Old Covenant Aaronic high-priest also wore a mitre ; so even before the fall of the empire, the bishop could likely have worn

a mitre that was related to the one prescribed by the Lord for Aaron and his successors. The second historical reference is more mundane. That reference is to the Roman imperial crown that was worn by the emperors. It is this shape of mitre which was passed to the patriarchs and then to the bishops after the fall of the Roman Empire in 1453. The mitre, nevertheless, refers us to the crown of Christ Himself, the King of the Universe.

Then the subdeacons bring the lit *dikiri and trikiri* candle-holders (words which mean double-candle and triple-candle). They are not actually part of the vestments of the high-priest, but these candles are used during the giving of some liturgical blessings by the bishop, so that all may see this blessing. They are also carried beside the bishop in processions, so that the people may see where he is amidst the throng. As they are given into the bishop's hands by the subdeacons, the deacon proclaims these words of our Saviour, which again apply not only to the bishop, but to each and every Christian :

> *'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven' ; always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen* (adjusted from Matthew 5:16).

With these words, and as the lights of the two candle-sticks are being used to bestow Christ's blessing, all will certainly and immediately recall the words of our Saviour about Himself :

> *Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life'* (John 8:12).

This will also surely remind us all of the Parable of the Lamp under a Bushel, as given to us several times in the Holy Gospels, as follows :

> *'No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light. Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him'* (Luke 8:16-18 ; see also Matthew 5:15, *&* Mark 4:21-25).

The Apostle and Evangelist Luke gives us another version of these words :

> *'No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts it in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness. Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light'* (Luke 11:33-36).

Finally, before the Divine Liturgy begins, the subdeacons and readers bring water, a basin, and a towel, so that the high-priest may wash his hands before leading the people in the serving of the Divine Liturgy. The deacon recites for him the following words :

> *I shall wash my hands amongst the innocent, and I shall circle around Your altar, O Lord, to hear the voice of Your praise, and to recount all Your wonders. O Lord, I loved the*

majesty of Your house, and the place of the tent of Your glory. Do not destroy my soul together with the impious, and my life with men of blood, in whose hands are lawless acts : their right hand was filled with bribes. But as for me, I have walked in my guilelessness ; redeem me, and have mercy on me. My foot has stood in uprightness ; in the churches shall I bless You, O Lord (Psalm 25:6-12).

Washing before serving the Lord liturgically has been with us from ancient times. It was with us before the time of Moses, but it became formally set out for us in these words :

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of testimony and the altar. You shall put water in it, for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and feet with water from it. When they go into the tabernacle of testimony, they shall wash with water, lest they die, or when they come near the altar to minister and to offer whole burnt offerings to the Lord. So they shall wash their hands and feet with water when they go into the tabernacle of testimony, lest they die. It shall be an ordinance forever to them—for him and his genealogy after him' (2 Moses 30:17-21).

From that time, it has been our general custom. The high-priest is merely doing what all would do. In the entrance to early Orthodox Temples, there were fountains for just this purpose. The high-priest washes so as to make the Offering with clean hands. Of course, the daily parallel is our washing of our hands before we sit down to eat. However, at the end of services also, the high-priests, priests, deacons and servers customarily wash their hands again in the special place for such washing, because some particles or residue of something blessed may remain on their hands. We do not wish to leave the Lord's Temple and inadvertently show disrespect for anything holy.

There is another, quite significant item associated with the bishop and his vestments, which is not mentioned in the vesting prayers themselves. This item is not specifically given him at this time, although during the course of the Divine Liturgy and other services he may use it frequently. This item is the pastoral staff (crosier ; ποιμαντορική ῥάβδος, *poimantorikē rabdos ;* жэзэл, *zhezel*). Because it is not presented as a part of the regular investiture, there is no prayer to accompany it. However, it would be useful for every arch-pastor and each one of us to recall the words that are spoken to the bishop at the time of his ordination, at that moment when the presiding bishop gives the pastoral staff to him, saying :

'Receive the pastoral staff, that you may feed the flock of Christ entrusted unto you : and be a staff and support to those who are obedient. But lead the disobedient and the wayward unto correction, unto gentleness, and unto obedience ; and they shall continue in due submissiveness' (Bishop's Service Book, vol. 2).

The new arch-pastor is himself exhorted to be "a staff and support" to the obedient sheep, and himself to "lead the disobedient and the wayward unto correction". The "submissiveness" mentioned is that obedience which each and every one of us lovingly offers to Christ Himself because we love Him who loves us. The pastoral staff, upon which the arch-pastor sometimes leans for his own support, is a metaphor for himself and for all round about him, concerning who he is and what he does.

There are two forms in which we generally see this pastoral staff. One is called the *tau*, because it is in the shape of the Greek capital letter "T" which has the same appearance in the

English alphabet. This T-form is from that used traditionally by monks in the Egyptian desert. It is very useful for them as a support to lean on during a twelve-hour vigil. The second form of the staff very frequently seen has approximately the same shape, but the top part of the staff is formed into stylised serpents facing each other, with a Cross in the middle. This Cross reminds us all that it is the weapon by which one can overcome in Christ. The serpents remind us all that our Saviour said to us : "'*Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves*'" (Matthew 10:16).

The other visible item that is associated only with bishops is the eagle-rug (орлэц, *orlets*). This is usually a small, circular rug, in very active liturgical use amongst some of the Slavic ecclesiastical families. It is less used (or not used) amongst those of the Balkan, Levantine and Constantinopolitan ecclesiastical families. The scriptural sources are as follows :

> *He surrounded him, and instructed him, and watched over him closely, as the apple of His eye. As an eagle that would shelter his nest and yearned for his young : spreading out his wings, he received them and he took them up on his back* (5 Moses 32:10-11 [from Canticle 2 of Matins]).
>
> *Your youth shall be renewed as an eagle's* (Psalm 102:5).
>
> *But those who wait on God shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not hunger* (Isaiah 40:31).

The eagle-rug presents the image of an eagle (one-headed) soaring above a city that is protected by walls. Very often, the city shown has features of the actual city whose name is in the bishop's title. However, the city shown may be any city, or a generic representation of a walled city. Since he is re-presenting Christ, the bishop's responsibility is to watch over, protect, strengthen, nurture, renew and refresh the citizens of the city (or cities) for whom he is responsible. This responsibility is conveyed by the image of the eagle. This very eagle also is a reminder to the bishop that he is to soar above earthly things and to aspire only to Heaven and to heavenly things. For such reasons, it is only the bishop who stands upon this eagle-rug.

The bishop is arrayed by the people ; and surrounded by them, he stands in their midst. He stands thus arrayed as he re-presents Christ Himself in the midst of Christ's own flock. The arch-pastor thus arrayed leads the flock in their worship of God. In his daily life, he continues to lead the flock in Christ to Christ Himself. By his own life, he shows the sheep how to live a Christian life in Christ. By his own life, the arch-pastor shows the sheep how to face difficulties in life by turning to Jesus Christ at all times for help. By his own life, the arch-pastor shows the rational sheep of Christ how to endure in Christ's forgiveness all sorts of suffering, pain, slander, calumny and persecution. By his own life, he shows the flock how always to forgive everyone, just as did Christ our Saviour from the Cross (see Luke 23:34). By his own life, he shows the rational sheep of Christ even how to die for the love of Christ if necessary, in all love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, forgiveness and blessing. The arch-pastor, by his living and by his dying, shows the flock of Christ the path to eternal life in Christ. Those apostolic shepherds who followed the Great Shepherd did just this in their lives and witness. The bishops who followed them (such as Saints Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp of Smyrna) did just the same. Generation after generation of the arch-pastors who followed them have been doing this until now, and they will continue to do this until that Great Shepherd, Himself, comes again.

8

Rhythm of prayer for busy bishops and busy people

Because there are so many demands on him, a bishop may often feel that he is "run ragged", completely over-tired and exhausted from working too hard. He has to endure frequent travel. There are services to be offered very often ; and very many times this entails (joyful as it may be) spending at least six hours in any given day in worship and the attending fellowship. Often there are even longer demands on his time. Daily appointments and a multitude of meetings are a great part of the responsibility. There are very many telephone calls. There is now never-ending e-mail that demands his time at all hours of the day and night. Even if most people cannot see or understand this, his life is not so very different from that of most people nowadays. He and the people he is given to lead may find that it is nearly impossible to keep a more formal rhythm of prayer such as may have been possible earlier in life, when there were fewer demands. Not many bishops or others have the strength, the formation or the gift to be able to sleep only one or two hours per night, even when their love for the Lord is very strong and vital. However, to become our true selves in Christ, we must have regular, frequent and daily communication and communion with our Saviour. It is important that we cultivate a daily habit of this communication with the Lord, a habit which we are able to sustain. In my opinion, it is important that we avoid using terms such as "rule" when we consider this habit or rhythm. Such a word can suggest compulsion. If we feel compelled or obliged, there is usually a tendency to resist. The "rule" might then come to be perceived to be a law that we must obey. Our habit is best rooted in and motivated by love. The habit helps to maintain the rhythm, but the deep love for the Lord which grows in our hearts (which is the reason for the rhythm) nurtures the regularity of the habit. The habit does not feel like any burden at all, but a part of our life which is as natural as breathing, and joyful as well (see the Homily of Saint Basil the Great on the Martyr Julitta, pp. 325-326).

It is significant and helpful for us that Saint Seraphim of Sarov understood long ago that some people must live with work-days of extremely long hours. In his days, it was particularly labourers and household servants who had to work even up to sixteen or eighteen hours per day (and this was not light work). Thus, they had difficulty praying in the way that they wanted to pray. In our days also, Saint Seraphim's recommendation may help anyone who is heavily burdened, busy and lacking time. It is summarised as follows :

> On rising from sleep, make the sign of the Holy Cross, stand before the icons and say the following :
>
> The 'Our Father' (prayed three times in honour of the Holy Trinity).
> The 'Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos' (prayed three times in honour of the Holy Trinity).
> The Symbol of Faith of Nicæa.

He rightly said that these prayers are the foundation of our faith. The "Our Father" is given to us by our Saviour. The second is sent from Heaven as the angelic salutation to the Mother of God at the Incarnation. The third is a summary of everything that we believe as Orthodox Christians, and it helps us to keep a clear focus on our purpose as Christians.

Saint Seraphim added that while we go about our daily work, we can all say the "Jesus Prayer" softly : "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me the sinner". And if we are surrounded by other people, then we can in our hearts and minds simply repeat silently : "Lord, have mercy".

Then, when it is time for the midday meal, we can repeat the three prayers as we did at the time of rising from sleep.

In the afternoon, we can continue to pray, saying softly : "Most holy Mother of God, save me the sinner" (or "Most holy Theotokos, save me the sinner"). However, at any time we are alone, we can repeat this prayer : "Lord Jesus Christ, through the Mother of God, have mercy on me the sinner".

When it is time for the evening meal, we can repeat the three prayers as we did at the time of rising from sleep. Afterwards, we can continue as in the afternoon until it is time to sleep.

When it is time to sleep, we can repeat the same three prayers with which we began the day. Then, protecting ourselves with the sign of the Holy Cross, we can retire to sleep.

Saint Seraphim provided other outlines for people in different situations. They are found towards the end of the biography of Saint Seraphim, An Extraordinary Peace, by Archimandrite Lazarus (Moore). However, this particular outline may be of greater support to those who are over-burdened. It is useful to understand that Saint Seraphim also recommended that whenever possible we would do well to repeat the Jesus Prayer accompanied by prostrations, and likewise the prayer : "Most holy Theotokos, save us" (or "Most holy Mother of God, save us"), with prostrations.

What is crucial for every Christian is that we constantly and consistently keep our hearts open to our Saviour in the communion of love which is the source of our life, and the source of our ability to serve Him daily. As Christos Yannaras reminds us aptly (see The Freedom of Morality, pp. 36 ff), sin is not about transgressing the law or laws. Sin is an existential fact, a state of being. If we sin, we "miss the mark" of living in harmony with, in communion with the love of God. If we persist in sin, we separate ourselves from God's love, from life, and from our true selves. If we insist on the state of sin, we cut ourselves off from Him who gives us life — life springing up from His love for His creation and His creature. It is we who betake ourselves to the left side, along with the goats (see Matthew 25:31-46). Keeping ourselves in the communion of love with our Saviour keeps us in life, keeps us being our true selves, keeps us in true health. In the communion of love with our Saviour, we can have hope of being amongst the sheep. Saint Seraphim urges everyone to enter this union, harmony and communion.

9

Three Psalms

— Psalm 3

O Lord, why have those afflicting me multiplied ? Many are rising against me ; many are saying to my soul : 'There is no salvation for him in his God.' But You, O Lord, You are my Support, my Glory, and the One exalting my head. With my voice I cried out to the Lord, and He listened to me from His holy mountain. As for me, I lay down and I slept ; I awoke, for the Lord will support me. I shall not fear myriads of people, who together are setting upon me round about. Arise, O Lord, save me, O my God ; for it is You that have smitten all those who vainly are at enmity with me ; You shattered the teeth of sinners. Salvation is of the Lord, and upon Your people is Your blessing.

(Saint Athanasius advises that if you are persecuted by your own people, and you have many rising against you, say Psalm 3.

Didymus the Blind comments that, as David, those who follow the Lord's righteousness will have enemies for no reason. It is so with the Saviour. [Foot-notes on Psalm 3, in The Psalter According to the Seventy.])

— Psalm 45

Our God is Refuge and Power, a Helper in afflictions which exceedingly befall us. Because of this, we shall not fear when the earth is stirred up, and the mountains are carried away into the heart of the seas. Their waters roared, and were stirred up ; stirred up were the mountains by His strength. The surges of the river make glad the city of God ; the Most High has hallowed His tent. God is in her midst, and she shall not be shaken ; God will help her at the break of dawn. The nations were stirred up ; kingdoms declined ; He has given His voice ; the earth was shaken. The Lord of Powers is with us : our Support is the God of Jacob. Come, and see the works of God, the portents which He set upon the earth. Taking away wars as far as the ends of the earth, He will shatter bows, dash weapons, and completely burn shields with fire. 'Be still, and know that I AM God. I will be exalted amongst the nations ; I will be exalted on the earth.' The Lord of Powers is with us : our Support is the God of Jacob.

(Saint John Chrysostom comments that the Lord has limitless spiritual armies under His command, and therefore "*we shall not fear*" in the midst of affliction and turmoil. As with the Three Young Men, the victorious Lord is with us in the midst of the fire and trial. Always He is with us. We encounter this in the seventh and eighth canticles of Matins [See Daniel 3:26-56, 57-88]. [Foot-note on Psalm 45, in The Psalter According to the Seventy.])

— **Psalm 148**

Praise the Lord from the Heavens : praise Him in the highest. Praise Him, all you His angels ; praise Him, all you His powers. Praise Him, O sun and moon ; praise Him, all the stars and the light. Praise Him, the Heavens of the Heavens, and the water above the Heavens. Let them praise the Name of the Lord ; for He spoke, and they came to be : He commanded, and they were created. He established them unto the age, and unto the age of the age ; He set an ordinance, and it shall not pass away. Praise the Lord from the earth : you dragons, and all abysses, fire, hail, snow, ice, and tempestuous wind, which are doing His word. Mountains and all hills, fruit-trees and all cedars, wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things, and winged birds, kings of the earth, and all peoples, princes and all judges of the earth, young men and maidens, elders with the young : let them praise the Name of the Lord, for His Name alone is exalted. Confession of Him is over earth and Heaven. He will exalt a horn of His people : a hymn of all His holy ones, the sons of Israel, a people drawing near to Him.

10

Saint Aristides the Philosopher

If any one of us might have any uncertainties about the manner of life of a Christian ; should any bishop have any tendency to forget what he is about, then it is crucial that we re-read the closing words of the Apologia written to the pagan Roman Emperor of his time, by Saint Aristides of Athens, the Philosopher († *ca.* 140). An "apologia" is a formal defence of one's opinions or conduct. In this case, it is the defence by Saint Aristides about the way in which Christians live and behave. Having previously been a pagan philosopher, he became a Christian, and his writing is said to have influenced the Martyr Saint Justin the Philosopher (†165). His words show us that we live nowadays in much the same environment, and that we face many of the same challenges in following Christ faithfully as did our ancestors two millennia ago :

> But the Christians, O King, while they went about and made search, have found the truth ; and as we learned from their writings, they have come nearer to truth and genuine knowledge than the rest of the nations. For they know and trust in God, the Creator of heaven and of earth, in whom and from whom are all things, to whom there is no other god as companion, from whom they received commandments which they engraved upon their minds and observe in hope and expectation of the world which is to come. Wherefore they do not commit adultery nor fornication, nor bear false witness, nor embezzle what is held in pledge, nor covet what is not theirs. They honour father and mother, and show kindness to those near to them ; and whenever they are judges, they judge uprightly. They do not worship idols (made) in the image of man ; and whatsoever they would not that others should do unto them, they do not to others ; and of the food which is consecrated to idols they do not eat, for they are pure. And their oppressors they appease [lit : comfort] and make them their friends ; they do good to their enemies ; and their women, O King, are pure as virgins, and their daughters are modest ; and their men keep themselves from every unlawful union and from all uncleanness, in the hope of a recompense to come in the other world. Further, if one or other of them have bondmen and bondwomen or children, through love towards them they persuade them to become Christians, and when they have done so, they call them brethren without distinction. They do not worship strange gods, and they go their way in all modesty and cheerfulness. Falsehood is not found amongst them ; and they love one another, and from widows they do not turn away their esteem ; and they deliver the orphan from him who treats him harshly. And he who has, gives to him who has not, without boasting. And when they see a stranger, they take him in to their homes and rejoice over him as a very brother ; for they do not call them brethren after the flesh, but brethren after the spirit and in God. And whenever one of their poor passes from the world, each one of them according to his ability gives heed to him and carefully sees to his burial. And if they hear that one of their number is imprisoned or afflicted on account of the name of their Messiah, all of them anxiously minister to his necessity ; and if it is possible to redeem him, they set him free. And if there is amongst them any that is poor and needy, and if they have no spare food, they fast two or three days in order to supply to the needy their lack of food. They observe the precepts of their Messiah with much care, living justly and soberly as the Lord their God commanded them. Every morning and every hour they give thanks and praise to God for His loving-kindnesses towards them ; and for their food and their drink they offer thanksgiving to Him. And if any righteous man amongst them passes from the world,

they rejoice and offer thanks to God ; and they escort his body as if he were setting out from one place to another near. And when a child has been born to one of them, they give thanks to God ; and if, moreover, it happen to die in childhood, they give thanks to God the more, as for one who has passed through the world without sins. And further if they see that any one of them dies in his ungodliness or in his sins, for him they grieve bitterly, and sorrow as for one who goes to meet his doom.

Such, O King, is the commandment of the law of the Christians, and such is their manner of life. As men who know God, they ask from Him petitions which are fitting for Him to grant and for them to receive. And thus they employ their whole lifetime. And since they know the loving-kindnesses of God towards them, behold ! for their sake the glorious things which are in the world flow forth to view. And truly, they are those who found the truth when they went about and made search for it ; and from what we considered, we learned that they alone come near to a knowledge of the truth. And they do not proclaim in the ears of the multitude the kind deeds they do, but are careful that no one should notice them ; and they conceal their giving just as he who finds a treasure and conceals it. And they strive to be righteous as those who expect to behold their Messiah, and to receive from Him with great glory the promises made concerning them. And as for their words and their precepts, O King, and their glorying in their worship, and the hope of earning according to the work of each one of them their recompense which they look for in another world, you may learn about these from their writings. It is enough for us to have shortly informed your Majesty concerning the conduct and the truth of the Christians. For great indeed, and wonderful is their doctrine to him who will search into it and reflect upon it. And verily, this is a new people, and there is something divine [lit : "divine admixture"] in the midst of them. Take, then, their writings, and read therein, and lo ! you will find that I have not put forth these things on my own authority, nor spoken thus as their advocate ; but since I read in their writings, I was fully assured of these things as also of things which are to come. And for this reason I was constrained to declare the truth to such as care for it and seek the world to come. And to me there is no doubt but that the earth abides through the supplication of the Christians. But the rest of the nations err and cause error in wallowing before the elements of the world, since beyond these their mental vision will not pass. And they search about as if in darkness because they will not recognize the truth ; and like drunken men they reel and jostle one another and fall.

Thus far, O King, I have spoken ; for concerning that which remains, as is said above, there are found in their other writings things which are hard to utter and difficult for one to narrate, which are not only spoken in words but also wrought out in deeds. Now the Greeks, O King, as they follow base practises in intercourse with males, and a mother and a sister and a daughter, impute their monstrous impurity in turn to the Christians. But the Christians are just and good, and the truth is set before their eyes, and their spirit is long-suffering ; and, therefore, though they know the error of these [the Greeks], and are persecuted by them, they bear and endure it ; and for the most part they have compassion on them, as men who are destitute of knowledge. And on their side, they offer prayer that these may repent of their error ; and when it happens that one of them has repented, he is ashamed before the Christians of the works which were done by him ; and he makes confession to God, saying, I did these things in ignorance. And he purifies his heart, and his sins are forgiven him, because he committed them in ignorance in the former time, when he used to blaspheme and speak evil of the true knowledge of the Christians. And assuredly the race of the Christians is more blessed than all the men who are upon the face of the earth. Henceforth, let the tongues of those who utter vanity and harass the Christians be silent ; and hereafter, let them speak the truth. For it is of serious

consequence to them that they should worship the true God rather than worship a senseless sound. And truly, whatever is spoken in the mouth of the Christians is of God ; and their doctrine is the gateway of light. Wherefore let all who are without the knowledge of God draw near thereto ; and they will receive incorruptible words, which are from all time and from eternity. So shall they appear before the awesome judgement which through Jesus the Messiah is destined to come upon the whole human race (The Apology of Aristides the Philosopher, paragraphs 15-17).

11

Supporting those who lead the flock

The arch-pastor supports and protects the flock given to his responsibility in Christ, and the rational sheep protect and support the bishop both by their prayers and by their practical actions (see pp. 125, 150, *&c.*). In the Divine Liturgy, we commend our bishops to the Providence of God as we pray that "in peace, safety, honour, health and length of days" their lives may be protected in every way. Liturgically, in a manner similar to venerating icons, the attention that is offered to the high-priest is truly offered to the Lord Himself (see pp. 294, 348).

The rational sheep are careful to care for their chief-shepherd who, in Christ, brings life to the flock. They provide for his personal sustenance, and they provide the help in administration that he requires in order properly to lead the flock. It is not that the bishop can demand this support. Rather, out of love for Christ, the rational sheep offer all that is necessary freely in the Love of Christ. Such support and care is given in the much-misunderstood custom that the arch-priest (and also the priest) does not himself drive a vehicle, but is driven by others (whether it be in an automobile or horse-and-carriage). It is well-known that Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) did not drive a vehicle, but he had, rather, a series of devoted drivers who helped him throughout his many years of episcopal service. One need only refer to the book about him, 'This Holy Man', by Gillian Crow, especially p. 108. Why is he protected in this way ? It is because of the consequences of stress, or of a serious accident. When a bishop is driving, there is not a little stress involved. When he is driven, he is free to pray, to read, to consider what he is about to do. Yet more seriously, when he is driven, he is not the one responsible should there be an accident, or worse, a fatality. Especially if there should there be a fatality, such is our two-millennia attitude of respect for life (and especially human life) that there are always serious consequences. (I have seen these consequences in others during my lifetime.) Whether there is a deliberate shedding of blood and taking of a life, or an involuntary and accidental shedding of blood and loss of life, there are strong consequences. The one responsible expresses regret and repentance for this loss of life by giving up any position of authority. In such cases, an arch-pastor also accepts to refrain from receiving the Holy Mysteries for a substantial length of time, in consultation with his spiritual father and the Holy Synod. This would be the same for a priest as well, although it is his own bishop who would supervise his state during the period prescribed. This is exceptional because there is not just one sign of repentance offered, but two.

We shall here consider some of the historical, canonical ways in which such a catastrophic event is addressed. First, we look at an excerpt from Canon 5 of Saint Gregory of Nyssa († *ca*. 395) :

> Cases of involuntary manslaughter, on the other hand, are marked by manifest characteristics, as when one has his mind on something else and does a fatal act through failure to pay attention to the situation. [...] As for the involuntary felony, it has been deemed pardonable [*i.e.* for laymen], though by no means praiseworthy. I said this in order to make it plain that even though one may involuntarily incur the taint of murder, on the score that he has already been made profane by the felony, the Canon has declared him to have forfeited priestly grace (The Rudder).

Let us take note that "the Canon" to which the saint refers means "the authority of the Canons". For example, Canon 16 of the First Ecumenical Council begins by referring to "any presbyters or deacons, or other persons covered by the Canon" [*i.e.* subject to the authority of the Canons]. Saint Gregory seems to assume that deposition from office is automatic, and he further imposes an *epitimion* (ἐπιτίμιον : discipline, censure, penalty) of nine years of not being able to receive the Holy Mysteries. Canon 23 of the Council of Ancyra (314), Canon 57 of Saint Basil the Great, and Canon 20 of Patriarch Saint John IV the Faster (†595), give us background information regarding the excommunication of those guilty of involuntary manslaughter. The discipline is not to participate in the Holy Mysteries either for seven (or five) years by the Council of Ancyra (the lower number is a moderation), for ten years by Saint Basil the Great, for three years by Saint John — provided the penitent eats only one meal (strictly lenten) per day, and does 300 prostrations per day. These are the words of the Council of Ancyra, Canon 23 :

> Concerning involuntary homicides, a former decree directs that they be received to full communion after seven years [of penance], according to the prescribed degrees; but this second one, that they fulfil a term of five years (see The Rudder).

Such is the seriousness with which the Orthodox Church regards the sanctity of life, and particularly human life. There are many, many more examples of such care and caution.

When the faithful rational sheep care for and protect their arch-pastor by making sure that he is not exposed to the danger of such a possibility, they also protect themselves. They reduce the risk of suddenly losing their chief-shepherd altogether, and they thus help to assure the stability of the life of the flock in which they live. As he serves and leads them in Christ with his whole heart, the rational sheep support and protect their chief-shepherd in a multitude of practical ways. Saint Ignatius of Antioch writes to the believers in Smyrna :

> You have refreshed me in every way, and Jesus Christ shall refresh you. You have loved me when I was absent as well as when I was present ("Letter to the Smyrnæans", 9).

The word "refreshed" translates the Greek verb ἀναπαύω, *anapauō*, which can mean "to give rest", "to give relief", "to soothe". We can honestly say that this offering is a real part of the offering of their life, love and resources to Christ Himself. Thus, the Body of Christ continues to grow and to flourish as all the members live and work in harmony and mutual love in Christ.

12

Concluding words

I undertook this reflection on all these aspects of being a bishop with no little hesitation. Nevertheless, there was a certain impetus in my heart to write something down after twenty-five years of episcopal service. Thus, in undertaking it, I have finally fulfilled my obedience to Archbishop Dmitri of blessed memory. More than thirty years ago, I had a correspondence with one of my former (now reposed) teachers, Professor Sergei S Verhovskoy, whose writing has already been cited. "Prof" (as he was affectionately called) was expressing his serious reservations about whether it was possible for Orthodoxy truly to be established and rooted in North America. At the time, I disagreed with him. Now, seeing how resistant we tend to be in our daily lives to this Orthodox Gospel Way, and how far most of us are from a true Orthodox mentality (that is, mind-set and heart-set together, see p. 315), I understand better the foundation of "Prof's" reservations. Orthodox mentality involves the correct understanding and perception of the Gospel, all the Scriptures, the theological and canonical Tradition, the examples of the multitudes of saints and other faithful Christians, the example of how holy people have baptised the cultures in which they have lived, and much more. All this is contained in one whole, in a sphere as it were, and all in balance and in harmony with Christ. This is what can well be said to express the Orthodox way. Nevertheless, despite our short-comings (and particularly my own), I remain determined in Christ to continue persevering in our missionary imperative :

> *'Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age'* (Matthew 28:19-20).

I have tried to keep this consideration of the arch-pastoral responsibilities primarily in the context of the Scriptures, and of the pastoral and canonical Tradition of the Church. This is not an exhaustive reflection, although it is a very long reflection — a book, even ; but then, again, I have already indicated that the episcopate, the high-priesthood, is ineffable. This is not at all a scholarly work as such. There has been repetition of points. This is partly because *repetitio mater studiorum* (repetition is the mother of learning), to put it in positive terms. What I have known all along is that it is imperative that I (and every bishop) be daily giving thanks to the Lord that He is Love, that He is Compassion. It is also important that I (and every bishop) daily ask that He give the ability to show this to His children. Moreover, I strongly believe that all bishops have received support from saints, and from others whom they have encountered in the course of their life. I shared a small sample of my own experience in Part A. It is from such personal experience that we all can be clearly convinced that we, ourselves, are truly able to know and to follow Christ, and that in Christ everything can be accomplished. This is why it is so important that all the people of God pray for each other. It is especially urgent that the faithful pray for the priests and high-priests, that the Lord protect them and guide them and keep them safe from all harm.

The purpose of this book is in the Hands of the Lord. Very recently, I read on the Mystagogy Blog the following few words by Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov) of blessed memory. He wrote these brief words in answer to the question : "Why are there so few writings

by holy women ?" These words were transmitted in Greek by Metropolitan Hierotheos (Vlachos) of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasios in Greece, and translated by John Sanidopoulos :

> Writings of holy women do not exist. This is not because there are fewer holy women than men. There are more holy women, but holy women have hidden lives and can safeguard the mystical life. The *Panagia* received great Grace from God. We do not have revelations that came from the *Panagia*, but we know that she has great Grace and the Church feels this together with all those who pray to her.
>
> Further, women were not required to guide flocks that would reveal their experiences [meaning that the holy women did not guide parish flocks ; monks do not speak of things or record things in the way that usually happens in parishes]. Those who left us a few words were Abbesses. But even the [male] saints would have been silent and we would not have their writings if there were no need for them, as responsible persons, as Pastors of the Church, to guide their flocks (I Knew a Man in Christ).

Although most holy women seem not to have written very much, they are often written about by others. A prime example is Saint Macrina († *ca.* 379). A saint in a family of saints, she is acknowledged as having had a great influence on her brothers Basil, Gregory and Peter, and it is her brother, Gregory of Nyssa, who wrote her life. Saint Olympia the Deaconess (†408) of Constantinople is another. A wealthy, well-educated philanthropist, she was co-worker with Saint John Chrysostom. As this present book is being brought to a conclusion, these previous words, which I only just recently saw, seem to confirm to me the reason why I had to write : for the flock, and for the shepherds. I am grateful to the holy Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov) for his words. I do consider him to be a holy man, inspired of God.

When I began this writing, I said that I would not be proposing any solutions to problems. The solutions have always been there for us, and before us. No so-called solutions I or anyone could think of proposing could ever be new and previously unconsidered.

Now, perhaps, a simple summary may be given to describe the life of a bishop. Long ago, we students were told by the Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko the following story from the life of the Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest John (Garklavs) of blessed memory (†1982). Once, after a service, a little girl asked the esteemed archbishop : "What do bishops do ?" He replied : "They bless". This is indeed the most succinct description of the life and service of a bishop that I have heard so far. This simple statement encompasses everything, although it must be also stated that most Orthodox Christians would understand by "they bless" that the high-priest or priest is calling for God's blessing, since he cannot himself actually bless. Now, in the context of this long reflection, I feel I must add to this that as the bishops bless, they bring Christ's forgiveness and they forgive ; and as they bless, they bring Christ's healing.

It seems to be necessary that I bring to our minds and recollection a word from the Egyptian saint of the Nitrian desert, Abba Ammon († *ca.* 350) (also spelt Amoun), the friend of Saint Anthony the Great. This exhortation, a simple application of the Gospel, is important for every Christian to remember. This is especially so for me, and for all bishops :

> Bear with everyone as God bears with you (The Synaxarion, 4 October).

The bishop may not find himself burdened with riches, as the rich young ruler (see Luke 18:18-27). However, he may well find himself feeling heavily burdened by the cares of the

diocese he leads, and by the needs of the people he leads. It is important always for a bishop to remember these strong words of our Saviour :

> *And those who heard it said, 'Who then can be saved?' But He said, 'The things which are impossible with men are possible with God'* (Luke 18:26-27 ; see pp. 5, 13).

It can happen that he, as the shepherd-leader, may find that his sense of priorities can become distorted. When the bishop himself asks this previous question about being saved, it is important that he keep in mind our Saviour's answer, and further, that he recall what follows when the Apostle Peter says :

> *'See, we have left all and followed You.' So He said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the Kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life'* (Luke 18:28-30).

Saint Athanasius tells us that when Saint Anthony the Great heard words like these (Matthew 19:21), straight away, he went and sold everything he had, distributed it to the poor, provided for his sister, and left all to follow Christ in the desert. These words are well-supplemented and completed by the following response from the Holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptiser of the Lord, John. It is my prayer that every high-priest and priest (and indeed every Christian) would be so prudent as to keep his words in their hearts and minds :

> *John answered and said, 'A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, "I am not the Christ," but, "I have been sent before Him." He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him'* (John 3:27-36).

These words, "*He must increase, but I must decrease*" can serve as a guide for every bishop. The bishop can be as an icon. In particular, the bishop, in uniting his will through love to the Lord's will, should be able to be sufficiently transparent, as it were, that all who see him may, in him, be able to see and to encounter Christ Himself. This can be the case for every other Christian as well.

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May the Lord help us, protect us and save us all in His Love, through the work of the Holy Spirit. May He bring us all into His Kingdom, into His Love. May the all-holy Mother of God, the Ever-virgin Mary, shelter and guide us all. May we eternally dwell in loving unity and harmony in the House of the Lord unto the ages.

The End.
Glory be to God :
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
unto the ages of ages.

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Index of scriptural citations

Unless otherwise indicated, all scriptural citation are taken from The Orthodox Study Bible. All citations from the Old Testament are therefore from the Septuagint Greek.

Psalm numbering comparison between Hebrew and Septuagint is as follows :

Septuagint	*Hebrew*
1 - 8	1- 8
9	9- 10
10-112	11-113
113	114-115
114	116:1-9
115	116: 10-19
116-145	117-146
146-147	147
148-150	148-150

✠

Item	*Page*
1 Moses (Genesis) 1	143
1 Moses1:26	300
1 Moses 1:26-31	153-154
1 Moses 2:15	240
1 Moses 2:19-20	240
1 Moses 3	115
1 Moses 3:8	273
1 Moses 4:1-16	86, 116
1 Moses 7	199
1 Moses 9:1-3	240
1 Moses 9:21-25	213
1 Moses 14:14-24	301
1 Moses 28-30	9
1 Moses 41	270
2 Moses (Exodus) 12:5	307
2 Moses 14:13-14	292
2 Moses 15:6-7	345
2 Moses 20:1-17	85
2 Moses 20:12-16	84
2 Moses 28	344
2 Moses 28:4-25	344
2 Moses 29:5	344
2 Moses 29:6	348
2 Moses 30:17-21	350
3 Moses (Leviticus) 1:3	307
3 Moses 8:7-8	344
3 Moses 11:44	12
3 Moses 11:44, 45	306
3 Moses 11:45	306, 308
3 Moses 18:7	213
3 Moses 19:2	306
3 Moses 19:18	85, 162, 223, 227, 275
3 Moses 20:7, 26	306
3 Moses 21:1-7, 10, 13, 17, 22	87
3 Moses 26:12	199
4 Moses (Numbers) 20:7-13	330
4 Moses 20:17	115
4 Moses 22	293
5 Moses (Deuteronomy) 1:29-31	292
5 Moses 5:16-20	84
5 Moses 6:4-5	274, 300
5 Moses 6:4-6	85
5 Moses 6:5	85, 143, 275
5 Moses 6:13	259
5 Moses 6:16	259
5 Moses 8:3	259
5 Moses 10:17	104
5 Moses 11:18-19	348
5 Moses 15:21	307
5 Moses 21:23	286
5 Moses 25:4	285
5 Moses 27:26	286
5 Moses 30:15-20	231-232
5 Moses 31:8	251
5 Moses 32:10-11	351
Joshua 1:5	258
1 Kingdoms (1 Samuel) 2:9	246
1 Kingdoms 16:7	213
1 Kingdoms 17:24, 26	292
2 Kingdoms (2 Samuel) 7:14	200
2 Kingdoms 11:14-17	257
2 Kingdoms 12:1-15	194
2 Kingdoms 12:13	194
3 Kingdoms (1 Kings) 3:8, 10, 11, 13, 27	123-124
3 Kingdoms 17:8-16	130, 169, 269
3 Kingdoms 19:11-12	131
4 Kingdoms (2 Kings) 6:16	258
2 Paraleipomenon (2 Chronicles) 15:2	77
2 Paraleipomenon 20:15, 17	292
2 Paraleipomenon 33:12-20	195
Tobit 4:10	33
Psalm 1:3	61
Psalm 3	354
Psalm 4:5	151, 234
Psalm 15:10-11	325
Psalm 15:11	337
Psalm 17:1-2	272
Psalm 17:33-34	345
Psalm 18:5	186
Psalm 20:4-5	348
Psalm 22	216, 217
Psalm 22:4	251
Psalm 22:5	216
Psalm 23	152
Psalm 25:6-12	350
Psalm 32:9	187
Psalm 32:10-11	258
Psalm 33:12	40
Psalm 33:16	36
Psalm 36:6	28
Psalm 36:23	14, 18
Psalm 36:30	66
Psalm 40:1	30
Psalm 40:12-13	272
Psalm 44:1	347
Psalm 44:4-5	345
Psalm 45	354
Psalm 49:14-15	86
Psalm 49:22-23	154
Psalm 50	194, 215, 274
Psalm 50:11-14	273-274
Psalm 50:12	347
Psalm 50:13	195
Psalm 54:23	129
Psalm 56:8	24
Psalm 68:10	110, 181, 287
Psalm 69:1	24
Psalm 70:5	57
Psalm 79	151, 152
Psalm 79:15	20, 283
Psalm 79:15-16	89, 151
Psalm 85:5	205

Psalm 90:11-12 259
Psalm 94:7 128
Psalm 102:2-4 205
Psalm 102:5 351
Psalm 107:1 24
Psalm 109:4 301
Psalm 111:4 48
Psalm 111:6-7 64
Psalm 117:1 247
Psalm 117:14 52
Psalm 117:27 164
Psalm 118:32 271
Psalm 118:73 116, 345
Psalm 118:108 86
Psalm 122:2-3 8, 9, 221
Psalm 126:1 181
Psalm 131:9 346
Psalm 132:2 344
Psalm 134:3 247
Psalm 138:8 251
Psalm 139:10 74, 75
Psalm 140:3-4 210
Psalm 145:3, 5 258
Psalm 145:7-9 167
Psalm 148 355
Job 1 & 2 250
Job 20:18 33
Proverbs 3:5-6 325
Proverbs 3:11-12 51
Proverbs 3:30-31 33
Proverbs 3:37 316
Proverbs 4:26 115
Proverbs 10:13 50, 213
Proverbs 21:12 33
Proverbs 25:24-25 227
Proverbs 27:19 137
Proverbs 27:25 133
Wisdom of Solomon 6:3, 6-8 106
Wisdom of Solomon 7:22-30 124-125
Wisdom of Sirach 7:32 33
Wisdom of Sirach 17:17 33
Wisdom of Sirach 18:7-12 141
Wisdom of Sirach 19:10 212
Wisdom of Sirach 28:2-4 224
Wisdom of Sirach 29:8-10 33
Wisdom of Sirach 35:12, 13 104
Hosea 2:23 159
Hosea 14:2-3 86
Micah 6:8 198
Micah 7:18-19 205
Jonah 3 199
Jonah 4:10-11 196
Nahum 2:1 183
Zechariah 1:3 77
Zechariah 13:7 126
Malachi 3:7 77
Isaiah 1:16-20 199
Isaiah 1:17, 23 198
Isaiah 1:18 199
Isaiah 6:1-3 152
Isaiah 8 & 9 296
Isaiah 10:1-3 198
Isaiah 11:2-3 125
Isaiah 26:20 107
Isaiah 40:3 160
Isaiah 40:11 137
Isaiah 40:31 351
Isaiah 43:25 206
Isaiah 49:15-16 251
Isaiah 52:7 183
Isaiah 52:11 200
Isaiah 53:4-5, 6,7, 9, 11, 12 286
Isaiah 53:9 287
Isaiah 55:7-8 206
Isaiah 55:11 184
Isaiah 61:10 344
Isaiah 64:5 294
Isaiah 66:13 153
Jeremiah 3:15 141
Jeremiah 23:1-4 132
Jeremiah 38:34 202
Jeremiah 39:38 199
Ezekiel 20:34, 41 200
Ezekiel 33:11 199
Ezekiel 34:1-10 132-133
Ezekiel 37:27 199
Daniel 3:26-56, 57-88 254, 354
Daniel 3:50 76
Matthew 3:3 160
Matthew 3:8 196
Matthew 4:1-11 259
Matthew 4:17 193, 196
Matthew 4:18-20 192
Matthew 5:3-12 291
Matthew 5:5 291
Matthew 5:13 62, 218, 314
Matthew 5:13-16 166
Matthew 5:15 309, 349
Matthew 5:16 349
Matthew 5:17-20 85
Matthew 5:19 190, 191
Matthew 5:23 207
Matthew 5:23-26 207
Matthew 5:28 110
Matthew 5:37 16
Matthew 5:42 33
Matthew 5:43-48 223
Matthew 5:44 207
Matthew 5:45 206, 220
Matthew 6:3 120
Matthew 6:6 107
Matthew 6:11 290
Matthew 6:12 205
Matthew 6:14-15 205, 210
Matthew 6:24 239
Matthew 7:1-2 211, 213
Matthew 7:3-5 213, 266
Matthew 7:6 332
Matthew 7:24-27 175
Matthew 7:28-29 183
Matthew 8:23-27 254
Matthew 8:31 250
Matthew 9:1-7 273
Matthew 9:12 137
Matthew 9:20-22 96
Matthew 9:36 126
Matthew 10:5-15 167
Matthew 10:8 167
Matthew 10:11-13 293
Matthew 10:16 351
Matthew 10:25 287
Matthew 10:40-42 167
Matthew 11:15 324
Matthew 11:28 316
Matthew 11:28-30 129, 204
Matthew 11:29 277
Matthew 12:43-45 220
Matthew 13:24-30 219, 289

Matthew 13:33 62, 166, 218, 314
Matthew 13:36-43 219, 289
Matthew 13:45-46 46
Matthew 14:14-21 160, 163, 331
Matthew 14:19-21 304
Matthew 14:22-33 211, 254
Matthew 14:27 65
Matthew 14:30 263
Matthew 15:19 266
Matthew 15:21-28 166
Matthew 15:32-38 160, 304
Matthew 15:36-38 304
Matthew 16:19 210
Matthew 16:24-26 129
Matthew 18:12-14 136, 347
Matthew 18:18 210
Matthew 18:19-22 214
Matthew 18:20 234
Matthew 18:22 215
Matthew 19:21 118, 363
Matthew 19:26 13
Matthew 20:1-16 148-149
Matthew 20:25-28 122, 169
Matthew 21:33-44 10, 281
Matthew 22:1-14 169
Matthew 22:13 256
Matthew 22:37-40 85, 138
Matthew 23:4-5 77
Matthew 23:7-8 91
Matthew 23:23 77, 198
Matthew 23:37 153
Matthew 25:23 47
Matthew 25:31-46 353
Matthew 25:37-40 147
Matthew 26:31 126
Matthew 26:35 320
Matthew 26:74-75 276
Matthew 27:11-14 291
Matthew 27:40 287
Matthew 27:46 255
Matthew 28:18-20 69, 123, 309
Matthew 28:19 306, 309
Matthew 28:19-20 361
Matthew 28:20 142, 233
Mark 1:12-13 259
Mark 1:15 193
Mark 2:1-12 273
Mark 4:21–25 349
Mark 4:35-41 254
Mark 5:1-20 166
Mark 5:25-34 97
Mark 6:34 126
Mark 6:34-44 160, 331
Mark 8:1-9 160, 304
Mark 8:34 129, 347
Mark 9:24 262
Mark 10:42-45 169
Mark 11:26 213
Mark 12:30-31 275
Mark 13:11 189
Mark 14:27 126
Mark 15:1-5 291
Mark 15:40-41 150
Mark 16:15 309
Luke 1:37 13, 184
Luke 1:38 299
Luke 2:17 161
Luke 4:1-13 259
Luke 4:23 190
Luke 4:40 312
Luke 5 107
Luke 5:16 107
Luke 5:17-26 273
Luke 6:17-19 170
Luke 6:35 207
Luke 6:36 33
Luke 6:42 266
Luke 6:43-45 109
Luke 7:36-50 162
Luke 7:40-50 273
Luke 7:47 191
Luke 8:16-18 349
Luke 8:22-25 254
Luke 9:10-17 160, 304, 331
Luke 9:23 129
Luke 9:58 122
Luke 10:1-9 133
Luke 10:1-24 174
Luke 10:5-6, 9 133
Luke 10:29-37 166, 270, 273
Luke 11:11-13 143
Luke 11:23 198
Luke 11:24-26 220
Luke 11:33-36 349
Luke 12:6-7 85
Luke 12:11-12 189
Luke 12:25-32 143
Luke 12:32 143
Luke 12:37 168
Luke 12:48 104, 243
Luke 13:34 153
Luke 15:4-5 136
Luke 15:4-7 98, 347
Luke 15:5 346
Luke 15:11-24 142
Luke 15:11-32 202
Luke 15:21 196
Luke 16:13 239
Luke 16:19-31 119
Luke 17:3-5 214-215
Luke 17:4 215
Luke 17:7-10 161
Luke 17:11-19 166
Luke 17:20-21 200
Luke 18:9-14 275-276
Luke 18:13 196
Luke 18:18-27 362
Luke 18:18-30 84
Luke 18:26-27 363
Luke 18:27 5
Luke 18:28-30 363
Luke 19:10 137
Luke 22:25-27 122, 163
Luke 22:27 91, 168
Luke 22:57-62 318
Luke 22:61-62 276
Luke 23:1-5 291
Luke 23:9 291
Luke 23:34 218, 254, 351
Luke 23:42 180, 290
Luke 23:43 180
Luke 24:13-35 134
Luke 24:49 6, 341
John 1:5-14 257
John 1:10-13 118
John 1:14 6, 226
John 3:16 255
John 3:27-36 363

John 3:30 278
John 4:7-42 166
John 4:13-15 136
John 4:14 214
John 4:34 297
John 4:34-38 296-297
John 5:17 185
John 6:5-14 160, 304, 331
John 6:32-35 304
John 6:54 179
John 8:12 349
John 8:44 260
John 10 188
John 10:1-5, 9, 11, 14, 15 126
John 10:3 278
John 10:4 136
John 10:7, 9 90
John 10:10-11 247
John 10:11 133
John 10:11-18 321
John 10:16 305
John 10:30 183
John 11:44 210
John 13:3-17 160, 168
John 13:7 168
John 13:13-15 184
John 13:14 170
John 13:15-16 168
John 13:20 301
John 13:34 84
John 13:34-35 301
John 13:37 320
John 14:6 74, 113, 164, 183, 284, 337
John 14:18 251
John 14:19-21 301
John 15:1-8 150
John 15:13 271
John 15:20 287
John 15:26 341
John 17:6-16 118
John 17:9-23 300
John 17:20-23 129
John 17:23 101
John 18:28-19:16 291
John 18:36 122
John 18:37 183
John 19:2 348
John 19:25-27 155
John 20:21 256, 312
John 20:23 210
John 21:15 264
John 21:15, 16 142
John 21:15-17 318
John 21:18 320
Acts 1:8 309
Acts 1:15-17, 23-26 172
Acts 1:24 313
Acts 2:42 312
Acts 4:29-30 185
Acts 5:32 312
Acts 6 147
Acts 6:1 144
Acts 6:1-3 169
Acts 6:1-7 172
Acts 6:5-6 314
Acts 7:59-60 217
Acts 8:14-17 314
Acts 9:2 164
Acts 11:26 164
Acts 13:1-3 314
Acts 14:23 81
Acts 15:6 81
Acts 18:3 285
Acts 19:9 164
Acts 20:27-31 139
Acts 22:4 164
Acts 24:14 164
Romans 2:1 212
Romans 2:1-11 266
Romans 2:11 104
Romans 2:21 190
Romans 3:22 128
Romans 5:1-8 264
Romans 5:7-8 271
Romans 5:8 306
Romans 8:15-17 35
Romans 8:28 248
Romans 9:25 159
Romans 10:12 105, 128
Romans 10:14-15 183
Romans 10:17 275
Romans 12:1-2 86, 307
Romans 12:2 118
Romans 12:16 277
Romans 12:20-21 227
Romans 13:1-7 104
Romans 14:4 212
Romans 14:19 177
Romans 15:1-4 181
Romans 15:8 91
Romans 16:19-20 260
Romans 16:20 292
1 Corinthians 1:10 305
1 Corinthians 1:10-13 301
1 Corinthians 1:12-15 311
1 Corinthians 1:22-25 8
1 Corinthians 2:3 104
1 Corinthians 2:16 130
1 Corinthians 3:6-8 297
1 Corinthians 3:9-17 176
1 Corinthians 3:11 176
1 Corinthians 4:1 173
1 Corinthians 4:12 191
1 Corinthians 4:14-16 152
1 Corinthians 4:21 317
1 Corinthians 7:25 312
1 Corinthians 9:1-18 285
1 Corinthians 9:19-23 106, 146-147, 316
1 Corinthians 9:22 317
1 Corinthians 9:27 191
1 Corinthians 10:1-4 175
1 Corinthians 10:17 106, 107
1 Corinthians 10:31 326
1 Corinthians 11:1-2 312
1 Corinthians 11:2 312
1 Corinthians 11:23 92, 314
1 Corinthians 11:23-25 180
1 Corinthians 12 128, 165, 166, 230, 298
1 Corinthians 12:3-29 228-229
1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11-14, 27 105
1 Corinthians 12:12-14 298
1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 20, 27 178
1 Corinthians 12:24-26 298
1 Corinthians 13 8, 10
1 Corinthians 13:1-8 321
1 Corinthians 14:40 82
1 Corinthians 15 321
1 Corinthians 15:3-8 92

2 Corinthians 1:3 313
2 Corinthians 2 282
2 Corinthians 2:11 250
2 Corinthians 3:1-6 312
2 Corinthians 3:10 87
2 Corinthians 4:1-6 312
2 Corinthians 4:5 173
2 Corinthians 4:17 54
2 Corinthians 5:20 293
2 Corinthians 5:21 286
2 Corinthians 6:11-13 271
2 Corinthians 6:14-18 199-200
2 Corinthians 6:16 176, 200
2 Corinthians 7:10 200
2 Corinthians 11:3 104, 197
2 Corinthians 12 285
2 Corinthians 12:2 104
2 Corinthians 12:9 75, 209
2 Corinthians 12:14-15 283
2 Corinthians 13:3 312
Galatians 1:6-12, 16 312
Galatians 1:8-9 197
Galatians 1:10 277
Galatians 1:18-2:10 312
Galatians 2:20 87, 189
Galatians 3:13 286
Galatians 3:27 54, 282
Galatians 3:28 128
Galatians 3:28-29 105
Galatians 4:19 153
Galatians 5:13-15 162
Galatians 5:22-23 290
Galatians 6:2 139, 140
Galatians 6:6 119
Galatians 6:17 282
Ephesians 1:10 311
Ephesians 2:5-6 311
Ephesians 2:14-19 105
Ephesians 2:19-22 177
Ephesians 2:20 312
Ephesians 3 312
Ephesians 3:5-13 312
Ephesians 3:20 258
Ephesians 4:1-7 301-302
Ephesians 4:2-3 305
Ephesians 4:11-16 177
Ephesians 4:13 131, 218, 305
Ephesians 4:15-16 305
Ephesians 4:26 234
Ephesians 5:2 91, 128
Ephesians 5:5 277
Ephesians 5:23-30, 32 158
Ephesians 5:26-27 306
Ephesians 6:10-18 108, 275, 344
Ephesians 6:11-13 140
Ephesians 6:12 250, 258
Ephesians 6:13 281, 346
Ephesians 6:14 344, 345
Ephesians 6:14, 16 348
Ephesians 6:14-18 281
Ephesians 6:15 346
Ephesians 6:16 346
Ephesians 6:17 348
Ephesians 6:17-18 345
Philippians 1:21-25 245
Philippians 2:1-5 302
Philippians 2:3 267, 302
Philippians 2:5 130
Philippians 2:5-11 161
Philippians 2:7 160
Philippians 2:8 286
Philippians 2:22 152
Philippians 3 312
Philippians 3:18-20 122
Philippians 3:20 311
Philippians 4:4-9 274
Philippians 4:8 63
Colossians 1:18 91
Colossians 1:20 311
Colossians 1:23-29 312
Colossians 1:24 298
Colossians 1:28 192
Colossians 2:19 178
Colossians 3:1-4 311
Colossians 3:9-11 105
Colossians 3:12-14 302
Colossians 4:6 189
1 Thessalonians 2:7-8 153
1 Thessalonians 2:10-12 152
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 161
1 Thessalonians 5:17 272
2 Thessalonians 2:15 94
2 Thessalonians 3:10 249
1 Timothy 1:15 118
1 Timothy 1:12-16 277
1 Timothy 2:1-4 238
1 Timothy 3:1-2 157
1 Timothy 3:1-7 171
1 Timothy 3:2-4 125
1 Timothy 3:2-9 329
1 Timothy 4:12-16 172
1 Timothy 5:17 81
1 Timothy 5:21 105
1 Timothy 5:22 315
1 Timothy 6:10 277
1 Timothy 6:12 79, 172
1 Timothy 6:20 94
2 Timothy 1:8-11 186
2 Timothy 1:13-14 80
2 Timothy 2:2-3 94
2 Timothy 2:15 187
2 Timothy 2:24-25 186
2 Timothy 2:25-26 136
2 Timothy 3:6 127
2 Timothy 3:10-12 268
2 Timothy 3:10-17 312
2 Timothy 4:2, 5 186
2 Timothy 4:3-4 192
Titus 1:7-9 329
Titus 1:7-11 172-173
Titus 2:1 94
Philemon 10 152
Hebrews 2:17-18 299
Hebrews 3:1 91
Hebrews 4:12 198
Hebrews 4:14-15 284
Hebrews 4:14-16 301
Hebrews 4:15 299
Hebrews 5:9-10 301
Hebrews 6:1-2 315
Hebrews 7:19 77
Hebrews 8:1-2 83
Hebrews 8:4 91
Hebrews 10:10-14 91
Hebrews 10:23-25 178
Hebrews 11:26 287
Hebrews 12:1-6 51
Hebrews 12:22-24 311

Hebrews 13:5 45, 251
Hebrews 13:7 11, 226
Hebrews 13:8 79, 95, 322
Hebrews 13:14 122
Hebrews 13:15 86
Hebrews 13:20 126, 141
James 1:12 348
James 1:13 258
James 1:27 226
James 2:5, 8, 9, 13, 14-19, 24, 26 226-227
James 2:26 198, 280
James 3:1-6 209
James 3:1-13, 17-18 186-187
James 4:1-10 316
James 4:8 77
1 Peter 1:13-19 306
1 Peter 1:15 306
1 Peter 1:16 308
1 Peter 2:5 176
1 Peter 2:9 121, 302
1 Peter 2:9-10 35
1 Peter 2:22 287
1 Peter 2:25 91, 126
1 Peter 3:15 185
1 Peter 4:8 50
1 Peter 4:8-10 213
1 Peter 5:1-4 81
1 Peter 5:4 91, 126
2 Peter 1:16-18 92, 316
2 Peter 3:9 277
1 John 2:3-6 227
1 John 3:10-18 118
1 John 4:7-11, 17-19 164
1 John 4:7-21 7, 247
1 John 4:10 228
1 John 4:17-19 227
1 John 4:18 210
1 John 4:20-21 82
1 John 5:6-8 164-165
Apocalypse (Revelation) 1:11 272
Apocalypse 1:19-20 311
Apocalypse 2:10 348
Apocalypse 3:20 227
Apocalypse 4 311
Apocalypse 4:8 152
Apocalypse 6:9-11 311
Apocalypse 7:9-17 311
Apocalypse 7:17 128
Apocalypse 14 &15 311
Apocalypse 19:1-18 311

Index of patristic references, other references, and some terms

Item *Page*

Abercius, Saint 138
Aleksy II of Moscow, Patriarch 23, 57-60, 61, 181-182, 234
Alexander of Comana, Saint 10
Alexander of Svir, Saint 300
ambo(n) 295
Ambrose of Milan, Saint 116, 189, 238
Ambrose of Optina, Saint 173
Ammon, Saint (Abba) 362
Amphilochios of Patmos, Elder 111-112
anaphora 98, 99, *&c.*
Anastasios of Tirana, Archbishop 243
anointing, *euchelaion* (unction) 105, 133, 171, 216, 221, 247
Anthony the Great, Saint (Abba) 114, 184, 248-250, 257, 261, 264, 267, 362, 363
Anthony (Bloom), Metropolitan 139-140, 217-218, 240, 252-256, 359
antidoron 228
antimension 90
Apostolic Canon 6 239
Apostolic Canon 8 45-46
Apostolic Canon 9 46, 179
Apostolic Canon 34 236
Apostolic Canon 39 82, 90
Apostolic Canon 41 144
Apostolic Canon 58 144
Apostolic Canon 59 144, 239
Apostolic Canon 81 239
Apostolic Canon 83 239
apostolic succession 93, 313, 337
Arian heresy 189, 324, 325, 337
Aristides the Philosopher, Saint 356-358
Arsenie, Archimandrite 219
Arseny, Archbishop 24-27, 29, 30, 181, 185
Athanasius the Great, Saint 110, 189, 249-250, 267, 317, 336, 340-341, 354, 363
autocephalous Church 32, 34, 55, 149, 153, 237, 243, 302
autocephaly 32, 34, 44
autonomous Church 53, 55
(im)balance 32, 33, 73, 107, 108, 110-115, 123, 134, 157, 183, 257, 260, 282, 361
Barnabas of Hvosno, Saint 322
Barsanouphius of Gaza, Saint 257-258, 277
Bartholomew I of Constantinople, Patriarch 61, 69, 181, 240, 241, 310, 343
Basil the Great, Saint iii, 19, 99, 120, 129, 144-145, 179, 189, 247, 253, 317, 324, 325-326, 331-332, 360, 362
belt (*zōnē*) 281, 344-345
bema 295
Bessarion of Larissa, Saint 146
bishop 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 20, 50, 55, 58, 59, 61, 62, 66, 67, 70, 72-80, 81-84, 88, 89, 90, *&c.*
The Bishop's Service Book 83, 313, 350
Cæsarius of Arles, Saint 100, 232, 337
The Canadian Field 25
Canadian Orthodox Messenger 11, 14, 16, 25, 40, 42, 48, 49, 192
Canon 5 of Saint Gregory of Nyssa 359
Canon 20 of Saint John the Faster 360
Canon 23 of the Council of Ancyra 360
Canon 57 of Saint Basil the Great 360
Clement of Rome, Saint 9, 199
Cleopa of Sihastria, Elder 188
Communion (Holy Mysteries) 7, 37, 38, 42, 45, 46, 55, 77-78, 91, 100, 117, 137, 179, 181, 202, 219, 225, 228, 247, 266, 290, 317, 332, 334, 347, *&c.*
Council of Ancyra : Canon 23 360
Council of Antioch : Canon 2 46
Council of Carthage : Canon 16 239
"1st-2nd" Council Constantinople, Canon 11 239
creed (symbol of faith) 336-342
cuffs 88, 345
Cyprian of Carthage, Saint iii, 189, 305
Cyril of Jerusalem, Saint 189, 308
Cyril and Methodius, Saints 95
David IV Bagration, Saint 182
The Dawn 67
deacon 45, 82, 83, 88, 100, 142, 144, 169, 170, 230, 232, 239, 248, 274, 281, 296, 305, 312, 313, 316, 332, 343, *&c.*
diaconate : see deacon
The Didachē 33, 186, 290, 292, 303
Diocesan Herald (*Vestnik*) 42, 43
Dionysius of Zakynthos, Saint 138, 214, 222-223
diptychs 94
Divine Liturgy 7, 38, 55, 83, 92, 95, 96, 98, 99, 152, 178, 180, 187, 198, 207, 228, 256, 273, 278, 283, 290, *&c.*
Dmitri of Dallas, Archbishop 1, 2, 66-68, 181, 361
Dmitri of Rostov, Saint 328
Dorotheus of Gaza, Saint 203-204, 234
eagle-rug 92, 351
1st Ecumenical Council 336
1st Ecumenical Council : Canon 16 360
2nd Ecumenical Council 336
4th Ecumenical Council 244
4th Ecumenical Council : Canon 3 239
4th Ecumenical Council : Canon 7 239
7th Ecumenical Council 6
7th Ecumenical Council : Canon 3 239
Egeria 278
Elijah (Elias), Prophet 131, 169, 269, 294
Eliot, T S 137
ephod 87, 344
Ephrem of Syria, Saint 211, 266
epigonation (*palitsa*) 88, 345
Epiphanius of Salamis, Saint 13, 142
episcopate, episcopacy : see bishop
epitimion 360
epitrakhil 88,174, 344
Gabriel II of Serbia, Saint 243
The Great Euchologion (The Book of Needs) 252
The Great Gerontikon (The Book of Elders) 256
Gregory of Nyssa, Saint 189, 359, 362
Gregory the Theologian, Saint iii, 77, 115, 127, 144, 145, 189-190, 317
Gregory the Wonder-worker, Saint 10
Herman of Alaska, Saint 4, 14, 15, 23, 59, 252, 315, 324
Hierotheos (Vlachos) of Nafpaktos, Metropolitan 204, 299, 362
high-priesthood : see bishop

Hippolytus of Rome, Saint 170, 313
Hopko, Protopresbyter Thomas 3, 262, 334-335, 362
Ignatius of Antioch, Saint 2, 7, 10, 21, 72, 82, 89, 90, 98, 106, 108, 121, 127, 128, 136, 137, 142, 144, 166, 175-176, 179, 187, 189, 199, 213, 235, 244, 252, 281, 282, 291, 297, 298, 303, 304, 305, 308, 316, 343-344, 360
Ignatius (Brianchaninov), Saint 272, 273, 274, 275, 276
Ilya II of Mtskheta-Tbilisi, Patriarch 61-63
Innocent of Alaska and Moscow, Saint 14-19, 23, 95, 146, 181, 192
Ioasaph, Archbishop 24, 26, 28-29
Ioasaph, Bishop 11, 48-51
Irenæus of Lyon, Saint 22, 93, 189
Isaac the Syrian, Saint 188, 200-201
Jacob's Well 157
Jakob Netsvetov, Saint 15
Jerome, Saint 125
John Cassian, Saint 266
John Chrysostom, Saint iii, 28, 33, 41, 54, 55, 72, 74, 75, 76, 80, 84, 87, 92, 104, 106-107, 118, 124, 126, 136, 137, 139, 141, 154, 170, 173, 174, 176, 185, 189, 190-191, 192, 204, 206, 208, 212, 214, 228, 238, 242, 259, 287, 290, 293, 298, 305, 306, 311, 313-314, 319, 320, 329-330, 354, 362
John of Damascus, Saint 19, 276, 348
John the Dwarf, Saint (Abba) 263
John IV the Faster, Patriarch, Saint 360
John the Forerunner (Baptist), Saint 363
John (Garklavs), Archbishop , 362
John of Kronstadt, Saint 45, 134, 184, 253
John V the Merciful, Saint 207, 284
John of Pskov, Elder 209
John of San Francisco, Saint 36-39, 135, 181
John of Sinai, Saint 139, 258, 274
John of Valamo, Elder 188
Joseph Vatopedi, Elder 263
Julian of Norwich 251
Justin the Philosopher, Martyr 356
Justin, Archimandrite 102
Kallistos (Ware), Metropolitan 112, 131, 310
Karavasilis, Demetri 191
lay-person 31, 32, 34-35, 55, 70, 82-83, 149, 231, 326, *&c.*
Lazor, Archpriest Paul 200, 320
Leo, Archbishop 55
Leonty of New York, Metropolitan 30-35, 146
Lewis, C S 184, 214, 234, 292
Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts 202, 210, 268
Lot of Arsinoë, Saint (Abba) 138, 287
Macrina, Saint 362
Maimonides, Moses 244
Marie of Paris, Saint 269
Mark of Ephesus, Saint 110
Mary of Egypt, Saint 201
Mastridia of Jerusalem, Saint 270
Maximus the Confessor, Saint 110, 254-255
Metropolia 26, 29, 31, 43, 44
Metropolitan Council 31
Michael, Matushka Olga 123, 156-157
mitre 87, 88, 89, 120, 121, 129, 348, 349
Moscow *Sobor* 30, 31, 32
Moses the Black, Saint (Abba) 205
Motovilov, Nikolai 248
Nathaniel of Detroit, Archbishop 69
Nektarios of Ægina, Saint 94, 111
Nestor the Chronicler, Saint 96
Nicephoros of Sebaze, Saint 270
Nicholas of Japan, Saint 95, 186
Nicholas of Myra, Saint 37, 145, 189, 318, 327-328
Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain, Saint 154
Nikolai (Velimirovič), Saint 135, 151, 207, 223, 226, 241, 248, 266, 311, 312
Nilus of Sinai, Saint 223
Olympia the Deaconess, Saint 362
omophor 44, 98, 128, 136, 139, 140, 346-347, *&c.*
orar 88, 344
ordination, episcopal 15, 21, 83, 88, 92, 138, 140, 172, 229, 308, 312-317, 322, 337, 342, 350
orphanage in Bancheni 230-231
Paavali (Paul) of Finland, Archbishop 34-35, 45, 52-56, 58, 99, 133, 167
Pachomius the Cœnobiarch, Saint 142
Paisios of Mount Athos, Elder 111, 264, 265
Paisius (Bishoi), Saint 269
panagia (*engolpion*) 88, 282, 298, 347, 348
parable 98
paraman 282
Parthenios III of Constantinople, Saint 243
pastoral staff 350, 351
pater familias 147, 153
Paul the Simple, Saint (Abba) 256
Paulinus of Nola, Saint 135
phelon 88, 346
Philanthrōpos 79
Philip II of Moscow, Saint 238
Photini, Saint 201, 214
pilgrimage 22, 59, 261, 278-279
Pimen of Suçeava, Archbishop 147-148
Pre-communion Prayers 201-202
presbyter(ate) 7, 45, 72, 76, 81-83, 87- 91, 93, 98, 100, 106, 121, 122, 127, 142, 144, 149, 157, 171, 172, 183, 239, 281, 295, 305, 312, 313, *&c.*
priest(hood) : see presbyterate
Proskomedia 148, 180-181
prosphora 248
Quinisext Council 157
Raphael of Brooklyn, Saint 20, 21, 24
relics 8, 18, 19, 22, 59, 248, 278, 307, 327, 343
Roum-Orthodox 88
The Rudder (the Pedalion) 154, 239, 359, 360
Russian-American Orthodox Messenger 30
Sabbas, Saint 145
sakkos 88, 89, 121, 346
Schmemann, Protopresbyter Alexander 11, 42, 45, 53, 55, 112, 154, 180
Serapheim of Phanarion, Saint 243
Seraphim of Sarov, Saint 107, 127, 131, 154, 187, 247, 248, 253, 352, 353
Sergei of Vanves, Elder 197, 224, 246, 265
Sergius of Radonezh, Saint 300
Shenouda III, Pope 70, 244, 263
Silouan the Athonite, Saint 154 193, 203, 215, 217, 219, 220, 222, 246, 252-253
Sisoës, Saint (Abba) 201, 204
Skouteris, Professor Konstantine 91
sobor 18, 30, *&c.*
solea 295
Sophrony, Archimandrite 154, 155, 162-163, 193, 197, 215, 217, 219, 220, 222, 246, 300, 333, 361-362

Spyridon of Tremythus, Saint 188, 189
Staniloae, Priest Dumitru 193, 215, 311
Stephen, Proto-Martyr 217
Stephen of Perm, Saint 146
stikhar 88, 120, 344, 345, 346
Stremskoi, Archpriest Nikolai (& family) 155
Sylvester of Montréal, Archbishop 25, 40-47, 48, 49, 62, 70
symbol 6, 7, 87, *&c.*
Symeon Metaphrastes, Saint 202
Symeon the New Theologian, Saint 202
The Synaxarion 10, 18, 39, *&c.*
Syndesmos 43, 59
synod (Holy Synod of Bishops) 21, 31, 44, *&c.*
Tarasius, Saint 145
Tertullian 22
Theodore the Stoudite, Saint 146
Theodosius the Great, Saint 145
Theodosius, Metropolitan 44, 46, 69, 70
Theophan the Recluse, Saint 263
Theophylact, Saint 145-146
Theotokos (Mother of God) 155, 203, 244, 252, 256, 282, 284, 298-299, 347, 352, *&c.*
Tikhon of Amathus, Saint 13
Tikhon of all Rus', Saint 20-23, 24, 29, 30-31, 58, 95, 127, 158-159, 181, 240, 242, 309-310
Tikhon of Zadonsk, Saint 248
Vasili of Warsaw, Metropolitan 64-65
Vasily (Philipoff), Archimandrite 126
Verhovskoy, Sergei 32, 103, 190, 311, 312, 361
Vincent of Lérins, Saint 309
Vladimir of Kyiv, Saint 96
Vladyka 16, *&c.*
Wee-Chong Tan 163
Yannaras, Professor Christos 200, 353
Zacharias (Zacharou), Archimandrite 7, 217