



Introducing this newsletter

I write this just after coming back from our annual conference at St Alban's, where there were many chances to hear again the humorous, deep, pure words of Metropolitan Anthony, both live on DVD, and quoted by speakers as vital guidance in their own history. So he was present with us again, and we were reminded afresh of two great precepts he always stood for. The first was to serve God and not man – not to be shaped by the social and political pressures of any one country, but to obey the Son and the Spirit who are at all times and in all places. And the second precept was, in whatever place we live, to serve people from all backgrounds equally.

This was something his generation rediscovered. The Orthodox faith came to this country in the hearts of people who had suffered every kind of human loss in the breakdown of Europe after the First World War. Because of the general breakdown, and the differing linguistic and cultural needs of those who suffered, an uncanonical situation arose in Western Europe in which a number of Orthodox Bishops sought to minister mainly to their own nationals, though claiming jurisdiction over the same territory. This problem was perhaps difficult to avoid at first, but Metropolitan Anthony and the best of his generation saw beyond it, and set themselves to create the conditions for resolving it.

The first step was to build a local Orthodox church open to all, gathered in council around a local Bishop, with statutes and skills and practices designed to engage the energies of people of many backgrounds in agreed decisions and fruitful service. Motherlands remained important, but the centre of gravity shifted to a living present here and now. By the 1990s, Metropolitan Anthony and several of his contemporaries had completed this step.

The second step became possible when he was asked to play a part in reconstituting the unity of the Orthodox churches in Western Europe, though he did not live to do this. Nevertheless this step now beckons us, and is already on its way. Local Orthodox churches, wherever they have emerged, are beginning to move towards one another in co-operation, creating possibilities from which an overarching unity can begin to emerge. How this will happen is still to be worked out, but we can suggest, following the 34th Apostolic Canon, that the true order of the church will begin to be expressed when all the Orthodox Bishops who live in this or other countries of Western Europe come together in a council chaired by the one who is the first among equals. This has happened in France. Let us pray for it to happen here, and everywhere.

Fr Alexander

Community News and Notices

Our Keswick community now has a shared website with the Dalton community of the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain – see www.orthodoxcumbria.org. Such examples of active collaboration between our two Archdioceses, both under the Ecumenical Patriarch, are increasing rapidly, and more can be expected. The singers at Keswick are learning quickly, and have just achieved their first Holy Week.

Here in Dunblane, the community has considered over several meetings how to make its practice truly conciliar. Metropolitan Anthony originally formulated our statutes (still valid) which make provision for two types of community - Parishes, and the less formal Eucharistic Communities. The general feeling was that the simpler and more direct participation which is possible in a Eucharistic Community, where everyone can join in discussion and decisions, is preferable for as long as numbers permit this kind of structure.

Plans formulated by Alban Whitaker to set up a community library have recently been approved, and a number of books have been given to us from the shelves of Sr Theodora through the kindness of her family. These will join books donated earlier by David Walters, and a catalogue will be drawn up by Alban when he has recovered from his operation.

We have recently strengthened our standing committee, which is our executive body, by electing Sr Elizabeth and Ninian Williams to join the four remaining members (Alban Whitaker, Mary Martin, Matushka Julie and Fr Alexander).

Dunblane Baptisms

Daniel, infant son of Fredric and Yuliya Phillips, was baptised on 26th July 2008. He was brought by his mother to his first communion on Sunday 3rd August, since his godmother Nadezhda Soboleva flew back on the day after his baptism.

Elizabeth, infant daughter of David Hossack and Katherine Eremin, was baptised on 2nd August 2008 in the presence of their numerous family. She was brought to her first communion on Sunday 3rd, by her mother and her godfather Colin McIntosh, accompanied by the prayers of her godmother Elena Andreeva in the USA.

Nathan, young son of John and Svetlana Higgins, was baptised on 3rd April 2009 in the presence of two generations of his family. He was brought to his first communion at the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on the same evening by his godfather Alban Whitaker and his godmother Natalia McVity.

Mary, infant daughter of Stuart and Yana Jones, was baptised on 11th April 2009. She was brought to her first communion by her godmother Ekaterina Kennedy-Stewart and her godfather Alexander Volunec on Palm Sunday, 12th April.

*Keep them ever warriors invincible in every attack of those who assail them and us;
and make us all victors even to the end through thy crown incorruptible.*

Marriage

Lorna **Margaret** Howard and Stephen William Swanton were crowned to each other in the Orthodox rite of marriage in St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh on Friday 1st August 2008, in the midst of many family members and friends.

*Bless now with thy spiritual blessing this common cup,
which thou dost give to those who are united for a community of marriage.*

The Vine newsletter is available at our website www.orthodoxchurchdunblane.org where you can also view past issues. If you would like to receive an email with information about each new issue please contact the editor (see below for address). If you can read online it helps to keep our costs down.

Calling all Pilgrims & Photographers! Would you be willing to write about your visits to other Orthodox churches, communities or monasteries? Do you have any photographs of our community, or other communities in Britain or abroad for publication? Do let us know. Email newsletter@orthodoxchurchdunblane.org.uk