



Prophet Elias News

**News in the time of self – isolation for the Orthodox Church
of the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon
18th October 2020**



The Freely Developing Truth of Christ

Fr Peter shared this Facebook posting in the summer. Introducing it, he said ‘These prophetic words of Fr Alexander, a priest in Moscow martyred while on his way to celebrate the Liturgy on 9 September 1990, were reproduced recently on Facebook. Note the distinction between his understanding of the faithful “remnant” – an outward-looking and therefore vulnerable body – and that of defensive “traditionalists”, who like the faithless servant in the Parable of the Talents try to preserve themselves and their Faith by “burying” themselves in citadels of safety.’

ALEXANDER MEN’ ON THE PARADOX OF CHRISTIANITY

The Apostle Paul was the first who was able, in human words, to convey to us the secret of the vision of Christ. He wrote prior to the Gospels. This is the man who said: “It is not I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” Paul recognized the mystery of Christ and managed to tell people about it. Millions of people accepted this mystery after that. Paul didn’t talk about the work of Christ, nor about the institution that He left, but spoke of an encounter—a personal meeting of a man with his Saviour. As for his revolutionary spirit and freedom, we can say that of all the apostles Paul surely surpasses them as an incomparable giant: he managed to see a sharp line between traditions, human inventions, customs, ceremonies, laws, even those once given by God—and the freely developing truth of Christ. “You, brothers are called to freedom,” he said. “Do not become slaves. You are bought with a high price.”

Paul is called the Apostle of the Gentiles, because he was one of the first to preach to the Hellenic world. But in the same breath we can call him the unique apostle of freedom. I am sure that we have not yet matured to the full understanding of Paul, that most of us Christians are legalists, standing with one foot still rooted in paganism. The Apostle Paul is a Christian teacher of what is coming. Therefore, we can say that Paul was the most adequate and complete exponent of the divine-human truth of Christianity.

Christ did not promise us triumphs. On the contrary, He spoke of the great difficulties that the Church will encounter on the historical path. But as a morally directing force, Christianity holds a leading place in the world. However, we must not identify empirical Christianity, the great body of Christians, with true Christianity. The ancient biblical prophets created a very capacious and multifaceted idea—“sariyd”, the remnant. The core remains. Those who hold fast will be the successors and bearers of the spirit of God. The same thing is happening in the Church. Not a triumphal march, but rather its indestructibility. “The light shines in the darkness,” is said in the Gospel of John. Notice, not the light that scatters the darkness, strikes at it, but the light that shines in the darkness surrounding it. The indestructibility of truth, its paradoxical weakness.

This is a great temptation for Christians. Many would like to see a triumphantly victorious Christianity. Many long for those times of the crusades and cathedrals crowded with worshippers. But that was most often a false Christianity; it was its perversion.

This Week We Celebrate

On Sunday 18th : **The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke**

We wish **Luke D** and **Luke K** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Monday 19th : **Saint John of Kronstadt** (1908)

Also on 19th : the translation in 1238 of the relics of **Saint John of Rila**

Saint John, Abbot of Rila, patron Saint of Bulgaria, went to his repose on 18th August 946, but in Bulgaria his memory is more generally celebrated on 19th October, the date of the translation of his relics from Sofia to Trnovo in 1238.

Again we wish all our Bulgarian friends a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Friday 23rd : **The Holy Apostle James, the Brother of the Lord**

We wish **James T** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke

Luke was born in Antioch. In his youth, he excelled in his studies of Greek philosophy, medicine and art. During the ministry of the Lord Jesus on earth, Luke came to Jerusalem, where he saw the Saviour face to face, heard His saving teaching and was witness to His miraculous works. Coming to belief in the Lord, St. Luke was numbered among the Seventy Apostles, and was sent out to preach. With Cleopas, he saw the resurrected Lord on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24). After the descent of the Holy Spirit, Luke returned to Antioch and there became a fellow worker of the Apostle Paul and travelled to Rome with him, converting Jews and pagans to the Christian Faith. 'Luke, the beloved physician, ... greets you', writes the Apostle Paul to the Colossians. (Colossians 4:14). At the request of Christians, he wrote his Gospel in about the year 60. Following the martyrdom of the great Apostle Paul, St. Luke preached the Gospel throughout Italy, Dalmatia, Macedonia and other regions. He painted icons of the Most-holy Theotokos - not just one, but three - and icons of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. Hence, St. Luke is considered to be the founder of Christian iconography. In old age, he visited Libya and Upper Egypt. From Egypt he returned to Greece, where he continued to preach and convert many with great zeal despite his old age. In addition to his Gospel, St. Luke wrote the Acts and dedicated both works to Theophilus, the governor of Achaia. Luke was eighty-four years old when the wicked idolaters tortured him for the sake of Christ and hanged him from an olive tree in the town of Thebes, in Boethia. The miracle-working relics of this wonderful saint were transported to Constantinople in the reign of Emperor Constantius, the son of Constantine.



St Nikolai Velimirovich – *The Prologue from Ohrid: Volume 2*

Strange Byways of the Internet

I found one account of the life of Saint Luke (Sveti Luka) on the website www.macedoniancuisine.com which gives recipes for traditional Macedonian dishes. The site claims that 'Macedonian food is one of the most delicious foods in the world' – not unreasonably, in my experience.

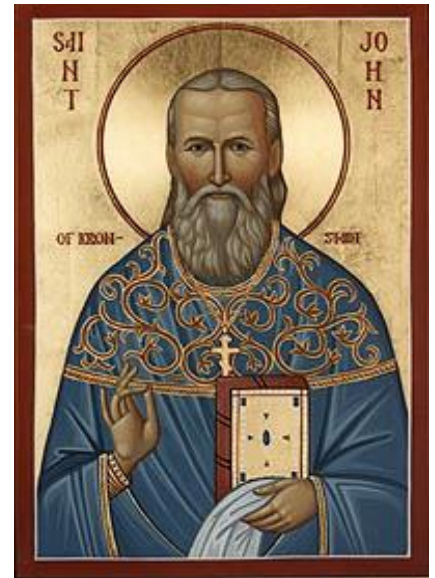
Ed.

Saint John of Kronstadt on Prayer

"When you are praying alone, and your spirit is dejected, and you are wearied and oppressed by your loneliness, remember then, as always, that God the Trinity looks upon you with eyes brighter than the sun; also all the angels, your own Guardian Angel, and all the Saints of God. Truly they do; for they are all one in God, and where God is, there are they also. Where the sun is, thither also are directed all its rays. Try to understand what this means."

"Do not fear the conflict, and do not flee from it; where there is no struggle, there is no virtue. Our faith, trust, and love are proved and revealed in adversities, that is, in difficult and grievous outward and inward circumstances, during sickness, sorrow, and privations."

"Prayer for others is very beneficial to the man himself who prays; it purifies the heart, strengthens faith and hope in God, and arouses love for God and our neighbour."



Saint John of Rila (Sv. Ivan Rilski)



The saint was born around 876 in the village of Skrino near today's town of Dupnitsa. As a youth he was a shepherd. He entered the monastery "St. Demetrius" in Vlahina, where he received training and took the monastic vows. He did not stay long in the monastery but devoted himself to living in complete solitude, prayer, fasting and privation. He travelled widely around the Bulgarian territories, before he settled in the Rila Mountains, where he remained until the end of his life, and founded the Rila monastery.

Ivan Rilski died on 18 August 946 years, and was buried in the narthex of the church of the monastery, in a stone tomb which is still preserved. Soon after his death, his remains were moved to Serdica (now Sofia) and it was probably then that he was canonized. In 1183, during another Hungarian-Byzantine war, the Hungarian King Bela III took Serdica and carried the relics of St. John to his capital Esztergom. In 1187 the relics were returned to Serdica, and in 1238 taken to the then capital of Veliko Tarnovo. In 1469 the saint's relics were returned to the renovated Rila Monastery.

For more than 20 years, on the initiative of the Bulgarian Medical Association, 19 October has marked the Day of the Bulgarian Doctor, as St. Ivan Rilski was declared patron saint of physicians.

Deacon Peter and the Bicycles – A Precious Memory

At one point in the memorable day we spent at Saint Cyprian's during our brief visit to Uganda in 2012, Peter was approached by Paul, the catechist from one of Fr Daniel's sub-parishes, with a request. Could we provide their community with a bicycle? (In Uganda bicycles are used as pack animals as much as for riding – we saw them everywhere being pushed along under lengths of timber, roofing sheets, bales of fodder – anything too awkward or too heavy to carry.) During the drive back to Kampala he asked me very excitedly if I thought we might be able to help. Paul's request had reminded him that when he was a young man two priests from Uganda had visited Ennismore Gardens, and that after the Liturgy Metropolitan Anthony had stern words for the congregation. 'Our friends in Uganda need bicycles. If you men give up smoking for a month, and you women buy no makeup for a month, we will be able to use the money you save to buy bicycles.' Peter had left London shortly afterwards for Oxford, and he couldn't remember whether the plan had ever become a reality. Might we be able to make it happen now, forty years later?

We agreed that ideally we would need three bicycles – one each for Saint Cyprian's and the two sub-parishes – and at breakfast in our guest house next morning asked if anyone could locate bicycles for sale. Yes, somebody had a contact who could get them for us: they would cost 600,000 Ugandan shillings (£150). Each? No, for the three. I went up the road to the bank to get the cash, and by the time I got back a young man had turned up on a motorbike; he took the money and drove off, saying he would be about an hour. Three hours later (the last hour just a little nervous on our part) he reappeared, with three bicycles strapped to the back of his motorbike. And he brought a receipt, and the change, which amounted to about £3.50. The bicycles were massive – built in India like T-34 Soviet tanks for rugged rural road conditions. Even so, we were told by one of our fellow guests, 'they'll reinforce them when they get them back to the village'.

Peter was so excited. He watched hungrily the complex process of their being unstrapped and disentangled, and then he was determined to ride one around the yard. That attempt I will draw a veil over – I don't know when he last rode any sort of bicycle, let alone a monster like these – other than to report that he suffered no serious injury. But no matter; he felt that he had fulfilled his beloved Metropolitan Anthony's 40-year-old undertaking. It only remained for us to arrange for the machines to be delivered to Fr Daniel the next day – on a lorry, this time. When we landed back at Heathrow two days later I received this text:

Bro martin good news bicycles well received may god bless fr daniel



Martin Olsson

The Image of Divine Liberty

Man is free, for he is in the image of divine liberty; that is why he has the power to choose.

Paul Evdikimov: *L'Orthodoxie* (Paris 1959)

All things in human life should be born of freedom and pass through freedom and be rejected whenever they betray freedom. The true meaning and origin of the fallen condition of man is seen in the primordial rejection of freedom.

Nikolai Berdyaev: *Dream and Reality*