

St. Dwynwen of Anglesey (d. 5th/6th c.), Welsh virgin and healer
 St. Eanswyth of Folkestone (d. c. 640), abbess, one of the earliest Anglo-Saxon nuns
 St. Edith of Wilton (d. 984), royal virgin and nun Whyte, anchoress of Dorset (details obscure but remembered in local Orthodox lists)

Later Hierarchs and Fathers

St. Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury (602–690)
 St. Erkenwald, Bishop of London, the Light of London (d. 693)
 St. Benedict Biscop of Wearmouth (d. 690), abbot and founder
 St. Wilfrid of York (d. 709), missionary bishop
 St. Aldhelm of Sherborne (d. 709), poet and bishop
 St. Guthlac of Crowland (d. 714), hermit
 St. Bede the Venerable (d. 735), theologian and historian
 St. Clement of Ochrid (sometimes linked in later Orthodox missions)
 St. Boniface, Apostle to the Germanic peoples (d. 754), English-born missionary
 St. Swithun of Winchester, the Wonderworker (d. 862)
 St. Caedmon of Whitby (d. c. 680), the first English Christian poet
 St. Ethelwold of Winchester (d. 984), leader of monastic revival
 St. Dunstan of Canterbury (d. 988), archbishop and reformer
 St. Oswald of Worcester & York (d. 992), monastic father and archbishop
 St. Alphege (Ælfheah) the Martyr, Archbishop of Canterbury (d. 1012)
 St. Justus, Archbishop of Canterbury (d. c. 627)
 St. Odo of Canterbury (d. 959), Greek-born archbishop
 St. John of Beverley, Bishop of York (d. 721)



The Apostle

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Martyrs to the Truth - who is Christ!



Sunday 22nd June witnessed a tragedy in Damascus of epic proportions. An Islamist fanatic walked into the Church of St Elias, Dweilaa opened fire and then detonated a suicide vest killing 25 worshippers and wounding over 50 more.

Christians have always known martyrdom for the truth from St Stephen the Protomartyr to the present day. When it happens of course there is distress, unbounded grief and a torrent of emotion. Love is not insensible to violence of any kind. However, martyrdom has never damaged the Church of God. On the contrary, the example of the martyrs only serves to strengthen faith, hope and love. How so?

Some of these martyrs in Damascus threw themselves on the man of hate seeking no doubt to

either prevent the blast, or failing that, to limit its impact. This was their sacrifice, their cross to save others. Their memory will truly be eternal. Let us be worthy of their sacrifice by not fearing to take up our own cross and follow Christ,

forgiving those who seek to harm us "for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church" (Tertullian)

- Fr Gregory

A Quirky Look at the Big Row of 1054



traditions were supplanted by Roman usage, the calculation of Easter being only one example of these changes. The British Isles now looked to Rome exclusively rather than all the patriarchates (as she had done before).

But hey! ... was this really a deal breaker? Hardly. Such harmonisation and standardisation can be detected in all the patriarchates at the time. The British Isles had always maintained a 'special relationship' with Rome - from whom she had originally received Christ and His Church. It was, therefore, natural to expect Rome to set the gold standard of Christian practice in the Isles.

It would be a mistake to think that at some particular date in the west all was lost for Christianity. There's always the difficulty of choosing which date the Big Row leading to the Great Divorce (the Great Schism) spoiled relations with Rome. Here are some possibilities considered by some; notice all the other contenders for the tarnished crown of 1054!

664 AD: The Synod of Whitby

- In this year, Celtic and Saxon

1054 AD: The classic choice!

- the mutual excommunication

Orthodox Saints of England

Holy Martyrs

St. Alban, First Martyr of Britain (d. c. 250)

Theodore of Crowland and Companions, martyred by the Northmen (9th c.)

Apostles to the English and Early Hierarchs

St. Gregory the Dialogist (Gregory the Great), Pope of Rome (c. 540–604), Apostle of the English

St. Augustine of Canterbury (d. 604), first Archbishop of Canterbury

St. Laurence of Canterbury (d. 619), second Archbishop of Canterbury

St. Mellitus (d. 624), third Archbishop of Canterbury

St. Paulinus of York (d. 644), missionary and first Bishop of York

St. Felix of Dunwich (d. c. 647), Apostle of East Anglia

St. Aidan of Lindisfarne (d. 651), missionary from Iona

St. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, Wonderworker of Britain (d. 687)

St. Chad of Lichfield, Enlightener of Mercia (d. 672)

St. Finan of Lindisfarne (d. 661), missionary bishop

St. Birinus, Apostle of Wessex (d. c. 650)

St. Cedd, Apostle of Essex (d. 664)

Holy Kings of the English

St. Ethelbert, King of Kent (d. 616)

St. Oswald of Heavenfield, King and Martyr (d. 642)

St. Edmund the Martyr, King of East Anglia (d. 869)

St. Edgar the Peaceful, King of all England (d. 975)

St. Edward the Martyr, Passion-Bearer (d. 978)

St. Edward the Confessor, King of England (d. 1066)

St. Oswy, King of Northumbria (d. 670)

Holy Mothers and Nuns

St. Audrey (Æthelthryth) of Ely (d. 679), virgin queen and abbess

St. Hilda of Whitby (d. 680), abbess and teacher

St. Mildred of Minster-in-Thanel (d. 700s), abbess

St. Werburgh of Chester (d. c. 700), royal abbess

St. Milburgh of Wenlock (d. 715), abbess and wonderworker

Recipe - Tarator

A refreshing recipe for the long hot summer days

Tarator is a Bulgarian cold soup made from Bulgarian yogurt, cucumbers, garlic, dill, sunflower oil, walnuts and a little water or ice. If you don't have Bulgarian yogurt use plain greek but add a little bit of vinegar (2 ts) or lemon juice to the soup. No problem if you skip the vinegar.

Ingredients

- * yogurt 500 g
- * 2 large cucumbers
- * 2 cloves garlic
- * ½ bunch dill
- * 50 g ground walnuts
- * 20 ml oil salt



Preparation:

- * Peel the cucumbers, cut them into very small cubes and place them in a suitable deep container.
- * Add the crushed garlic, finely chopped dill, salt and oil.
- * Beat the yogurt, pour it over the cucumbers and add water until you reach the desired thickness. Stir.
- * Serve the tarator chilled and sprinkled with walnuts.

As easy as it is to prepare the tarator, it has its subtleties.

Here are some of them:

- * DO NOT grate the cucumbers. Do not grate the cucumbers, even if this seems convenient and easy. Grated cucumber will ruin the overall recipe.

- * Beat the yogurt well. Before adding the yogurt to the cucumbers, beat it very well. There should be no lumps.

- * Taste the cucumbers first. After you have diced the cucumbers, put them in a bowl and season them with the oil, salt and garlic. Mix well. Only then add the yogurt. Try the opposite option to see the difference.

- * Be careful with the water. If the yogurt has a fat content of over 3.6%, the yogurt-to-water ratio should be 1:1. If the fat content is lower, add less water.

- * Don't skip the walnuts. Walnuts are the addition that gives the traditional Bulgarian tarator a finished look.

How to serve tarator

There are no rules for serving it. You can serve it in a bowl or in a glass. You can consume it as an appetizer, as well as with the main course.

of Rome and Constantinople. The issues? The usual suspects: the filioque innovation in the Creed, universal papal jurisdiction (still in its infancy), mandatory celibacy for priests, the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist. OK so these are tad more important than the issues debated and decided at Whitby (to say the least) but did the tragedy of 1054 rock the Christian boat here in the Isles? Hardly, not a ripple! In fact Rome remained in communion with other local churches for a long time - Antioch until 1100, Cyprus probably until 1191, Bulgaria until 1235, Georgia until - or a little before - 1240, Alexandria until between 1215 and 1276. You see it's all a bit vague and messy this Schism business!

1066 AD: The Battle of Hastings!

Those naughty Normans dealt a blow to us proud English by an act, not of war (OK a skirmish), but of ecclesiastical bravado. We English had always maintained a special affection for St Peter and St Paul so imagine our / their surprise when on Senlac Hill on that fateful day, William of Normandy unfurled the papal banner granted him by Pope Alexander II as a blessing for the invasion – psychological warfare at its finest. For the

exhausted English (worn out by another skirmish 'up north') it was a rout. You may imagine, therefore, why ecumenism was not exactly fostered by those Spanish galleons when they tried it on for an invasion five centuries later. God made the winds blow hard that day. There are still rumours of sunken treasure lost off the coast of Scotland as those ships went down.

Now, whereas it's true that William's pillage of Yorkshire and his enforcement of feudalism subdued Celtic and Saxon Christianity definitively, this did not at the time turn the English against Rome. As far as east and west were concerned though, this was just another story of warring feudal monarchies trying to catch the eye of the Pope. So, nothing to see here!

1431 to 1445 AD: The Council of Florence – Ferrara.

This is where our list must end. I wasn't sure whether to include it or not since it was an attempt to mend the breach rather than the alleged cause of any rift. Suffice to say that it was an utter failure and we must mark the date of 1445 as being the day the Schism became entrenched.

So what do we learn from this history? Well, when parties become estranged it never happens overnight and there are invariably witnesses to an enduring, albeit incomplete, unity after the event. This is not to minimise the seriousness of the Schism and the heresies that fuelled it both before and after but there are strong

flashes of light in the encroaching darkness. It is those flashes of light that give us hope that we can draw closer together in that Light which is Christ. And so, to our first example: the poetry of George Herbert. In future editions we shall explore other “flashes of light.”

- Fr Gregory

Flashes of Light – Orthodox Remnants in the West

George Herbert (1593–1633) was an English poet, orator, and Anglican priest, whose works have earned him acclaim as one of the finest devotional poets of the English Renaissance. In 1630, he was ordained and became rector of the small rural parish of Bemerton, near Salisbury. Known for his humility and deep sense of

pastoral care, Herbert dedicated his life to serving his parishioners and fostering their spiritual growth.

In this poem “Prayer” Herbert captures perfectly the sense of prayer in our Orthodox Tradition. I am not going to explain the references in the poem but rather invite you to explore these yourselves.

PRAYER by George Herbert

Prayer the Church's banquet, angel's age,
God's breath in man returning to his birth,
The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,
The Christian plummet sounding heaven and earth
Engine against the Almighty, sinner's tower,
Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear,
The six-days world transposing in an hour,
A kind of tune, which all things hear and fear;
Softness, and peace, and joy, and love, and bliss,
Exalted manna, gladness of the best,
Heaven in ordinary, man well dressed,
The Milky Way, the bird of Paradise,
Church-bells beyond the stars heard, the soul's blood,
The land of spices; something understood.



St Paisios

St. Paisios wasn't on my radar but he made himself known to me during my Lenten journey this year.

I'm always wary of what I perceive as bandwagons or popular movements and as a result things like Air Fryers and Game of Thrones have passed me by.

I'm also wary of the faithful being led astray by wolves who have broken into the sheep fold so I may be a bit of a Thomas too.

St Paisios is a very popular saint maybe too popular. That set alarm bells ringing and I avoided him.

Regular readers will be aware of the Lenten journey I was on. At one point during this I became aware that I was seeing St Paisios' name everywhere. His sayings were popping up on my social media feed and I was drawn to his no nonsense wisdom delivered in plain

language.

Then, in a miraculous turn of events a presvytera (priest's wife) who I haven't seen for 6 years and not had any contact in two years sent me a WhatsApp message out of



the blue, with a link to a tv series about the life of St Paisios.

I watched the whole series with tears streaming down my face.

There is so much information online about the saint

https://orthodoxwiki.org/Paisios_of_Mount_Athos

The link to the tv series doesn't seem to work anymore.

I implore you to read more about the saint if you haven't already.

Kontakion of Saint Paisios of the Holy Mountain

The most-famed ascetic of the Holy Mountain, and the newly-enlightened light of the Church, let us praise him with hymns with all our heart, for he leads the faithful towards a perfect life, filling them with rivers of gifts, therefore we cry out: Rejoice, O Father Paisios.

Venerable Father Paisios, pray to God for us!



Elder Paisios was glorified on January 13, 2015, by the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. He is commemorated each year on July 12.

- Chris Tsielepi

suffering they are identified with the Crucified Christ, and the power of the resurrection takes hold of them” (pp. 256, 258). “As 2 Peter 1:4 says: ‘He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world... and become partakers of the divine nature...’ (This is the process of deification—the action of becoming a sharer in the divine nature) (p. 263).

Chapter 4, “The Difficult Love” (pp.270-307), this final chapter, urges us that: “Spiritual progress has no other test in the end, nor any better expression, than our ability to love. It has to be an unselfish love founded on respect, a service, a disinterested affection that does not ask to be paid in return, a ‘sympathy,’ indeed an ‘empathy that takes us out of ourselves enabling us to ‘feel with’ the other person, and indeed to ‘feel in’ him or her. It gives us the ability to discover in the other person an inward nature as mysterious and deep as our own, but different and willed to be so by God” (Cf. Mathew 25:35-40) (p. 270). “In John 13:34 the Lord says ‘A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another’.... The Lord did not require ... unprecedented miracles of His

disciples... But what did He say to them? ‘By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another’” (John 13:35) (p. 272). “Ardent meditation on the cross, that is, on God’s unbounded love for us, banishes all our rancour, resentment and hatred. In the presence of the immensity of God’s forgiveness, the Gospel says how can we do other than forgive others? And how can we receive God’s forgiveness if we do not forgive one another? ‘Forgive us our trespasses to the extent that we forgive those who trespass against us,’ we pray in the Lord’s Prayer” (p. 276). This chapter expands our understanding of the attributes of love as set out by St Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (p. 277).

In the final paragraph of the main text of this book Olivier Clement writes: “The spirituality that I have tried to present in this book is a spirituality of resurrection. And resurrection begins here and now. It is life in its fulness, life able finally to absorb, reverse and pass beyond death.... (We can all chant together) the Troparion in the Paschal Liturgy: “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life” (p. 307).

- Fr. Emmanuel

Greets 'n Eats

Two aspects of the social dimension of the Church is the welcome and help we give, particular to newcomers, in our community both at the door and in other encounters - also the food we share with each other after Liturgy ... so conducive to warm conversation and fellowship. Let's deal with “Eats” first then “Greets”.

Eats ... We have many more people now attending church and we are still growing! This is delightful but it does pose its own challenges: “will we have enough food today?!” Well, yes, just about, usually; BUT we could receive more of your blessing in the food you bring to share in church. So, this is really an appeal to all of us to redouble our efforts to bring something (no matter how modest or small) for everyone to eat.

Then we have the issue of making sure that there are enough helpers at the food bar to share out the food and wash up and clear up at the end. Could you perhaps consider joining the rota to help the rest of us do this important work? I do hope so. Please see Helen if you could do this and spread the load. Women AND men should be helping out, so come on fellas! Don't hang back!

Greets ... A warm (but not overbearing) welcome at the door, a natural smile, all serve to make someone who may be rather nervous coming to an Orthodox church for the first time more at ease. Then there's the practical aspect of controlling human traffic ... making sure that everybody knows where everything is and trying to ensure that people move forward into the seating area.

In Summer time a number of us will be away of course and this is already posing problems in ensuring that the rota works properly. Please see Helen if you can join the rota ... as before, women AND men!

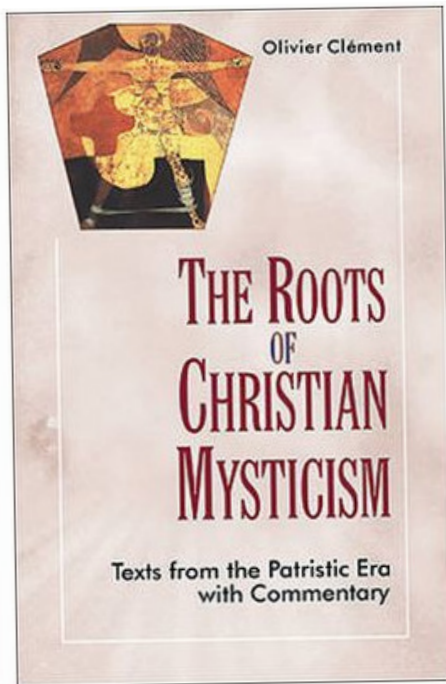
So whether it's in the “Eats” or the “Greets” department, I am sure you could help.

- Fr Gregory and Helen



Book Review: Roots of Christian Mysticism

By **Oliver Clement** - An Indepth Review



Oliver Clement's book, *The Roots of Christian Mysticism: Texts from the Patristic Era with Commentary*, has a daunting title. However, it is quite readable with an excellent comprehensive index that enables you to dip into hundreds of topics and to learn what our Church Fathers taught "to make audible the voice of Tradition" (p. 9). The book is divided into three parts: (1) Understanding the Mystery; (2) Initiation for Warfare; and (3) Approaches to Contemplation. I will

share an overview of the book and hope this may encourage some of you to dig deeper.

Chapter 1 of Part 1, "Quest, Encounter and Decision" (pp. 15-25) begins with the awareness that "unlike the animals, we know we are going to die. But our very anguish is a source of grace, for it betrays a longing for being and unity, a yearning to know the Being and the One" who is Christ (p. 15). We can each experience "metanoia, the great 'turning round' of the mind and heart, and of our whole grasp of reality" (p.16). You may not be familiar with the word metanoia which is based on a Greek word meaning "to change one's mind, to repent, to reorient one's way of life." This is a lifelong process in which "the quest" is our search for a relationship with God, "the encounter" is our discovery of His presence in our lives, and "the decision" is how we each respond to His presence.

Chapter 2, "God, Hidden and Universal" (pp.26-34) seeks to explain to the reader the paradoxical manner in which God is both hidden and universal. "As St Paul told the Athenians in Acts

having an inner experience of God)-Ecstasy" (pp. 230-269) begins: "In the battle of asceticism (that is, to obtain self-discipline) and the offering of creatures to God ... our will must cooperate with divine grace. But the ultimate knowledge, the love-knowledge of the Trinity, takes hold of us by grace alone. We prepare for it by a stripping away of our being until we become nothing but expectation.... Then the Holy Spirit comes as He came upon Holy Mary, and the person is created afresh in 'an ineffable (that is, unable to be expressed in words) in peace and silence.'" (p. 230). St Augustine wrote powerfully of his personal experience in his commentary on Psalm 41/42: "He who dwells in the highest heavens in an invisible abode possesses also a tabernacle on earth. His tabernacle is His Church still on its journey. It is there that He must be sought.... The tabernacle of God on earth is made up of faithful people.... But ...our body that is doomed to corruption weighs our soul down and our spirit is troubled by many thoughts. Sometimes, spurred on by the longing that scatters the vain images that surround us, we succeed in hearing these divine sounds. However, since we are weighed down by our heaviness... (and) we let ourselves be dragged

back to our usual way of living. And when we fall back to earth we have reason to groan: 'Why are you so heavy, O my soul; and why are you so disquieted within me? You have just tasted a secret sweetness, you have just been able ... to glimpse, very briefly, the Life that does not change. Why then are you so distressed?... You do not doubt your God.... Hope in God.' And the soul replies in secret: 'Why am I in distress, unless it is because I am not yet in that abode where this sweetness ... is forever enjoyed?'... Then the reply comes: 'Hope in God. While awaiting heaven find your God here below in hope'" (pp. 234-235). In the Epistle to the Ephesians, 15:1-3, St Ignatius of Antioch wrote: "It is better to keep silent and to be [with the Lord], rather than to speak but not to be [with Him]. One who truly possesses Christ's words can also hear His silence in order to be perfect.... Nothing is hidden from the Lord, but our very secrets are close to Him. Let us do everything in Him who dwells in us so that we may become His temples" (p. 249). "Martyrdom means witness. But to bear witness to Christ to the point of death is to become one who has risen again.... A martyr can be ... any man or woman.... But when they are crushed by the



(p. 185). In *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, St Macarius is asked: "How should one pray?" The old man replied, 'There is no need to lose oneself in words. It is enough to spread out the hands and to say, 'Lord, as Thou will and as Thou know best, have mercy.' If the battle is fierce, say, 'Help!' He knows what is suitable for you, and He will take pity on you' (p. 203). Origen wrote: "The one who prays unceasingly combines prayer with necessary duties.... Only in this way can we find it practicable to fulfil the commandment to pray always" (p.212). So, in this chapter our Church Fathers are offering us succinct advice on how to pray.

Chapter 2, "The Glory of God Hidden in His Creatures" (pp. 213-229) begins with the advice of St Isaac the Syrian: "Faith is the

doorway to the mysteries. What the eyes of the body are for physical objects, faith is for the hidden eyes of the soul. Just as we have two bodily eyes, so we have two spiritual eyes, and each has its own way of seeing. With one eye we see the glory of God hidden in creatures; with the other we contemplate the glory of God's holy nature when He deigns to give us access to the mysteries" (p.213). "It is up to Christians to show people that the cross, all the crosses of history, call upon us to advance from possession to sharing and offering, to discover the Giver through the gift. They invite us to respect nature and spiritualize it, and to share the blessings of the earth like brothers and sisters" (p. 228).

Chapter 3, "Enstasy (that is,

17:28: 'In Him we live and move and have our being.' But, enclosed as we are within ourselves and also enclosed 'in His hand,' we can know Him only if He freely establishes a relationship with us, a relationship in which distance (from Him) and nearness (to Him) are made a setting for a Word, of (His) speaking to (us)" (and we respond to His invitation to each of us to draw closer to Him) (p.26).

Chapter 3, "The God-Man" (pp. 35-57) begins with a beautiful prayer from St Basil of Caesarea, explaining to us the history of salvation: "Thou has visited humanity in many ways: in the loving-kindness of Thy heart, Thou has sent the prophets; Thou has worked mighty wonders through the saints who, from generation to generation, were close to Thee....; Thou has given us the help of the Law; Thou has charged angels to watch over us; and when the fullness of time came, Thou did speak to us by Thine own Son" (p. 35). This chapter concludes with an insightful statement about how "Christ ensures our freedom. In the desert He rejected the temptations of riches, magic and power that would have drawn people after Him like tamed animals. He did not come down from the cross. He rose from the dead in secret and is

recognized only by those who love Him. In the Holy Spirit, He walks at everyone's side, but He waits for the response of loving faith, that 'Yes' like Mary's," (which accepts His unique will for each of our lives) (p. 57).

Chapter 4, "God: Unity and Difference" (pp.58-75) explains how "the revelation of the Trinity has unfolded and continues to unfold in history (for each of us because) Pentecost is a beginning" (p.61). As St Gregory Nazianzen has preached: "The Old Testament has manifested the Father clearly, the Son only dimly. The New Testament has revealed the Son and implied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Today the Holy Spirit lives among us and makes Himself more clearly known" (p. 61). In the *Treatise on the Holy Spirit*, St Basil of Caesarea has set out how "the Father is the origin of all, the Son realizes and the Holy Spirit fulfils. Everything subsists by the will of the Father, comes into being through the action of the Son and reaches its perfection through the action of the Holy Spirit" (p. 64). So, this chapter and the next chapter expand our understanding of how the Holy Trinity acts in the world.

Chapter 5, "The Human Vocation" (pp.76-91) concludes Part 1 of this book and opens with the challenge

to each of us that: “The human vocation is to fulfil one’s humanity by becoming God through grace, that is to say, by living to the full. It is to make of human nature a glorious temple” (p. 76). St Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons sets out succinctly the role of the Trinity in fulfilling the human vocation: “The Father makes the decisions and gives the commands, the Son carries them out and adapts them, the Holy Spirit provides nourishment and growth, and humanity progresses little by little” (p. 76). “It is the whole human being, soul and body, that is in the image of God. The body, by receiving the life-giving breath of the Holy Spirit, is enabled to be the visible expression of the person...” (p. 82).

Part 2, “Initiation for Warfare,” begins with Chapter 1: “Ecclesia: A Place for Rebirth” (pp. 95-129) which introduces us to the conflict between the Church and the corruption of the world. We learn that “the Ecclesia, the Church, is above all, the power of the resurrection, the sacrament of the Risen One, Christ Himself, who imparts His resurrection to us.... From Christ’s pierced side indeed there flow the water and the blood (John 19:34), the water of baptism and the blood of the Eucharist” (p.95). St Ambrose of Milan strongly

encourages us to go frequently to communion. He wrote of how Christ “is the bread of life. Whoever eats (of Him) cannot die. Go to Him and take your fill, for He is the bread of life. Go to Him and drink, for He is the spring. Go to Him to be enlightened, for He is the light. Go to Him and become free, for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (p. 108). This chapter openly acknowledges that once we have become Orthodox Christians our warfare with the evil one—the devil—intensifies. However, the Lord strengthens us and draws us closer to Himself.

Chapter 2, “The Interior Combat” (pp. 130-148) explains to us that this conflict between the Church and the world takes place within each Christian. Christ is “the Word who acts, but we have to co-operate with Him, not so much by exertion of willpower as by loving attentiveness” (p. 130). A mother of the desert, St Syncletica advised us: “If you want to light a fire, you are troubled at first by smoke, and your eyes water. But in the end you achieve your aim. Now it is written ‘Our God is a consuming fire’ (Deuteronomy 4:24 and Hebrews 12:29). So, we must light the divine fire in us with tears and struggle” (p. 132).

Chapter 3, “Confidence and

Humility” (pp. 149-165) significantly revises our understanding of the relationship between confidence and humility. St John Climacus urged us in *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*: “If the passions lord it over us and we are weak, let us with great confidence offer to Christ our spiritual weakness and our impotence; let us confess them before Him. He will help us irrespective of what we deserve, on the sole condition that we descend continually to the bottom, into the abyss of humility” (p. 152). “It is especially profitable not to boast, not to put oneself forward, carefully to refrain from speaking about one’s own ascetic practices, to give the glory to God, and not to oneself.... In this way any narcissistic tendencies will be converted into self-forgetfulness and trustful self-abandonment” (p. 157). This is indeed a helpful understanding of true humility grounded in an awareness of our spiritual weakness and impotence, but trusting in Christ to guide us.

Chapter 4, “Passions Transfigured, Thought Transcended” (pp.166-177) concludes Part 2 of this book. In the 4th century, Evagrius of Pontus helpfully advised us: “Be the doorkeeper of your heart and do not let any thought come in without questioning it ... individually: ‘Are

you on our side or the side of our foes?’ And if the thought is one of ours, it will fill you with tranquility” (p.170). I hope that you will find this helpful advice: “to question” each thought “individually” and to accept only those thoughts that draw us closer to the Lord. With practice, we can learn which thoughts bring us peace and which thoughts should be rejected.

Part Three, “Approaches to Contemplation” begins with Chapter 1 “On Prayer (pp. 181-212). The way of thinking “we need to cultivate, even when care weighs heaviest, is that of remembering that God exists and loves us” (p. 181). St John Chrysostom preached that: “By prayer I mean not that which is only in the mouth, but that which springs up from the bottom of the heart. In fact, just as trees with deep roots are not shattered or uprooted by storms ... in the same way prayers that come from the bottom of the heart, having their roots there, rise to heaven with complete assurance and are not knocked off course by the assault of any thought. (p. 182). St John Cassian urged us to “withdraw our heart completely from the clamour of our thoughts and preoccupations, and in a kind of secret dialogue, as between intimate friends, lay bare our desires before the Lord”