

**FELLOWSHIP SUMMER CONFERENCE 2007**  
**The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, 6-8 July**

Following publication in the last issue of the talks given by Fr Thomas Hopko and Professor David Frost, we are very glad to be able now to publish the third main talk of the conference, which was given by Metropolitan John of Korçe. Special thanks are due to Natalie Quinn and Harry Georgiou who painstakingly transcribed the talk from a recording, and to Metropolitan John, who prepared the final text for *Forerunner*.

For follow-up to David Frost's talk, see Readers' Letters.

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**Mission and Evangelism:**  
**witnessing to our faith before the world**

*Metropolitan John of Korçe*

When I received the first letter from your beloved Bishop (and he is our beloved bishop too and a teacher of the whole Orthodox world and more), and when I read about the theme of the Conference 'Mission and Evangelism: witnessing to our faith before the world' the very same questions came to my mind that were in my thoughts when I returned to Albania about fifteen years ago in order to serve my Church. At that time what was before my eyes was the total destruction of the church. Think of it: a small country like Albania and a small community like the Orthodox Church in Albania, and 1,600 churches and monasteries were destroyed, many blown up with dynamite. After the severe persecution, few priests remained. They were very old, many over 80 and sick, and most of them were not able to carry out their ministry.

These questions came to my mind: first, *why* should we give this witness to the world? Second, *who* will do it? Third: *why* were we not doing it? And fourth, and the most important: *how* shall we do it? These questions have been and are raised by everyone who wants to work seriously in the vineyard of the Lord. For this reason, I would like to meditate together with you about these questions—to meditate, not to teach you, because you have a teacher better than me, and to share with

you some of the things that have happened in my life serving the church in Albania, and in the life of the Church in Albania.

### **Why should we give witness of our faith to the world?**

I believe first of all it is because this is a commandment, the last commandment of our Lord, '*Go and teach all the nations*'. Unfortunately, today, often in the Orthodox Church, or in most parts of the Orthodox Church, it's a forgotten commandment. We don't do it, and not only do we not do it, but we do not even talk about it. About other commandments maybe we talk a little bit more, but about this we talk very, very, little. And when we talk, often we don't mean it. This commandment is not something that we like or don't like—it is an *order* from the Lord to spread this light.

Why is it necessary for the world that we give this witness? Because the world needs it. When I saw the darkness and the spiritual confusion in my country and I realized that this misery was not only physical but also spiritual, I thought to myself that my duty and the duty of the Christians is to try to spread a little bit of light. The crisis in Eastern Europe was not an economic crisis but a moral one, and a moral disease can be healed only by moral medicine. Without the light of God it is very hard to build other people—and this not only for Albania but for the entire world! Sometimes in Albania, it was more obvious because the destruction was physically apparent, but many times the destruction is spiritual and we do not see it, because we do not have spiritual eyes. And it is our duty, if we really believe that we have the light of Christ, to share this light with others, because the world needs the light—and the greater the darkness, the greater the need for the light. If we *really* believe in it, we will try to share it. The reason we that do not try is sometimes that we do not believe in it, because our words are only on our lips and not rooted in our hearts. Someone who has tasted the light of God, and has tasted the joy that comes from this light, finds it difficult not to share with others. It is impossible to taste this joy and not to share with others. I can say that if we share the light of God with the others, it is a sign that the light is in us; if we do not, it is not.

It is necessary because there are a lot of people who are alone, and not only in Albania—all over the world, people are alone. Although they live in big cities, still they are alone, because being alone is not necessarily being alone physically! There are people, who live in deserts, but they are

together with other people, and there are people who live in cities, and they are alone. Loneliness is a great suffering and a real unhappiness. Remember the paralysed man, in the Gospel. He was living in the city, where there were maybe a million people during the festival, and still he was alone. He told to the Lord: 'I have no one to put me into pool'. And millions and millions of people are alone like him. Who will reach out to these people? And how can these people relate to each other, if the light of Christ is not given to them? Without the light of Christ we cannot built a community. Living together is not the same as being together. People in prison live together but they are not a community. It is the duty of every Orthodox Christian to be close to every lonely human being. Only by being together and building a real community can we be true Christians – *unus christianus nullus christianus*.

I remember, in my ministry, trying to serve the needy people in my city. We created several groups of young people and women and we went to visit people who were alone, mostly elderly people. And I remember an old lady over 80, who told me she had not spoken to anyone for three months. She had nobody just to talk to, and you can imagine her spiritual state, being alone, and abandoned by all. And sometimes maybe these cases are very obvious, but we can be in the midst of people and *still* be alone.

It is a necessary, because the world has lost joy. We speak many times about joy, but if we don't *experience* joy, we do not know what we are talking about. Joy is a basic thing for a human being. A person without joy is not a full human being. And the world has lost it, because we have lost communion with God. Fr Thomas spoke yesterday [see Fr Thomas Hopko's talk in *Forerunner* 50, Winter 2007-08] and explained that in order to be fully human, we should live in communion with God. And the world that does not live in this communion, does not have full life. And a life without joy is not a real life. Sometime, in the Gospel, the words life and joy are used almost synonymously. The Lord says to his faithful servant, and the good steward, 'Enter in my joy.' That means 'enter into eternal life'. And life in Christ will always have a joy. A life without joy it is a mutilated life, but it is unfortunately a life that we are living nowadays.

I myself remember the time of persecution, and I remember my baptism, and all these times were terrible times; *but joy was present*. And I can tell you that that kind of joy has never been in my life since. Now the church is free, we have freedom to worship God, we have freedom to do a

lot of things, but we do not have the same joy as we had in that time of persecution—because joy is not related to things that we have or we do not have; joy is related to whether we really serve God and fulfil our being in communion with God. And because the world does not have that joy, it is our duty to spread it, because I am convinced that if someone lives with Christ, it is certain they will have joy. Maybe we do not understand why or how; but we can experience this kind of joy.

Living and working in Albania it is very hard. And for us in the Church it is not easy. We cannot create an island outside the society and all the problems of society will be reflected in our Church. You have to pass through a lot of difficulties—sometimes just a small thing may take a whole month to achieve—but with all these difficulties the joy is present, because there is always hope when you are working for the cause of the Christ, and because all these efforts bear fruit. And these fruits were a great joy for all of us, for those we were serving and for other people. And the joy spread to other communities. I cannot explain how, but when you live with people who have joy, the joy will enter into you. It is like light, so if you full of light yourself, and even if you are not aware of it, you are illuminating other people, because light has no boundaries. And joy is the same. I cannot explain how, but I have experienced that when we are joyful, we transmit joy to others. And I think it is a tragedy, as many people have mentioned before, that there are Christians without joy, as we often unfortunately see today.

It is necessary to give this witness to the world because, in today's world, we have lost the meaning of eternity. People today think only of life's problems and that dominates everything they try to do. Usually we live no more than 100 years in this world, and we do almost nothing about the most important thing. Look at what people do for their retirement. They pay for years and years and years, just to receive something for a few years. But we do not do anything for our eternal retirement! And it will come! And will be soon! And we have to focus on this *other*, because if we lose this perspective, I think we lose a lot. We need to give a witness to the world because the world has lost the meaning of that vision. I see a lot of people who do not have this meaning in their life sinking in misery and their life is full of despair, because without meaning, it is impossible to have a full life. And the meaning cannot be just to buy a house, or to do something—the real meaning is the meaning of our existence. And we need, we *really* need, a *meaning* for this.

I remember reading a book (maybe you have read it too), a famous book by a famous psychiatrist Viktor Frankl, called '*Man's Search for Meaning*'. During the time he was in a concentration camp, he was observing himself, and the people around him, and he came to the conclusion that: 'I saw in myself and in the others, the basic need for a human being is not pleasure, as Freud thought, or power, as Adler thought, but is the basic need to have a reason to live, and a reason to die.' And only faith can give these two reasons. Only the life of Christ can give us a reason to live, and can give us a reason to die. If we have both these reasons, our life will be full. And if our life is full, regardless of the difficulties we face in this life, we will have joy. This is the experience of thousands of thousands of people.

### **The second question: *who will do this?***

Remember the words of the Lord to Isaiah: 'Whom I shall send?' And *who* will go for us?' If we will not do it, who will? If we do not give this light to others, there are two reasons: first, we may not have the light, or our light may be very dim, or, we don't believe in the light, because it is impossible to believe in this light and to experience the joy of it and not to give it to others. We should do this. And anybody can do it! It is not only for well-educated people. The first apostles were not learned men, and maybe they were even below the average level of education for their time, but they were able to spread the faith through the whole world because they believed, because they *lived* through this faith and they were able to witness to it. If we really have faith, every one of us has a personal story and personal experience, and if we were able to speak to others this personal experience, I think it would be enough.

When I went back in Albania and saw again all the destruction, which now maybe I see all over the world in different forms, I said to myself: 'Look to the world around you, and see how evil, greed, despair, anger and hatred, exist almost everywhere'. All of these poison human life. And how will we defeat these enemies of human life? Only a deep and genuine faith can heal this world. And I believe only a strong morality can defeat corruption. And only a godly hope can conquer despair. And only a godly love can *really* conquer hatred and all the evil we see, or at least saw, frequently in our part of the world. And perhaps only through this can we help our people and do something that is *beyond* our power. If we have this kind of love, we will spread it to others, too.

So the real message for us is this: if we serve others, we are doing what God wants us to do. God wants us to serve others, because only through this can we really serve Him. And this service is important for the Church. Without this how can we show others our love, the love that embraces the entire world, and each person, whoever they are. For this reason, it is very important for us to have a community of love that works and to try to reach everyone else. It is not important to tell them great theological doctrines—just to serve them and love them; through this they can understand things that they may never learn in books. *Real* presence, and *real* service and if you see a *real* faith, will teach you more than all the books. And this is true: we have the evidence from *thousands* of people—in Albania, in Russia, in Britain, and all over the world! We have to keep serving, because if we do not serve others, people will not believe what we preach. To believe something is to *practise* it in everyday life.

**The third question: *why* are we not doing this?**

We do not do these things because we face lots of obstacles. And the first obstacle is us. Unfortunately we live today a culture that complains about everything. Today, with some people, if you do not complain, they look on you as someone strange, and they think or say, ‘What’s wrong with you?’ This is becoming a kind of culture and it is destructive for the the soul, because it is a *lie*. It destroys our relations with each other, with God’s creation, and for sure with God himself. Complaining is the *opposite* of giving witness to others. And unfortunately, Christians sometimes complain more than other people. The more people have, the more they have to complain about! I have heard more complaints from rich people than from poor people. The people who have the best roads complain about the roads. They have the best houses, and they complain about houses. They have the best clothes, the best food, and the best possibilities and they complain about everything. Complaining it is not about whether or not you have something— it is a state of being. It is ingratitude, the opposite of gratitude!

And how we can spread faith and Christianity if we are like that? If other people do not see gratitude among us, they will not believe in what we are telling them. Being thankful is very, very important, and it is a powerful tool for spreading the gospel.

When I was visiting some needy people in my diocese, I went into the house of an old lady was over 90, and she was blind. She had been blind

since she was three years old, so she had spent all her life in darkness. But rarely have I seen someone with more gratitude to God than this old lady. Every time I mentioned the name of Christ, there was a kind of light in her face. And she was thankful for everything! And now that I recall this for you, I am ashamed of myself for my own complaints. Imagine someone who spent all her life in darkness and is still full of thankfulness because the grace of the Lord has touched her soul. And if the Lord is present, it is impossible not to be thankful. We are not thankful because God is not present, and has not touched our heart. We *think* that we are living according to the commandments of the Lord, but if our life is not one of thankfulness, we are not. And being thankful does not mean always we have to have things. People under persecution were thankful. You know the lives of the saints; they were thankful and facing execution, they were thankful for everything, because being thankful is a state of being. Everybody that has known God will be thankful, and maybe this is a *sign* of whether we know, or do not know God.

I will tell you another story. There was a Christian king who had a good adviser, very devout and very Christian, and everywhere the king went, he took his adviser with him. The thing about his adviser was that he thanked God for everything. Whatever happened to him, he said, 'Glory to God.' One day the king was cutting an apple and cut off his finger. He cried out in pain, and his advisor said, 'Glory to God'. The king was furious: 'Glory to God! I cut off my finger! and you say glory!!! Put him in jail!' And his guards put him in jail. After a while the king was hunting and he lost his way and was captured by the soldier from the neighbouring pagan kingdom. They brought him before the pagan king, and they were very pleased to have a king for a prisoner. The pagan king wondered what to do with him, and said, 'I'll offer him as a sacrifice to my gods'. So he brought the priests to see him but they saw he had a finger missing. They said to the king, 'We can't sacrifice him, because he's not whole.' Then the pagan king said to himself, 'Maybe I'll make him a friend', and so he released him from prison. The king returned to his kingdom and immediately asked what his adviser was doing. 'He's thanking God that he's in jail,' they said. The king had him brought in and said to him, 'I understand now why you thanked God for my finger, and really we have to thank God for that. But why you are thanking God that you're in jail?' He said, 'My king, if I were not in jail, I would have been out hunting with you. And because I am whole...'

There is always a reason to be thankful. Sometimes we humans do not understand these reasons, and sometimes we think what happens to us is a tragedy, but if we see in the light of Christ, everything will be for our benefit because Christ has the power to transform everything. He can transform persecution into joy, as he transforms death into life. The cross, an instrument of death, is transformed into the instrument of life. The problem is not the *event* that happened to us; the problem is in us, and how we see it. We must try to be thankful for everything, because through this we can teach others.

I would also like to say something about another obstacle which is in us, or at least in the Church. In the Church there is always a danger of hypocrisy, because it is a high place and it is a high risk. The people sometimes think they are *in*, but really they are *out*. These are the Pharisees, and they are not something strange. When I read about them in the gospels, sometimes it is really like me. We fool ourselves in many things: when we read the gospel, in general we identify ourselves with the Lord, or at least with the apostles, and we could say that we do not identify ourselves even with them when they do something wrong or when the Lord is reprimanding them. Few people identify themselves with the Pharisees or with the others, though, to tell the truth, we have more in common with the Pharisees than we have with the apostles. The Church is a risky place and we should be careful. A famous rabbi, who lived, according to tradition, a generation before the Lord, used to say, ‘If we divided all the hypocrites of the world in ten parts, nine would be in Jerusalem.’ And we know that Jerusalem is the church. We have the blessings of Jerusalem but we also have all the dangers, and sometimes the people in the church are caught in hypocrisy. Sometimes they are not aware of it, but if we live differently from what we think we believe, we are hypocrites. You know that the Lord loves everyone else. He is kind to everybody, even great sinners, but he is always angry with the Pharisees. Pharisaism is a terrible sickness for the church; I think the greatest sickness and we should fight it, because if you are a hypocrite, you do not have the power to repent. If you believe you are righteous, why repent? Why change, if you are in the right way? This is why it is so difficult to fight pharisaism, but we must fight it. And to fight it, first we have to recognise it, which is difficult, because it is natural for everyone to think highly of himself and few people think humbly of themselves. To

understand that we are hypocrites takes a lot of power and a lot of humility, and this is the only way we can understand what we are like. Being humble, understanding that we are really sinners and that something is not going well with us will not damage us, because the truth does not hurt, but will heal us. If we understand this, we will be able to repent, but how can we be repentant if we do not really think we are sinners? And not sinners in the general sense, but in the concrete deeds and thoughts of everyday life.

I worked for about twelve years in psychiatry, and there is something about psychiatry that I think compares with the spiritual life: when a patient starts to understand that he is ill, he has started the healing process. The spiritual life is the same. When somebody understands that something is wrong with him, that he is really a sinner, he has also started the spiritual healing process. If we do not understand that something is wrong with us, we never will try to heal ourselves. I have never seen somebody going to the dentist for fun. Only pain can take someone to the dentist. It is the same with God: we only go towards Him to ask for healing if we really feel the pain of sin—not in a general sense, but the pain of sin in our personal life. So it is very important for us to be sober and to see clearly, because often it is as if we were drunk, and we do not see ourselves clearly. If we have a sober mind and can really see what we are, we will ask for help. ‘Ask, and it will be given to you.’ And you know that the real healer is the Lord.

**The fourth and most important question: *how shall we do it?***

First, we shall do it by example. We have a lot of good examples but we do not see them, or we do not like to see them. There have been millions of men and women who have given their life for the Light and Love of Christ. Today too there are people who give everything they have to give witness to our faith before the world. One of these illustrious men is our beloved Archbishop Anastasios. He came to a very difficult country, where he found a completely destroyed Church, but his love for Christ was stronger than all the difficulties. He was able through this love and faith to be the architect of this resurrection of the Church and, more important than building the walls of the churches, was the spirit he spread in our church. He strengthened us through his example more than through his words.

So we can preach better and more powerfully through our way of living than through our words. You know, *everybody* is speaking well. If you had

heard a Communist preaching, for example, you would be exalted—everything was fine; every word perfect; but the application of the words in real life was a tragedy! So it is very important for us to transform ourselves, so that we can have the power to transform the world and witness to the world through what we really live. People are sometimes not convinced by theological explanation; they are convinced through very simple things, and our example is the most important tool to spread the Gospel.

In our days, people are not impressed by words and perhaps words are not the main thing. You can say everything but it means nothing. The main thing is to transmit something through our personal life. People can be touched by this. We have the example of a holy bishop, maybe 200 years ago. There was a Muslim Agha, a Turkish lord, who was friends with this bishop, and one day he decided to become a Christian. The bishop asked him, ‘Why? I never preached to you about Christ.’ The Agha said, ‘No, but by the way how you live, I understood you have the Truth.’

If people saw this in our life, maybe they would imitate us, because everybody wants to be healed. Everybody wants to live a different life, in the sense of having a *fuller* life than this, because the anxiety that we face in the world today arises precisely from lack of the communion with God. We lack the true life. We often live with fake life, but we only fool ourselves, not God.

I believe strongly that we can witness to our faith before the world, because I have seen a lot of people do it. And they were simple people, not educated people, who lived a true Christian life and by the way they lived, they changed their lives and then helped others to change own lives.

We have to teach people about the crucial things of life: life, death, freedom and so on. Now we have freedom to worship in Albania and people are free, at least outwardly, but freedom, like anything else, can be abused. People were not used to freedom and we had to teach them that the freedom should have some boundaries—not to limit their freedom, but to help them to be free. I tried to give to them some examples. In Albania, the roads are mostly in the mountains and some of those that run alongside precipices have railings or walls for protection. These are not to limit the freedom of the drivers, but to protect them. So too, the boundaries set by God’s commandments are not to limit our freedom, but to help us, to save us and to make us free. All the commandments—‘don’t do that, don’t do this’—are to *help* us. It was difficult to teach our people this because they

had been under oppression. Sometimes they would say, ‘*Again*, “don’t do that?” We heard “don’t do that, don’t do this” for 50 years!’ and it was difficult for them to understand. I think the Church did a great work in trying to explain that the law of God is to help them.

And this is true not only for Albania and countries like Albania, but for the whole world, because freedom can be dangerous. We know that the first human being abused their freedom as the result of a lie. The devil lied to them, and told them that they could be free, and be like God, but without Him. This was what Communism was preaching: that we can build a society where there will be freedom, justice and equality and no more exploitation, but without God. We know now what they really created! And it is not different from the consumerism that we see now in the West, where the people think that they can build their happiness by themselves, without God. The consequences will surely be the same as they were for Adam and Eve, and for all the ideologies of the last century.

We have to explain to people that the commandments are for our benefit, and our faith is to transform us. The faith is not something to be hoarded, unused; it is something that we have to live constantly, in every aspect of our life! I try to explain this with examples, telling people it is not enough that you believe. Someone may believe in the power of medicine, but if you keep it in the cupboard, the medicine will not help you. If you do not inject it into your body, it will have no power. It is the same with faith; if it is not practised and lived in everyday life, it will not help us, because it will have no *power* in us; it will be something *outside* us. We have tried to convince people that this is not for the benefit of the church, because church is not an institution which is outside them. They are the Church. It is for their *own* benefit. Faith is for *us*, it is not for God, and trying to have the faith in our everyday life will help us to transform ourselves, and I believe that through ourselves we can transform and help the others.

When I was very young, I met three old ladies. They were famous, and they are still famous. They were sisters and they wanted to become nuns. But at that time there were no longer any monasteries in Albania, so they made their own home a monastery. Throughout the persecution they preached, in a simple way, and everyone wondered why no one did anything against them; they were not arrested, they were not persecuted or exiled. They just kept on preaching through their lives the gospel of Christ. And they became a source of inspiration for a lot of people, including me,

because I saw through them that it is possible to live according to the law of God. Living according to the teaching of Christ is not a utopia; it is a real *possibility*, and these old women they *did* it, they *lived* by it. They were people with courage, they were people who loved, and they were people full of care for the other. The best way to serve the Lord is to serve others.

I will tell a short story (I like a lot the stories). There was a very devout monk whose monastery used to distribute bread to the needy every morning. The bell was the sign for the distribution, and the monk had to fill baskets and give the poor people bread. One morning he had a vision: the Lord himself, surrounded by angels, appeared to him. You can imagine the joy of this monk, who had this great vision. And at that moment he heard the bell, telling him that he should distribute the bread, and he wondered what to do. 'How I can leave this glorious vision.' In the end, he decided to go, but he was very sad. He took all the baskets and went to the square in front the main gate and gave away all the bread. That day there were more poor people than any other day, so he spent more than an hour just giving out the bread, and this makes him sadder, because he had thought that maybe, if he went back quickly, he would see the vision again. After he finished, he went back in his cell sadly, because he thought that he had lost the great vision, but when he opened the door, the light was not only present but was even brighter and there were more angels than before, and the Lord said to him: 'You did well. If you had stayed, I would have left.'

A lot of people cannot accept, or they deny, the name of God, and there are people of other faiths who do not accept the name of Christ, but if we offer to them Love, the other name of God, they accept. Under the name of Love they are able to see, and to accept. I remember the refugees who came to Albania during the war in Kosovo, about half million of them, and they were mostly Muslims. Our Church, under the courageous and visionary leadership of Archbishop Anastasios was mobilized to do something. The Archbishop said, 'What can we do? We have plenty of reasons to say that we cannot do anything. We are a small church, a poor church, how can we help half million people? But we are Christians, our power and wealth is the Lord, so we must help them. Let us make the sign of the cross and move forward toward these people and help them as much as we can.' And so it was. The Archbishop himself went to them. Our seminary was closed and all our students went to help them. In

collaboration with other churches, the Archbishop led a campaign and through our church, which become a kind of channel for other churches, \$12million dollars were given to help with these people. The impact of this love still remains today. We have summer camps in Kosovo for 1,000 Muslim children and they come to us, to the Orthodox Church (and for them the Orthodox Church, being the Church of the Serbs was a kind of *enemy*), because they saw this sign of love. Maybe they have difficulty accepting the name of Christ, but they can accept Christ under the name of Love. This is why we should offer love, to each other and to the whole world.

I would like to talk about another very important issue: the prophetic role of the Church, because if we lose this role we will lose the real mission of the Church. The Church needs to say what God keeps saying, not only what we want to say. And God is telling us all the things that we preach every day but don't really live in our personal life. It is not easy to live in the Church. We know how costly the phrase, 'thus saith the Lord' was in the Old Testament. People didn't want to hear it. Kings and people liked false prophets because they said what they wanted to hear, and we are often the same. We often do not speak the truth because we are aware that people will not accept it. So we tell them what they want to hear. By doing so, we are lying to them, and so becoming false prophets. We must be aware that our duty is to be the prophets of the Most High, and this is surely a costly office. Speaking the truth is always is costly, and people do not do it for that reason. But this cost is nothing compared with the joy we receive from the Lord. Why? Because we have spoken the truth, and speaking the truth is very important. In these days of lies and half truths, people desperately need the truth, and if we do not speak it, who will it? My beloved sisters and brothers, try always to speak the truth. The truth always heals, and it will heal us and others.

To conclude, I urge you to carry the torch of truth that has been held by the prophets, apostles, martyrs, saints and by all true Christians, the torch that has brought us the light, the word and the life of God. They have made our beloved Church the place where this treasure is preserved, so let us always keep this torch alight so that those in darkness can see, believe and live. And may the Lord bless all of you.

## Excerpts from the discussion that followed Metropolitan John's talk

### **Metropolitan Kallistos:**

I was struck particularly by the emphasis you placed on the presence of joy during the time of persecution in the Albanian church. How joy is not just comfort, or optimism, or cheerfulness; how joy often goes with suffering; how joy is not just a human temperamental quality, but a gift from God. No joy without communion with God—that I shall retain from your talk. And alas it is true, as you said, that when comfort increases, pleasure may grow, but in our Western society today, while there is a lot of quest for pleasure, there is very little joy. As we say in matins each Sunday, 'Through the cross, joy has come to the entire world.' Through the cross—there is no other way.

I wanted to ask you a question about the re-birth of the Christian faith in Albania. Outwardly, in the time of persecution, as you told us, you lost everything. I remember, in 1967 I think it was, the head of state in Albania announced that Albania was the first atheist country in the world, by which he meant the first country in which all outward expression of religious faith, whether Christian or Muslim, had been totally eliminated. There was no longer a single place of worship officially open. And it must have seemed a very formidable task when there was again freedom. How do you start to rebuild and to re-evangelise? So, where did you begin with this daunting challenge of building up again almost from nothing?

**Metropolitan John:** I think, first of all, it was the blessings of God in our Church in sending Archbishop Anastasios, a man of courage, a man of faith, a man of vision. This is something that I don't believe another person could do. When he came, he had the same question; 'How to start?' And the start was like this. There was a gathering of people in a destroyed church, and the first word that the Archbishop said to them was: 'Christ is risen!' And this was the start. This was the beginning, and it will be the end of all our efforts: spreading the Love to the people

And starting wasn't a sure thing, because if we think with a human mind we're stuck. We'll say, 'No, it's impossible, everything's destroyed, how we can start?' Through faith, we started, and it was surely the Lord who provided everything—money, people, and a lot of other things that we would never have thought of. And to tell the truth, in 1991 I never would have believed what happened. When the Archbishop spoke for the

first time about opening a seminary, we had an old theologian, a good, devout well-educated man, who told us that it was an impossible dream, but after a while this dream was a reality! And I think everything in the beginning was a kind of dream. But after 15 years it is a reality. I don't know how it happened, but for sure I know that there was the hand of God and the blessing of God. And He responded to the devotion of the people. And he responded to the thirst that the people had for Christ.

It's strange that it happened like this. When you have water, you are not thirsty, and when you are thirsty you don't have water. We didn't have water, but we were thirsty. And I hope that there will be times when we are full of water but are still thirsty. Otherwise, it means we have failed. You see in many other countries people who have a lot of water, but they are not thirsty. The churches are open and they don't go! There are plenty of churches, but they are not used and many of them are sold! I have difficulty explaining to my people over there how it is possible to sell a church! Many of them told me that this is the greatest blasphemy. Many of our churches were destroyed, but it was by force! And here churches are not sold because the people are in are needy. They had *everything*, and still they sold—because they think they can live without a church!

We saw the damage done during all these years without the church and this motivated us to rebuild the church, and through the help and blessing of God in sending us Archbishop Anastasios, the Orthodox Church in Albania is a reality. When Patriarch Bartholomew visited our Church, he said, 'If somebody doesn't believe in miracles, let him come to Albania.' In 15 years it has built a church, a church that is functioning, a church that is now trying to reach all the other people, a church that is trying to make it possible to live according to the commandments of God. All this was done by love. Archbishop Anastasios has a great love for God and this gave to him the strength to fulfil the titanic work of the resurrection of the Church in Albania.

For sure, we have a lot of shortcomings, and for sure we are facing a lot of difficulties again. But this is the life. At least we have to try. I would prefer to die trying to do something, than to do nothing. Yesterday we talked about sacrifice. We said that sacrifice is not an end, it's a means. Like the cross, it's not an end in itself, it's a means. The end is the resurrection. But the resurrection, as Archbishop Anastasios say, is not an event that happened after the cross, it's in the cross. And the sacrifice is the means of sanctification. The root, '*sacra*' means sanctification, so in

order to sanctify something we should sacrifice. Sanctification does not happen *after* but *in* the sacrifice. This is how we help our church, our people, and mostly ourselves. Saint Paul said to Timothy: ‘In doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you’ (1 Tim. 4:16). If we will try to save others, we save ourselves. We see this every day in Albania. Everyone trying to help the church and save others is helping themselves more. They have a full life; they have more joy in their life. So the secret is this, in trying to save others and help others, we are helping ourselves more than them.

Metropolitan John hopes to meet with participants in the trip to Albania in September. For details, see page 45

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## FELLOWSHIP STUDY WEEKEND

25 – 27 January 2008

### **St Augustine of Hippo: an Orthodox perspective**

It is a commonplace that for most of the past millennium and a half, Orthodoxy has had an internal dialogue about the writings of Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (AD 354-430). While he is accounted a saint among the Orthodox (15 June), nevertheless, some of his teachings – about the Holy Trinity, predestination and original sin – have caused distinct discomfort among the Orthodox. (I only know of three Orthodox churches dedicated to St Augustine – in Denver (Colorado), Texas and Haiti.) What therefore, is the Orthodox believer to think about Augustine? I had never before really taken much note of him, apart from reading some of his works many years ago (his *Confessions* seem to have fled from my library) and I had noted the lack of enthusiasm for him among my Orthodox teachers. So when I heard about a Fellowship study weekend consisting of a series of talks to be given by the Reverend Professor Andrew Louth at St Botolph's, Bishopsgate, I decided that I was definitely going to attend, despite the fact that when I heard about them, I was at the other end of the planet.

I travelled up to London from Southbourne on Friday 25 January with Dr Gilbert Meal (we had hastily re-acquainted ourselves with Augustine's biography) and after having found a distinctly iffy place to leave his car, we joined the other people gathering at St Botolph's. After Vespers, we retired to the interesting parish hall for some milling around, registering and seat-finding followed by supper, and then began the first session. It was only when we arrived in the hall that I discovered that not only were we to hear from Fr Andrew Louth, but that he was joined by Metropolitan Kallistos. Now the mere prospect of this was definitely pure joy for me.

The first session was a talk that evening after supper by Fr Andrew titled 'Augustine: the best known man in late antiquity' and was in effect an introduction to Augustine by the Professor of Patristic and Byzantine studies at Durham University – in other words an extremely well-informed introduction. Fr Andrew introduced us to Augustine almost as to a very old friend, whose life and idiosyncrasies were both familiar and well-loved.

There were about 15-17 of us in the class hearing Fr Andrew and, frankly, thoroughly enjoying ourselves, hearing an expert guiding us

towards an Orthodox view of Saint Augustine. That evening, I was kindly given shelter for the night by the Vicar of Elmer's End (Fr Leon Carberry) a classmate at these lectures.

On Saturday morning, we arrived back from Elmer's End barely in time for the morning Office conducted by Bishop Kallistos in the parish church. Saturday was to produce four lectures by Fr Andrew on aspects of St Augustine, first as bishop and preacher, then his teaching on grace and predestination. After lunch, we proceeded first to Augustine's thinking on the Trinity and finally that day to his ideas on the Church and society.

There is no doubt that Fr Andrew, in such an intimate gathering, is a compelling teacher. With us gathered around the table, he could give us a learned chat rather than lecture about each facet of Augustine. But that was not all: at the end of each session, we were treated to a discussion between Fr Andrew and Metropolitan Kallistos on aspects of the preceding talk. Metropolitan Kallistos discerned very accurately those things which might have puzzled the rest of us and brought them to the fore so that we could clear them up. At this point after each session, we could ask questions – and we did. I must admit that I only ventured once to join the august discussion at the end of a session, and that was on the subject of the Donatists – with whom I have a (very) modest acquaintanceship.

Saturday night ended with Vespers in the church, again conducted by Bishop Kallistos, followed by supper and general discussion. The last day was Sunday, with a session of plenary discussion following the Divine Liturgy. However, I was slated to celebrate the Divine Liturgy in deepest Kent, and so that evening I sloped off, not to return, so alas, I cannot report on the conclusions (if any) reached by the group about Augustine as a saint of the Orthodox Church.

I have to say that the Fellowship fed us well, housed the sessions comfortably and generally exhibited their long practice of smoothly running such occasions, but can they top the joy of having both Fr. Andrew and Metropolitan Kallistos enlightening us with such teaching and discussions? Overall, it was definitely 'a treat' and those who missed it will just have to put up with the smugness of those of us who went.

*Fr Michael*

## ORTHODOX CHILDREN'S CAMPS

At the end of July 2007, shortly after being elected Chairman of the Fellowship, I decided I would like to know what happened in the children's camps. They are organised by the various jurisdictions and are not Fellowship events; but I was aware that many of our 'Youth' members who attend the Ilam Youth Celebration, and who had provided the choir at our annual conference at Swanwick were also helpers at the camps and had attended them themselves when younger. Their enthusiasm for the camps was a strong recommendation. I also knew that the camps were highly regarded by many members of our main committee and that we had made a loan (since repaid) to one of the camps when it had cash-flow problems, and had made a significant contribution to the purchase of a much-needed new tent at one of the others. So, I thought I ought to know more. I contacted the organisers of the three camps and was assured in every case I would be welcome to visit. I made it clear I would only wish to stay for a couple of hours, and did not wish to disrupt their routine, but that I hoped to be able to get an impression of what camp life is like.

The first camp I visited was the Sourozh Camp at Burnham Deepdale in Norfolk. This was organised by Father Stephen and Anna Platt. The chapel and refectory were undercover in a barn, actually the old smoke-house which was originally on the shore when the sea was a little closer.

The second camp was the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Thyateira) Camp. Their chaplain was Father Philip Hall from Lincolnshire. 'Youth' Members (that is between the ages of 18 and about 35) were much in evidence and had organised the camp. This camp should have been held on a farm at Ratlinghope in Shropshire. Unfortunately the heavy rain had made the camp site unusable and at one stage it had been thought the camp would have to be cancelled. With the support of Fr John Nankivell, it had been moved at short notice to the garden of the Midlands Orthodox Centre in Walsall and they were able to hold their services in the adjacent Church of the Nativity of the Mother of God and events in the hall at the back of the church. There was also a park opposite which was convenient for them. The number of children had to be reduced slightly and the camp was shortened, but in the circumstances the organisers had done very well to have the camp at all.

The third camp I visited was the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Vicariate) camp near Crickhowell in Wales. They had been fortunate. When they arrived the river was at the top of its banks but after that the water level fell. This was a totally tented, self-sufficient camp, in a beautiful setting. It was organised by Father Alexander Fostiropoulos and Deacon Peter Scorer and their wives.

In total the three camps had about 110 children and about 60 helpers, although not all the helpers were there all of the time. The three camps had many features in common. In each there was roughly equal numbers of boys and girls and an even spread of ages between about 9 and 16. Roughly a third attended church regularly, another third attended church on major festivals, and the final third did not normally attend church at all. In each camp there was about an hour's formal instruction each morning with the children divided into juniors and seniors. There were always morning and evening prayers, as well as the camp Divine Liturgies. At least one of the camps gave the children the prayer booklet used, because they had found children wished to continue to use it for the rest of the year. In every camp there were shared activities of various types: theme days, saints' plays prepared and performed by the children, swimming, communal games, dancing, walks, arts and crafts days, etc. I was impressed by the enthusiasm of the children and the way they spoke about the camps. They looked forward to being there and to meeting their friends from previous years again. It was also very noticeable how the younger children were being supported by the older ones, how responsive the younger ones were to being helped, and how activities were being shared. Each camp was a family.

I felt the future of the camps was assured. The leaders had no doubts about the importance of what they were doing. Many of them had attended the camps themselves, enjoyed themselves immensely, and had returned to provide the same experience for younger church members. The ideal size of camp appears to be between 40 and 50 children so that everyone knows everyone else. One of the organisers spoke of the increase in numbers expected in the coming two or three years and the possibility of creating a fourth camp.

If you know children who might like to have the camp experience, I hope you feel encouraged to recommend it to them. I saw no-one who was not enjoying it. They will have happy memories, and form friendships which could last the rest of their lives.



## The 2008 OFSJB Youth Festival at Ilam 'Freedom to Become'

*True friendship is like a rare Indian plant: however hard I tried to describe it, I would be unable to convey a proper understanding of it to someone who had no experience of it.* St John Chrysostom

The list of rooms was staring at me defiantly from the desk. Covered in pencil markings, rubber shavings, crossings-out and half-finished names, it seemed almost mocking. Nearby, luggage was piling up and people circulated round, chatting animatedly. How could I have been so naïve as to imagine that such a small place as Dovedale House could contain so many people?

In fact, Dovedale House in Ilam is not a small building at all, and fortunately, with the aid of the nearby Youth Hostel, we managed to make everyone very comfortable during the weekend. What was in fact making itself plain to me, as I rued ever taking up the post of secretary of OFSJB Youth, was the simple fact that, yet again, we had a record number of people attending. This was only the fourth annual Orthodox Youth Festival, and yet it has grown from relatively humble beginnings to attract a total of 72 people. More impressive than the numbers perhaps is the fact that many came from abroad—we had visitors from France, Germany, Romania, Holland, America and even Iceland.

The above quotation from St John Chrysostom is one that we discovered last year when our theme was *Friendship and Unity*, and we put it on much of our Youth Festival literature. Thanks to the Orthodox Youth Festival, we have all made great numbers of new friends and, as a result, we have seen people from various Orthodox parishes throughout the UK (and beyond) meeting up for special events, pilgrimages and simple social gatherings. However hard it is to organise such a festival, rewards like these are more than enough, for what is the aim the OFSJB Youth but to build up this sort of strong Pan-Orthodox fellowship?

The theme of this year's festival was *Freedom to Become*. What we had discovered from listening to previous comments was that there was (and is) a general appetite for practical advice in leading an Orthodox Christian life, especially in a secularised and secularising society such as we have in the UK. The committee had chosen the theme carefully, since

the questions of how we live out our freedom and what we strive to become are so central to Christianity. There was fertile ground for discussions, talks and activities, and it proved to be a theme that resonated strongly with the people who attended. Many people spoke to me afterwards telling me not just how interesting they had found the weekend, but how *useful* it had been as well.

We must thank a number of distinguished speakers who very kindly found time to be with us and to make the weekend what it was. Metropolitan Kallistos once again came to join us, giving the introductory talk on the theme of *Freedom to Become*. As ever his anecdotes, advice and answers to the audience's questions were greatly appreciated, not to mention his keen wit! The Metropolitan also served the Divine Liturgy on the Sunday and people had the chance to speak to him throughout the weekend. The task of following on from Metropolitan Kallistos was unenviable, but the second talk, given by Fr Raphael, from the Parish of St Ephraim in Cambridge, provoked much discussion and many questions, especially on the topic of confession. We are also indebted to Sister Magdalen, of the Monastery of St John the Baptist in Essex, who gave a fascinating talk with the title "What Am I Becoming?", which focused on our vocation in life, a subject very relevant to Orthodox young people. Our other guest speakers were Dr Krastu Banev and his wife Esther, from the Institute of Orthodox Christian Studies in Cambridge; it has become customary now to invite a 'festival family', and they brought their two delightful children with them who, it seems, lightened the mood for a number of people! Esther and Krastu gave a joint talk on the subject of marriage and relationships, after which the men and women divided up for discussion before joining each other again to reveal the conclusions that they had reached. On the Monday morning (the final day), Ionut Nazarcu held a workshop in which people had the chance to express their experience of living an Orthodox life and realise that in many respects they weren't alone. Questions set by Ionut included, for example, "What is the strangest question you have ever been asked about Orthodoxy?" There were some surprising answers—for example, one group of non-Orthodox visitors to Greece mistook a lamb barbecue for a pagan sacrifice! We rounded-off the weekend with the elections for the new Youth Committee and a blessing of the cars before departing.

The weekend was not just about talks, seminars and discussions, however. There was also a hike through the hills around Ilam, taking advantage

of the beautiful countryside of the Peak District. We enjoyed a pleasant picnic by the river, and also visited the Well of St Bertram where we had a blessing of the waters. And it would not be a proper Orthodox Youth Festival without the liturgical side of life. Fr Philip of All Saints' Parish in Lincolnshire and Fr Raphael of St Ephraim's in Cambridge served as Youth Festival chaplains, leading prayers, serving the Divine Liturgy and hearing confessions until all hours of the night. We are especially grateful to them for this! Unfortunately Fr Benedict Ramsden was unable to join us this year, but our thoughts and prayers are with him and we hope that we may see him again next year.

One great highlight of the Youth Festival was a surprise event on the Sunday evening. Miriam Craddock, who was Events Coordinator at the time, took advantage of the fact that our Treasurer is out of the country to hire a Celtic Ceilidh band. So it was that I ended the day in a rather self-indulgent way, immersed in the atmosphere of my native Scottish culture! We are all grateful to Miriam for far more however, as the festival really could not have taken place without her hard work and determination. Similarly we thank Guy Maxfield for taking charge of making sure that everyone got to and from Ilam safely, Alex Haig for ensuring that we had all the necessary liturgical equipment, Daniel Berovic for his vital financial advice (despite being in Japan), the Youth Choir for their sterling singing in the chapel, Anna Sander for her organisation of the website, and of course the good staff of Dovedale House for providing us with comfortable accommodation and delicious Lenten fare.

The Fourth Orthodox Youth Festival is now finished, but we are looking ahead to the future. We have new and stronger friendships, new possibilities, and new ideas. We pray that next year even more people come to discover this particular Indian plant.

*James Morton*  
*Events Coordinator*

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## **REFLECTIONS OF A CANADIAN PILGRIM**

Orthodox youth are coalescing across England. The active Orthodox youth in England are seeking opportunities for fellowship and faith strengthening. It is very exciting to see that Orthodoxy in England is growing; it

is even more exciting to see that Orthodox young people are committed to growing in faith! Being an overseas student from Canada, I am grateful for being able to participate in these gatherings and to share my impressions of Orthodox youth activity here. I am going to describe and reflect upon the pilgrimage to Walsingham in November 2007 and the conference for Orthodox young adults held in Birmingham in January 2008.

About twenty young adults from various places in England, most notably Oxford, Cambridge, London and Birmingham, took part in the pilgrimage to Walsingham. I was struck from the start by the friendly and familial group dynamic. It seemed that the group, albeit from different parishes and parts of the country, were friends and very happy to see one another. The pilgrimage began with a talk by Fr Dn Matthew from London, who spoke of the interior pilgrimage of the heart. He connected the idea of pilgrimage to holy places with the pilgrimage of all Christians, which is to ‘get up and go to the Father’, like the Prodigal Son. He emphasised that the Christian’s pilgrimage is to walk with Christ—it is in fact the way of the Cross. It was fitting that Fr Dn Matthew spoke about the pilgrimage of the Theotokos, in which she pondered the mysteries of God in her heart and turned to Him in total obedience, entering the eternal kingdom of God.

It was a pleasure for the group to meet with Fr Philip, priest at the Orthodox Chapel of the Mother of God of the Life-giving Spring inside the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. Fr Philip effectively exhorted us to participate in the fullness of the Orthodox Faith and he warmly invited us to participate in the Divine Services and in fellowship throughout the weekend. Guided by Fr Philip and Fr Dn Matthew, we visited the other Orthodox chapels in Walsingham, which gave us the opportunity to sing hymns to God, the Theotokos and St Seraphim of Sarov, who has a chapel dedicated to him there.

In retrospect, I can see that this pilgrimage was spiritually beneficial in two particular ways. First, meeting at the holy site dedicated to the Theotokos reminded us that God and His saints are not distant, but rather in close proximity to us. Thus, the pilgrimage to Walsingham helped us to see that we must endeavour to make pilgrimage daily into our hearts, where we can truly receive the Holy. Second, meeting with Orthodox young people provided a welcome opportunity for fellowship with others of our faith. The importance of this is obvious: Orthodox youth today have to ‘swim against the current’ of secularism and post-modern relativism and

fellowship with others who have resolved to swim against the tide is very encouraging.

I now turn to the youth conference at St Luke's Church, Birmingham, in January this year. I was glad to see a great mixture of young people from the Greek, Russian, and Coptic jurisdictions. Meeting young people from different parishes leads to stronger links being formed between members of the Orthodox Church in England. The theme of the conference was 'Stages of the Spiritual Life'. After liturgy and a generous breakfast provided by the community of St Luke's, Archimandrite Chrysostom began with a talk on the sacraments, which centred on the need to participate regularly in the mysteries, such as Confession and the Eucharist, in order to grow in the divine life through the grace of God. It is imperative for the leaders and the teachers of the Orthodox faith to convey and teach the importance of the Holy Mysteries as the means to acquiring the Holy Spirit and growing in the likeness of God. The Orthodox Church should inform its young people about the sacramental and ascetic teachings of the faith, or the attitudes that prevail in today's secular culture will lead us astray.

The session after the lunch break showed that efforts are being made to teach the younger generations the tradition of the Orthodox Church. Archimandrite Zacharias (from the monastery in Essex) spoke poignantly of the wisdom he had received from his spiritual father, Fr Sophrony. Under the title, *The Three Stages of the Spiritual Life*, Fr Zacharias explored in depth the various stages of Christian life. The main theme centred on humility, which tied in with to Fr Chrysostom's talk on the sacraments and renewing the spiritual life in Christ, and pointed to *kenosis* (self-emptying love) and the cross. Our Lord picked up His cross in humility and self-emptying love and we, as children of God, we can expect to travel on the same path as Christ.

During the question periods, it was evident that many people had basic questions about the Faith, but there were also a number of more complicated and sophisticated questions. This suggests that, first, Orthodox youth (presumably brought up going to church) have basic questions about the faith, and, second, that even with accessible catechism, Orthodox Christians are seeking a fuller understanding of Orthodox teaching. To conclude, it is becoming apparent that Orthodox youth today, whether in England, Canada or elsewhere, are seeking God. Their challenge is to resist a dominant and predatory culture that is essentially anti-Orthodox. What is needed is a strong voice from the Church declaring and teaching Orthodox

culture—a culture that is ascetic and Truth-seeking. As one of the younger generation, I would like to thank the servants of God here in England, who are sacrificially teaching us the truth of God in the Orthodox tradition.

*Peter Efthymiadis*

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## **ORTHODOX-CATHOLIC CONFERENCE YORKSHIRE 2007**

*Fr Simeon Piers*

In November last year a Conference to celebrate the 1600th anniversary of the death of St John Chrysostom was held at Ampleforth Abbey, Yorkshire, through the hospitality of the Benedictine Community.

The first speaker, Fr Bernard Green OSB gave a detailed date-line of the events of the life of St John, and of his contributions to the scriptural interpretation of the Church, and to the Council of Nicea and the liturgical practice of the Church at that time.

Dr Marcus Plested from the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies, Cambridge, then spoke on St John Chrysostom's influence on the West—a very erudite talk on how St John's works are reflected in Western thought.

The third speaker, Dr Matthew Steenberg (very recently ordained to the diaconate, Patriarchate of Moscow), spoke under the title 'The Sermon and the Chalice: the Relationship of the Preaching of St John Chrysostom to the Eucharist', of the Orthodox attitude to the priesthood and the development of the Eucharistic theology of the Church.

Overnight accommodation and meals were provided for those wishing to attend the hierarchical Liturgy next morning. This was celebrated, using the high altar and sanctuary of the Abbey church, by Bp Basil of Amphipolis, assisted by Fr David Gill and Fr Elwin Richards of Nottingham, and Dn Peter Scorer of Exeter.

The excellent Russian classical ecclesiastical music was sung in English by a 40-strong choir made up of Kirbymoorside Choir and the Simeon Singers, conducted by Fr Alexander McCabe OSB, the Abbey choirmaster, all of them hitherto unfamiliar with Orthodox Liturgy, except for two previous Liturgies with the choir at Ampleforth. Bishop Basil preached on the

Orthodox idea of episcopacy, taking his theme from the Gospel of the day, the Good Shepherd.

This Liturgy was celebrated very smoothly. The Epistle was sung by Br Cedd, a novice monk (soon to be professed), using the Cassinese tone common to both our Church traditions. (Some of us debated later who pinched it from whom, but I suspect that we Orthodox are to blame!)

I was the co-ordinator of the Conference and the Liturgy and was also involved in the training of the choir in respect of their part in the Liturgy. I know Ampleforth well and this, along with experience of both Western and Eastern rites, liaison with Bishop Basil, and knowledge of who would be likely to concelebrate, meant that keeping the sanctuary and the choir in harmony required remarkably little intervention on the day.

About 60 people attended the Conference, about one third of them Orthodox people from the locality, along with Fr Abbot, Fr Prior and members of the Community. Over 100 people in all attended the Liturgy, which was followed by an excellent lunch, before we all adjourned to our various places of recovery.

*Fr Simeon Piers*

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## THE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF UGANDA

The origins of the Orthodox Church in Uganda are probably unique. It was locally generated. There was a Greek Church in Nairobi and another in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, which catered for the Greek expatriates, but there was no Orthodox presence in Uganda in any ecclesiastical sense.

In 1929, two Ugandan church students for the Anglican Church of Uganda, Ruben Sparta and Theodore Nankyama, came across a book on Orthodoxy and found it interesting enough to trek to Nairobi to find out more. Eventually, they were sent to Apostoliki Diakonia in Athens and, after instruction, were received into the Church and later ordained.

The two returned from Greece and set up a church near Kampala, the capital city of Uganda. Though musically, and to some extent liturgically, often more Protestant than Orthodox, they moulded themselves into the Orthodox tradition and the church began to grow. Like Catholic and Protestant missions, they opened elementary schools adopting the same practice as other missionary churches in that they required membership of the Church as a condition for entry to the school. There is a lesson to be learnt here. Although one may strongly suspect the motives for local people joining the church, by the grace of God (which should never be overlooked) they remained loyal members of the Church after leaving school and some went on to be minimally theologically trained priests.

After World War II, the Patriarchate of Alexandria took the fledgling church more seriously under its wing, giving it full recognition under the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of British East Africa (Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika) in Dar-es-Salaam. Later, in about 1967, Fathers Ruben and Theodore became auxiliary bishops of Uganda and Tanzania respectively, and later an African priest was made bishop for Kenya.

By 1965, the two purpose-built churches in Tanzania, still beautifully kept by African ladies, were in almost total disuse, as the only Greek church left in East Africa was the under-subscribed church in Nairobi. The indigenous churches – now nine in Uganda, with elementary schools, and fewer in Kenya – continued to grow, and a day secondary school opened, attached to the now-Cathedral Church a few miles from Kampala. All services are in the local language (Luganda or Swahili) with a smattering of Greek and English and all the clergy are ‘home-grown’. It is truly an indigenous church and has never been the object of missionary activity,

although Moscow did send two priests to Uganda for a while in the 1960s. The churches in Uganda now have the backing and support of the Greek consulate in Kampala and are assisted educationally and financially by Apostoliki Diakonia of the Church of Greece.

In my tour of Uganda (1969-1974), as head of religious studies in a state secondary school in Jinja, I was involved in catechetics. Having a car (where roads permitted) and a motorbike, the use of a Roneo machine to duplicate lessons and a Prayer Book with Matins and Vespers, I was by African standards, I quote, 'as rich as Onassis and Niarkos rolled into one'. To be accepted as a missionary, one needed to be a priest, monk or nun, so it was suggested that I should become a deacon. I was duly ordained by the late Archbishop Athenagoras of Thyateira and returned to Uganda, only to be heaved out, with two adopted children, by Idi Amin's regime.

What can we learn from this? The ways of God are mysterious indeed, and we should not play God by being too phrenic and judgemental about the reasons why people become Orthodox. In the 1880s, 22 Catholic young men and boys, and as many from the Anglican Church of Uganda, were marched to Namagogna, where their limbs were severed and burnt before their eyes and they voluntarily underwent martyrdom. Most of them probably joined the Church to get a school entry ticket. Many of the Orthodox are now third-generation Orthodox, so it goes to show. Free bicycles from Italy were also a popular way of gaining converts! Orthodoxy grows on you, and like the faithful of Uganda, one learns and matures on the job. I think we all know that.

*Fr Simeon Piers*

## BOOK REVIEW

*The Living Body of Christ*, by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2008, £10.95, 261 pp., ISBN 0-232-52718-0)

This is a collection of talks and a few written articles by the late Metropolitan Anthony on the nature of the Church. Those that are dated (only one is not dated) were given between 1967 and 1993, mostly in the latter half of this period. Many of them have appeared previously in printed form in French and/or English in various journals.

They represent his mature reflection on a subject which, as he notes, is often neglected. He argues that the Church, as the mystical Body of Christ Incarnate is more than just the eucharistic assembly. It is the living presence of Christ in the world, and must go out from the sacraments (Baptism, Chrismation, Communion and Ordination), that are integral parts of its inner being, in order to live out the call of Christ to mission in the world (Matthew 28:19).

The material is arranged thematically and, while the central focus is always the Orthodox Church, there is some discussion on questions of schisms and heresies, both ancient and modern.

Since most of the material was originally presented orally, it is fairly straightforward to read. The relatively large font size and the wide spacing between lines also facilitate reading, even though they mean that the book contains rather fewer words than one might expect in a book of its physical size. Some rhetorical devices, such as frequent lists of threes, may be considered to come over better in an oral presentation than in a written form.

The editor(s) have provided some footnotes on people and historical events referred to in the text, but, apart from scriptural citations, the actual quotations from Patristic and other writers are mostly not referenced, and there is no index. Scriptural quotations appear to have been done from memory and are occasionally somewhat loose. This is a notorious feature of many Patristic sermons, so Metropolitan Anthony is in good company.

As these talks were given on different occasions to different audiences, there is inevitably some repetition of ideas, and, more specifically, of illustrations drawn from other authors. It might have been useful if the editor(s) had given rather more indication of the original audiences for the talks, in

order to place the material more fully into context and to enable the reader to see how the different strands in the author's thought were linked to his other work.

As the author himself points out, this material is not a work of scholarship, but is intended as a personal and practical contribution to help the members of the Church to live out their vocation in the world. Whilst there is nothing in the book that could be described as being startlingly original, it does provide much solid food for thought.

This reviewer, however, found reading this book a somewhat frustrating task as he was repeatedly diverted from the good material by the lack of scholarship, including misquotations of scripture, arguments based on an inadequate understanding of Greek words, a very superficial knowledge of bits of church history, quotations of prayers alleged to be from the Divine Liturgy but which figure in no published English or Slavonic version that I have ever seen, etc., though these may be considered relatively minor blemishes in a work that extends the range of Metropolitan Anthony's work that is now available.

*Fr Kyril Jenner*