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216859

# Odoiporikon

## Orthodox Mission in the East

Quarterly newsletter of the Patriarchal Foundation  
of the Far East Mission - Issue 72  
July - September 2020



The Church of the Holy Trinity in Nadi, Fiji

# † BARTHOLOMEW ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH – Church New Year Message 2020



† BARTHOLOMEW  
BY GOD'S MERCY ARCHBISHOP  
OF CONSTANTINOPLE-NEW  
ROME  
AND ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH  
TO ALL THE PLENITUDE OF THE  
CHURCH GRACE, PEACE AND  
MERCY  
FROM THE MAKER OF ALL  
CREATION  
OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR  
JESUS CHRIST

Dearest brother Hierarchs and  
beloved children in the Lord,

It is a shared conviction that, in  
our time, the natural environment  
is threatened like never before in the history  
of humankind. The magnitude of this threat  
becomes manifest in the fact that what is  
at stake is not anymore the quality, but the  
preservation of life on our planet. For the first  
time in history, man is capable of destroying  
the conditions of life on earth. Nuclear weapons  
are the symbol of man's Promethean titanism,  
the tangible expression of the "complex of  
omnipotence" of the contemporary "man-god."

In using the power that stems from science  
and technology, what is revealed today is the  
ambivalence of man's freedom. Science serves  
life; it contributes to progress, to confronting  
illnesses and many conditions that were hitherto  
considered "fateful"; it creates new positive  
perspectives for the future. However, at the  
same time, it provides man with all-powerful  
means, whose misuse can be turned destructive.  
We are experiencing the unfolding destruction  
of the natural environment, of biodiversity,



of flora and fauna, of the pollution of aquatic  
resources and the atmosphere, the progressing  
collapse of climate balance, as well as other  
excesses of boundaries and measures in  
many dimensions of life. The Holy and Great  
Council of the Orthodox Church (Crete, 2016)  
rightly and splendidly decreed that "scientific  
knowledge does not mobilize the moral will  
of man, who knows the dangers but continues  
to act as if he did not know." (Encyclical, § 11)

It is apparent that the protection of the common  
good, of the integrity of the natural environment,  
is the common responsibility of all inhabitants  
of the earth. The contemporary categorical  
imperative for humankind is that we live  
without destroying the environment. However,  
while on a personal level and on the level of  
many communities, groups, movements and  
organizations, there is a demonstration of great  
sensitivity and ecological responsibility, nations  
and economic agents are unable – in the name  
of geopolitical ambitions and the "autonomy of

the economy” – to adopt the correct decisions for the protection of creation and instead cultivate the illusion that the pretended “global ecological destruction” is an ideological fabrication of ecological movements and that the natural environment has the power of renewing itself. Yet the crucial question remains: How much longer will nature endure the fruitless discussions and consultations, as well as any further delay in assuming decisive actions for its protection?

The fact that, during the period of the pandemic of the novel coronavirus Covid-19, with the mandatory restrictions of movement, the shutdown of factories, and the diminishment in industrial activity and production, we observed a reduction of pollution and encumbrance of the atmosphere, has proved the anthropogenic nature of the contemporary ecological crisis. It became once again clear that industry, the contemporary means of transportation, the automobile and the airplane, the non-negotiable priority of economic indicators and the like, negatively impact the environmental balance and that a change of direction toward an ecological economy constitutes an unwavering necessity. There is no genuine progress that is founded on the destruction of the natural environment. It is inconceivable that we adopt economic decisions without also taking into account their ecological consequences. Economic development cannot remain a nightmare for ecology. We are certain that there is an alternative way of economic structure and development besides the economism and the orientation of economic activity toward the maximization of profiteering. The future of humanity is not the homo oeconomicus.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate, which in recent decades has pioneered in the field of the protection of the creation, will continue its ecological initiatives, the organization of ecological conferences, the mobilization of its faithful and especially the youth, the promotion of the environment’s protection as a fundamental subject for interreligious dialogue and the common initiatives of religions, the contacts with political leaders and institutions, the cooperation with environmental organizations and ecological movements. It is evident that the collaboration for the protection of the environment creates

additional avenues of communication and possibilities for new common actions.

We repeat that the environmental activities of the Ecumenical Patriarchate are an extension of its ecclesiological self-consciousness and do not comprise a simple circumstantial reaction to a new phenomenon. The very life of the Church is an applied ecology. The sacraments of the Church, its entire life of worship, its asceticism and communal life, the daily life of its faithful, express and generate the deepest respect for creation. The ecological sensitivity of Orthodoxy was not created by but emerged from the contemporary environmental crisis. The struggle for the protection of creation is a central dimension of our faith. Respect for the environment is an act of doxology of God’s name, while the destruction of creation is an offense against the Creator, entirely irreconcilable with the basic tenets of Christian theology.

Most honorable brothers and dearly beloved children,

The ecofriendly values of the Orthodox tradition, the precious legacy of the Fathers, constitute an embankment against the culture, whose axiological foundation is the domination of man over nature. Faith in Christ inspires and strengthens the human endeavor even before the immense challenges. From the perspective of faith, we are able to discover and assess not only the problematic dimensions, but also the positive possibilities and prospects of contemporary civilization. We call upon Orthodox young men and women to realize the significance of living as faithful Christians and contemporary people. Faith in the eternal destiny of man strengthens our witness in the world.

In this spirit, from the Phanar, we wish all of you a propitious and all-blessed new ecclesiastical year, fruitful in Christ-like deeds, for the benefit of all creation and to the glory of the all-wise Creator of all. And we invoke upon you, through the intercessions of the All-Holy Theotokos, the Pammakaristos, the grace and mercy of the God of wonders.

September 1, 2020  
†Bartholomew of Constantinople  
Fervent supplicant of all before God



# The Spread of Orthodox Witness in the Holy Metropolis of New Zealand during COVID-19

Beloved Brothers & Sisters in Christ,  
Rejoice in the Lord!

The land is fertile, the harvest is plentiful, the workers are few. Especially now given the Global situation due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Missionary Metropolis of New Zealand continues to enable and invite all our Brothers and Sisters, around the world, to taste the joy of offering and praying for our fellow man, for our Spiritual family, the newly Illumined, the poor, the sick.

Two of our Missionary workers remain locked in Greece because of the Global conditions and are unable to return to New Zealand to continue to offer their services and their hearts to the Mission.

The country's borders remain closed and air travel between New Zealand and the mission islands of Fiji Tonga and Samoa is restricted.

Th pressure and concerns in the missionary fields of the Islands Nations due to the physical absence of the Missionary Clergy of our Church is constantly increasing.

However, even in the face of all this, where one could become overwhelmed by these challenges, Our All-Good and Loving God continues to provide the signs of his presence in the life and work of His Church.

During this period, we have been faced with a life and death situation with one of our beloved Local Clergy in Fiji.

In a lightning flash response, through the love of Christ expressed by our generous Orthodox Christians who love the Mission and Love the Church. The Holy Metropolis of New Zealand was able to raise \$ 13,000 in a matter of days for the purchase of a Dialysis machine unit consisting of 2 devices, which we are, as at the time of writing this article, in the process of shipping to the Medical Clinic in the city of Lautoka in Fiji, to be donated to the Clinic to treat patients who are suffering from kidney failure.

The lack of the necessary equipment in the health services of the Fiji Islands to address a life and death need for dialysis of Fr. Panagiotis, a Fijian

Born Greek Orthodox Priest, who was diagnosed with end-stage renal disease, mobilised us all.

It mobilised the loving kindness and generosity of our Faithful Brothers and Sisters who in one week raised the amount of \$ 13,000. Through the personal interest and constant motivations of Fr. Meletios, Head of the Missionary staff of the Fiji Islands. With the painstaking and continuous coordinating efforts of Fr. George to find, order, process and send these



***Students' Studying Hour –  
St. Tabitha's Orphanage, Fiji***



two machines from New Zealand and Australia to Fiji. And most importantly with the moving offerings of people who love Christ and strive to remain His friends and obey His promptings

The presence of God in this effort was manifested not only in the offer of money, time and effort that was contributed but was highlighted particularly in the words of protest from some of our brethren who when they heard from others that the Mission was trying to raise funds for this issue, but whom we had not contacted and asked them to contribute, got upset with us and we were called to justify why we did not call them!!! Glory be to the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



***Five Days in the Hospital  
with Sister Anysia***

What else could this be, but the voice of God in their heart, as their only motive for their reaction.

Whilst fundraising is very important, especially when it goes towards restoring the health of our brothers, it is not the only sign of the presence of our Lord in the Mission field.

Another clear sign of the Grace of God has been the maturity that we have seen in the team members of the Mission, of our newly enlightened brothers and sisters who have been called on in these most difficult times to step up and carry the great weight of the missionary effort. Of our local Priests, of the local Monastics and of all the volunteers.

We feel them growing day by day. Growing more and more in the Lord Jesus Christ. To live their lives ministering for the Church in a responsible and conscious way.

What else other than the Grace of God, the Giver of All things, could give such Gifts?

Gifts that heal the sick. Gifts that enlighten minds and illuminates hearts.

We ask you our beloved brothers and sisters, please, do not forget us in your prayers, do not forget our newly illumined. Do not forget all those who are called, day by day to give their all for the care and upbringing in Christ of our newly enlightened.

The land is fertile, the harvest is plentiful, the workers are few.

The joy of contributing is immense.

The joy in Heaven, of receiving another friend of His, is infinite.

I wish you all, from the depths of my heart, during the period of Christmas Lent, a period of spiritual reflection which our Church urges, to be beneficial to our souls, to attract the grace of our Almighty God, to prepare ourselves to receive our Lord Jesus Christ, transforming our hearts into a manger. To recognize Him, to accept Him, to host Him and to permanently give our heart to Him. That our hearts become His home, so that we no longer live our lives in a meaningless and pointless way but to live our Lives in Christ, to have Christ within our very being.

With much love in Christ,  
†Metropolitan Myron of New Zealand

# DECONSTRUCTING MYTHS RELATING TO THE PASSION OF THE ONE AND ONLY SON OF GOD FROM THE "LESSORS OF THE VINEYARD"

(Continued from the last issue)

## Myth 2:

An additional myth is that we humans have on our own the possibility by nature or through



education – the training to become "good citizens". Therefore, what is needed to do to eliminate evil in the world is moral education, which distinguishes everything and everyone between good and bad. This is what the Metropolitan of Pergamos I. Zizioulas notes: "Let's

make a self-criticism along with Dostoyevsky, who characteristically writes in one of his early and shocking works, the **Basement**: *"I went so far as to reach the certain conclusion that literally love consists of the strange right to torture the one you love. [...]"*»

That's why the strange conclusion is for Dostoyevsky the amazing truth that he expresses with the complaint: "In my hatred for the people of our land there is always a nostalgic anguish: why can't I hate them without loving them? [...] And in my love for them inside was a nostalgic sadness: Why can't I love them without hating them? Good and evil don't disconnect, they don't separate, they don't break up. [...] Man, every man, is a mixture of cunningness and simplicity, purity and sensuality, kindness and badness. Dimitri says: "I was a bad person, and yet I loved God... **Good and evil are in a monstrous coexistence within man.** The sin, which is not identified with sexual awakening but with our arrogance that we can become happy and immortal gods without God, it is not something that concerns only *our*



*actions* but marks man within his **very existence** as it is a divorce from the generator of life. *God has not become flesh nor rises to the gruesome Cross to make us better people, moral, etc., but to make us exist (overcoming death as a threat to man's being).*

### Myth 3:

A myth that puts us in a lethargy, just like the disciples of Jesus in Gethsemane, is that the Lord is a handsome Hindu-German, a blond and blue-eyed man, who either spread sweet sermons for love as a moral teacher or functioned as a rebel of the type "Tse Guevara". We have also identified the Bridegroom of the Church with the Icon of the Suffering Lord, which is placed in the center of the church during the first three days of the Holly Week. First of all, Jesus was a **Jew** and preached mainly in **Galilee**, primarily addressing those Jews who were suffering under the taxes that had been imposed by the conquerors and the guilt that was imposed on them by those who interpreted **the Testament** as the **Law**. The **Eternal Stranger**, as he is characterized in the Hymnology of Holy Saturday, particularly in narratives before the Holly Passion and Resurrection, is

presented as the Bridegroom- Judge who will ask for the reason of our attitudes and behaviours towards the OTHER. Do we devote the talents, He as Lord has given us, in the "service" of the stranger, the enemy? Our great hope, however, is that this Judge of ours is not a Super Star embodying the love for power but the



humiliated Groom, a suffering God who embodies the power of love and sacrifice. All we need to do is make the most of the heritage that He gave us to transfuse life to those around us. Is it possible that we may end up in our lives worshipping Pontius

Pilate who constantly washes his hands in the face of blatant injustice?

#### Myth 4:

Another myth that has been preserved and revived for centuries

and did not place him at the edge of the table stigmatized, but rather in the most honourable position, to the left, after offering him His own bite. Is it possible that this ungrateful greedy Judas is hidden within us? After



is either, **the hanging of an external Judas**, in order to function overall *as scapegoat* along with the Jews, or the view of the Traitor as a programmed – winded tool of God. For the Bible, Judas was chosen by Jesus for his **charismas**, but Judas himself also chose the Lord. He received the power to preach, to work miracles while resenting along with the other disciples, while *en route* (=on the way) for the Passion, for the thrones requested by the sons of Zebedee. Christ himself washed his dirty feet

all, we may not even have the self-reproach of Judas who was hanged by his guilt? Maybe we eventually commit suicide every day, killing those around us, because we do not have the courage to empty the garbage truck of our existence at the feet of a spiritual guide, of a Moses? *For Dostoevsky there is one and only choice for man, instead of suicide. It is expressed by Ivan Karamazov with the dilemma: **Either the cross or the gallows.** “Tomorrow”, he says, “the cross but not the scaffold. No, I will*



*not hang myself. I could never commit suicide". And as the devil says to Ivan, "people suffer, but they live, they live a real life, not imaginary, because to suffer is life". Raskolnikov in 'Crime*

*is the beautification of the Cross. We have transformed the Cross into jewel or, even worst, we reverse it and then the Cross becomes a deadly knife with which you criticize human beings.*



and Punishment' kneels in front of Sonia and kisses her feet saying: **I knelt not in front of you, but in front of all the suffering humanity.** And Zosimas explains that he knelt in front of Dimitry Karamazov with the words: **"I knelt in front of what he's about to suffer (Dimitri)".**

### Myth 5:

Finally, another myth that weakens the radical message of Christianity

We tend to forget that the wood of the Cross was the tool on which the first globalized political system of history, that of Rome, nailed and thus punished with a slow, **torturous** death those who questioned the **sanctity** of their religious and political establishment. While the Roman citizens were beheaded instantly, other victims were hung naked on a two-meter high wood, so that eventually may suffer a crude death from suffocation and

from shame. Christ does not have a stolid death, drinking the poison like Socrates among his friends. He is in horrible pain and He is thirsty, feeling the absolute loneliness even from His Father. According to the Letter to the Hebrews, Christ is crucified again, not by the evil Jews but by those Christians who humiliate Him with their inconsistency and return to the old practices.

Before hanging Jesus on the cross, the Romans mock Him with unique sadomasochism that those imprisoned in barracks have, when they get the opportunity from victims to become perpetrators. In ancient times, on New Year's day a victim in the prime of his youth, lived for three days as a king and then was burned to death in order to act as purification, taking with him all the guilt. The Lord's last temptation is not to marry Magdalene, as some fantasized, but to make a show of His power by throwing off Him the thorny crown that Adam had created for Him and making a show by freeing His people from the conquerors.

## Conclusions

Finally, we are thirsty for eternity because eternity exists! And eternity exists because the Resurrection is a

fact! Eternity doesn't come away from hardships, but through hardships. *"The suffering is for Dostoyevsky the only true and indisputable reality within human existence, the only antidote to the ridiculousness of morality that ignores the absurdity of coexistence within the same man of good and evil. The Cross is the only true reality in existence, but not the last."*

- So is true that religion really says that all of us will rise from the dead and we're going to live again and see each other again?

- Without a doubt we are going to resurrect ... And cheerfully, we'll tell each other what's happened... Aliosa replied.

- Oh, how beautiful it's going to be then, Kolia said.

- Well, let's finish with the speeches now and let's go to the table of consolation... Here we go now hand in hand.

At the end of the section marked: "The trials of a soul" of the Karamazov brothers, Dimitri is having a terrible dream. In the remains of a burned village a peasant woman tries to escape and to be saved, and next to her an infant suffering from hunger tries to breast-feed from his mother's dry breast. Then Dimitri, writes Dostoevsky, "felt a feeling of pity that he had never felt before, rising





in his heart, to want to cry, to do something for all of them, so that the infant no longer cries, his dark and scrawny mother to stop shedding tears, so that no more tears would exist". Thus, Dostoyevsky envisions the ultimate good beyond suffering. The Cross must be overcome by the Resurrection. There is no place in the Kingdom of God for pain. Love embraces suffering, in order not to give it metaphysical content, but to turn it into joy. Dostoyevsky does not clearly say it, but he implies it: Holy Communion is a foretaste of

joy, not sadness - not even a mixture of joy and sadness. We said that the heroes of Dostoyevsky are a mixture of good and evil and that it would be in vain for us to seek among them the morally perfect. Pain is the only truth and by accepting it, particularly in the face of the Other, we overcome nihilism and we understand that it's worth being alive. Yet, beyond all that, the one thing that gives meaning to our existence is the Resurrection.

Professor Sotiris Despotis



# The Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Jeonju



The faithful of the Parish of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Jeonju, with the participation of the Metropolitan of Korea Fr. Ambrosios, assisted by Presbyter Fr. Hillarion Jeong, and Deacon Yohan Park celebrated the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos, according to the ecclesiastical order.

On the day before the feast, many believers and the clergy worked for the cleaning of the church, the decoration of the icons, the preparation of the Artoklasia and the Prosporon for the Divine Liturgy.

During the Service of Vespers, the Metropolitan delivered a sermon and said that, what the Virgin Mary asks of us on her feast day are two things: First, to listen to

the word of Her Son and to apply it in our lives, so that we may not only be listeners, but also doers: **“those who hear the word of God and keep it”** (Lk. 11:28). He also admonished parents to teach their children the word of God, and how to apply it in their everyday life.

On the following day, the Service of Orthros (Matins) of the Feast as well as the Divine Liturgy were celebrated. Before the Dismissal, the Procession of the Holy Icon of the Virgin Mary took place, at the end of which a prayer of thanks was offered for the liberation of Korea from the Japanese yoke in 1945 and for the establishment of the Republic of Korea (15/8/1948). The word *Gwangbok*





means "restoration of light".

This was followed by a common meal of Love, during which the Metropolitan referred to the protection of the Virgin Mary as the “Mother of the whole world”, and invited the faithful to resort

to Her Intercessions during all their difficulties. Finally, he asked everyone to pray so that soon we may celebrate the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Her new Church, which is currently being constructed.





# The Wedding Ceremony of Dionysios Kwon and Katerina Park in Seoul



On Saturday, September 26, 2020, the Korean Orthodox faithful experienced the great joy of performing the Sacrament of the Wedding of Dionysios Kwon and Katerina Park at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Seoul. The Sacrament was performed by Metropolitan Ambrose with the participation of the presbyters Fr. Romanos Kavchak and Fr. Antonios Lim, and the Deacon Johan Park.

Dionysios is the son of the late Fr. Paul Kwon. Presbytera Harris, deeply moved, accompanied her son to the church with the participation of ten faithful from the parish of St. Dionysios of Aegina in Ulsan.

Due to COVID-19 the number of participants was limited inside the church. Most remained outside in the courtyard.

The Metropolitan of Korea conveyed to the newlyweds the wishes of His Eminence Metropolitan Sotirios of Pidisia, the Clergy and the faithful of the Church in Korea.

Commenting on the apostolic reading from the letter to the Ephesians, he presented the divinely inspired counsel given by the apostle Paul to newlyweds, which is the key to the success of their marriage. And he concluded:

*Dear Dionysios and Katerina, make sure you keep deep in your heart the divinely inspired counsels of Apostle Paul and be absolutely sure that your marriage will always be happy. These counsels dispel any sinful tendency to conspire, oppress, and exploit one another. They bring a balance in male-female relationships; they weaken feminist claims and counter-claims, and protect the divine gifts of peace and harmony in the family home.*

*In the difficult times that will inevitably come in your marital course, remember Paul's counsel and you will find rest in your souls and solutions to your problems.*

*Because, really, if the man loves his wife as himself and the woman respects her husband, then there is nothing to shake their relationship. Their bond will be lifelong and eternal because it will be based on the "stone", that is, Christ. (1 Cor. 10: 4)*





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Orthodox Mission in the East  
Quarterly newsletter  
of the Patriarchal Foundation  
of the Far East Mission - Issue 72  
July - September 2020

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**National Bank of Greece: Account Number: 040-296124-56**

**IBAN: GR6001100400000004029612456**

**Alpha Bank of Greece: Account Number: 473-002101-099272**

**IBAN: GR8901404730473002101099272**



**Visit of the Slavs to the Holy Monastery of Holy Transfiguration in Gapyeong with their priest Fr. Roman Kavchak, for their spiritual edification and voluntary work, for the cleaning of the yard of the Monastery**