

**ST. MAKARIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH,** [saintmakarios.org](http://saintmakarios.org)  
**Orthodox Church in America** [oca.org](http://oca.org)

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BULLETIN FOR SEPTEMBER 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012

*Until September 23<sup>rd</sup>, all services at Calvert House, 5735 S. University Ave.*

*Starting September 23<sup>rd</sup>, Sunday services at Carith Carmelite Pre-Novitiate House, 5498*

*Kimbark (door facing Kimbark, building just south of St. Thomas Catholic Church, against 55<sup>th</sup> St.). Saturday Vespers will remain at Calvert.*

Sunday, 9am Orthros, 10am Divine Liturgy

Saturday, 6pm Vespers @ Calvert House

Tuesday, September 11, 18, 5pm Vespers @ Calvert House

Tuesday, September 25 and on, 6:30pm Vespers @ Carith House



**PLEASE NOTE: Friday night, 9/7: Vigil and Liturgy for Birth of the Mother of God, and next Thursday night 9/13 for the Elevation of the Cross; both 5-8pm.**

**Looking ahead: Welcome dinner, for the beginning of the School Year at the Polites', 6pm Thursday October 11<sup>th</sup>. If you want to stop by us at UC orientation, let me know, I can give dates and times.**

**Diocesan Assembly 11/12,**

**All-American Council (special election for Metropolitan) 11/13**

**Both in Parma, OH**

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**Selections from Bishop Alexander Golitzin,  
"Scriptural Images of the Church."**

...I begin my reflection with the following thesis statement: for Orthodox tradition, the Church is nothing more nor less than Israel in the altered circumstances of Messiah's death, resurrection, and the eschatological outpouring of his Spirit. This "inaugurated eschaton", to borrow a phrase from the late Fr. Georges Florovsky, is at the same time a "new creation" (Gal 6:15). In Jesus of Nazareth, Mary's son and eternal Son and Word of the Father, Israel has in a sense itself been crucified, raised, and changed, such as to become the "first-fruits" of the new creation (I Cor 15:20), the "new" or "heavenly Adam" (cf. I Cor 15:45 ff.; R 5:12 ff.), the beginning of the world to come (Col 1:18). Yet, at least in Orthodox tradition, it would be most wrong to emphasize this change, these altered circumstances, as denoting rupture pure and simple with the Israel of the patriarchs, kings, and prophets. True, far and away the majority of Israel did not accept the change, and they carry on to the present apart from the Church, but I would maintain that that separation was and is not so much *between* Church and Israel, as between two separate and discrete entities, as it is a schism *within* Israel, a schism which, if we are to believe the Apostle, God -- and only God! -- will heal at the end of days (see R 9-11). Christian and Jewish polemics, both in the early centuries of the Church and in more recent times, may often have obscured this fundamental linkage and kinship, but they could not erase it. It is built into the earliest documents of

Christianity and reflected continuously thereafter in Orthodox literature and liturgy. Thus for St. Paul, as I read him, the discussion at issue in epistles such as Galatians and, especially, Romans centers not on the rejection of Israel, but rather, through Messiah, on the expansion of Israel's boundaries to include the nations.

...In the Orthodox liturgical year, quite the most dense concentration of images and scriptures touching on the nature of the Church occurs in the feasts dedicated to Mary Theotokos. She is herself the outstanding type or icon of the Church. Hence, as noted above, the implicit parallel in Luke between her and the tabernacle of Exodus, a parallel that is made explicit, and at considerable length, in the 2nd century apocryphon, the *Protevangelium of James*, which, *inter alia*, portrays the young Virgin weaving the temple veil, surely an allusion to the "veil" of Christ's flesh (cf. Heb 10:20) which will later be "woven" in her womb. The feast of the Entry of the Theotokos, November 21st, thus deploys three of the texts I noted above in connection with the entry of the Glory into the sanctuary: Exod 40, I K 8, and Ezek 43. Two other Marian feasts, the Annunciation and the Nativity of the Theotokos, add, respectively, Exod 3:1-8 (the burning bush), and Prov 9:1-11 (the house of Wisdom) together with Gen 28:10-17 (the ladder of Jacob and the Beth-el, "house of God"). Of the many images applied to her in the hymnography, most of them from the Temple cultus, almost all carry the sense of something that either contains or holds, hence: candlestand (i.e., *menorah*), vessel or jar (of manna),

chariot (cf. Ezek 1), throne, ark, mercy seat (*kapporet*), holy mountain (! cf. Sinai/Zion, and Dan 2:45), holy of holies, tabernacle, temple, palace, house, meeting-place, paradise containing the Tree of Life, bridal chamber of light, gate of heaven, ladder, golden censer, incense altar, holy table (of the shewbread), living heaven, living pavillion of the Glory, and living city (cf. again Rev 21-22). All of these are as well types of the Church. All or nearly all of them have their original locus in the divinely-ordained cult, and all are, again, equally types not just of the Virgin, but of the Christian.

Here I arrive at the soteriological dimension of the cluster of images around the tabernacle and temple. Christ himself is pre-eminently the tabernacle and temple (cf. Jn 1:14 and 2:19-21), the "tabernacling" of the Glory or *Šekinah* among us, the "Lord of Glory" (I Cor 2:8), the Immanuel. The Church, as his risen body into which believers are incorporated in Baptism (or with which they are "clothed", cf. Gal 3:27, Col 3:10), and which is made present in the worshipping assembly, is also temple (cf., e.g., Eph 2:21-22). Third, however, the baptized Christian is temple as well (cf. I Cor 6:19-20), for whom Mary Theotokos is, again, exemplar *par excellence*. It is in this imagery of the indwelling Glory, based on the Sinai and Zion traditions, that we find in fact the scriptural foundations for the Orthodox soteriology of *theosis*, deification. In the subsequent literature of the Eastern Church, particularly in the writers of the ascetico-mystical tradition (which means, after the 4th century, essentially the monks), we discover this parallelism and interweaving of the "three temples" or "three churches", to use an expression in the 4th century *Liber Graduum*, as continuously the subject of meditation and reflection to the end of the Byzantine era. At the heart of these reflections is faith in the participation in God -- "partakers of the divine nature" (II Peter 1:4) -- offered the believer in Christ through his Church, and discovered in the inner reaches of the heart. That discovery, moreover, is not merely or even primarily an affair of the emotions (though emotion has its part to play), so much as personal experience of the transfiguring Lord, which experience we may characterize as the so to speak subjective validation at once of the truth of the dogmas, and of the "real presence" of the sacraments.

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***Mary, the Mother of God: the Cross of the Mother of Life.***

*"Concerning Emulation of the Mother of God,"*

*excerpt- by St. Maria Skobtsova (who experienced the death of 2 of her 3 children, and exhorted the 3<sup>rd</sup> to martyrdom)*

The significance and meaning of the cross is inexhaustible. The Cross of Christ -- is the eternal wood of life, invincible power, uniting heaven with earth, an implement of horrid execution. But what such is the cross on the paths of the imitation of Christ, in what ought our crosses to resemble the singular Cross of the Son of Man? Indeed even upon Golgotha

it stood not alone, for there were there three crosses, -- the Cross of the God-Man and the crosses of the two thieves. Are not these two subsequent crosses as it were symbols of all the human crosses, and dependent upon us as to which of them we express? Our way of the cross is in any event inevitable, but we have the choice, and we can voluntarily go the path of the blaspheming thief -- and perish, or go the way of acclaiming Christ -- and be with Him now in paradise. In the same span of time the thief, choosing perdition, shared the same fate with the Son of Man. He was condemned the same and sentenced to the cross, he alike suffered the torment of the cross. But this does not mean, that his cross was in emulation of the Cross of Christ, or that his path led him to the feet of Christ.

In the image of the Cross is the most essential, the most defining thing -- the necessity of freely and voluntarily wanting to accept and lift it. Christ accepted upon Himself freely and voluntarily the sins of the world, and He lifted them upon the Cross, and by this He redeemed them, and conquered hell and death. Free acceptance of the deed and responsibility, the free crucifixion of one's sins -- herein is the meaning of the cross, when we speak about bearing it upon our human paths. Freedom -- is the inseparable sister of responsibility. The cross is this freely accepted responsibility, with open eyes and soberly so.

Having taken the cross upon his shoulders, a man forsakes everything, -- and this signifies, that he ceases to be a certain part of this everything, -- of this natural world. He ceases to be subject to its natural laws, those which free the human soul from responsibility. Natural laws not only set free from responsibility -- they deprive of freedom. In actual fact, what sort of responsibility can there be, when I act, as the unconquerable dictates of my nature lead me to do, and what sort of freedom can there be, when I am totally subject to these laws of nature?

And so herein the Son of Man pointed out to His brethren in the flesh rather a super-natural path of freedom and responsibility, which in this sense is not merely human but God-manly. He told them, that the image of God within them makes them likewise God-manly and he calls them to *theosis*, to deification, to that wherein they actually should become sons of God, should come to this filiation to God, freely and responsibly lifting up their cross upon the shoulder.

The free path to Golgotha -- herein is in what consists the genuine imitation of Christ...

... The Orthodox consciousness bears always within its depths a sense of the mystery of the Mother of God. For it, She is not only the suffering Mother at the Cross of Her Crucified Son, She is also the Queen of Heaven, more honourable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim. The Orthodox consciousness perceives Her, the Virgin from the tribe of Judah, the Daughter of David, as the Mother of all the living, as the living and personal embodiment of the Church, as human

Body of Christ. By the protection of the Mother of God the world is safe-guarded, and She is the mother of the damp of the earth. Herein this lattermost image is in connection with thoughts about the cross, having become a two-edged sword, and gains therein a yet new power. The ground of Golgotha with the cross planted into it, piercing it, the ground of Golgotha, scarlet with blood, -- is not this the mother's heart, cut by the sword? The Golgotha cross is the weapon piercing through the soul of the earth -- of its mother.

And if we divert from this, wherein the Mother of God is manifest to us in glorified image, if we perceive Her only in Her earthly path, then it is there, where it becomes possible to speak about an "imitation" of Her, then it is perfectly proper, that the Christian soul should understand the sort of special possibilities, opening before it. Upon this path namely of the Mother of God must needs be sought out the justifications and foundations of our hopes, to find the religious and mystical meaning of an authentic human communality, which outside of this eludes us.

It can be directly asserted, that an authentic and religious attitude towards man in all its extent, with all the particular and personal details, reveals itself only then ultimately, when it is sanctified by the path of the Mother of God, set in accord with Her footsteps. It is in light of Her.

And herein is the very chief thing -- to have a sympathetic sense, of what the Golgotha of the Son was for His Mother.

He undergoes the voluntary sufferings on the Cross, -- She involuntarily **co**-suffers with Him. He bears the sins of the world, -- She **co**-works with Him. She **co**-participates, She **co**-feels, **co**-suffers, His flesh is crucified, -- She is **co**-crucified.

The degree of the Golgotha torments was beyond measure. Their measure is not given us: the Cross of the Son in all its vast extent, in all its weightiness becomes the double-edged sword, transfixing the Mother's heart. These torments were on the level of the immeasurable. The difference is only in this, that the torments of the active, free and voluntary acceptance by the Son becomes the passive, inevitable **co**-acceptance by the Mother.

Upon Golgotha the words of the Annunciation, "behold the handmaiden of the Lord", resound not triumphant, in then is drowned out any thoughts about, that "henceforth all generations will call Me blessed". On Golgotha She was the handmaiden of Her suffering Son and God, the handmaiden of His suffering. It was the same submissiveness, that was also there on the day of the good-tidings Annunciation, the same **co**-participation in God's arrangement and plan, yet there however it was a path to the Nativity, to the **co**-sharing in the angelic song: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will to men", and here however -- this was a **co**-sharing in the pre-eternally inevitable Golgotha torment, in the "extreme humility" of the emptying kenosis of God. The stones and scales were rent asunder, the earth did split, the

curtain of the Temple was torn in twain, the weapon of the cross did pierce the soul of the Mother, the Son consigned His spirit into the hands of the Father.

Certainly, the Mother of God had Her own particular fate, Her own cross. But can Her fate be termed a cross, freely chosen and lifted ashoulder? It would seem to me, that Her fate was the cross of Her Son, having become the sword piercing the soul.

Her whole mystery is in this **co**-uniting with the fate of Her Son, from the Annunciation and the Nativity, through Golgotha to the Resurrection, to the Pentecost, to the eternal heavenly glorification of the Uspenie, the Dormition, the Falling-Asleep.

Always -- His will be done, -- the Handmaiden of the Lord had open to Her His fate, His being pierced upon the Cross.

Thus it was in the hour of Golgotha, and in the 33rd year of our century, -- and thus it will be eternally. Eternal is the Golgotha of the Son of Man, eternal are His torments of the Cross, and eternal are the torments from the weapon piercing the soul of the Mother.

There is much in this maternal torment that we can also at present discern and recognise, and draw conclusions, concerning our human torments.

Foremost, and chiefly, -- we see the humanity of Christ, the Church of Christ, the Body of Christ, to which the Mother of God is likewise Mother. And this expression is not only a certain bit of pious lyrics, -- it also precisely corresponds to the very understanding of the Church as the Body of Christ. And if so, then also in relation to the Church as eternally alive is that, which She experienced in relation to Her own Son. The Mother of God-manhood -- is the Church, She also at present is pierced through by the torments of this Body of Christ, by the torments of each member of this Body. In other words, all the innumerable crosses, raised up by mankind upon its shoulders, in order to follow after Christ, are turned into a likewise innumerable number of swords, eternally piercing Her maternal heart. She continues to **co**-share, to **co**-feel, **co**-suffer with each human soul, just as that selfsame day on Golgotha.

This is a main thing. And in this sense She always goes with us along our own way of the cross, She is always here, alongside, and our every cross -- is Her sword.

But there is another thing also, no less essential. Each man -- is not only the image of God, an icon of the Divinity, not only brother after the flesh of the God-Man, by Him deified and by Him vouchsafed a cross, each man in this sense is also a son of the Mother of God. Each man likewise is also the image of the Mother of God, giving birth to Christ within, from the Holy Spirit. In this sense therefore, each man in his depths is manifest as a two-in-one icon of the Mother of God with the Divine Infant, as is thus revealed by this two-in-one mystery of God-manhood. This is easy to see and simple to follow out, how the Old Testament mankind prepared itself

for the Birthgiving of God, how all God's promises to it tended namely to this promise of the Birthgiving of God. And the Virgin Mary in full measure was connected with this hoped-for Birthgiving of God from the house of David, from the tribe of Judah, from the seed of Abraham. And we, the New Testament Church, having grown forth from the Old Testament one, in this aspect have lost nothing. In this sense it might be possible to speak about a physical communion-sharing of mankind, -- and by this to signify, that each separate man, -- shares in the birth of the Son of God. But concerning this it can and ought only to be spoken of in a very mystical, a very deep plane of the human soul. And indeed, ultimately the analysis of suchlike a literal equation: the Son of God -- is the Son of Man, renders demonstrable the birthgiving of God by man.

And thus, the human soul combines within it two images -- the image of the Son of God and the image of the Mother of God, and through this itself the soul ought to be a participant not only in the fate of the Son, but also in Her fate. Both the Son of God, and His Mother -- are pre-eternal archetypes -- thereby symbols, in accord with which the soul orients itself upon its religious paths. And in this sense it not only ought to imitate Christ, but also to imitate the Mother of God. This means, that it ought not only to take up the cross upon its shoulders, freely chosen. It ought also to know the mystery of the cross, rendered into a sword. First, the Golgotha Cross of the Son of Man ought to be the sword piercing into each Christian soul, it ought to be a lived-through experience as a co-sharing, a co-suffering together with Him. Yet besides this, it ought to be an acceptance of the crosses-swords of its brethren.

In actual fact, we shall endeavour more to the point and precisely to examine the legacy of the path of the Mother of God for the human soul, in which each shares to some or other degree.

If man is not only the image of God, but also of the image of the Mother of God, then also in each other man he ought to see likewise the image of God and the image of the Mother of God. In the human Mother of God aspect of the human soul there is not only annunciation of the birth of the Son of God and not only the birth of Christ, but there is also keenness of sight towards the vision of Christ's image in other souls. And in this sense the Mother of God aspect of the human soul begins to accept other people as its own children, to af-filiate them under its wing to itself. The utmost of the 'Mother of God aspect' -- is to catch sight of the God and Son in others, -- something ultimately attainable only by the Virgin Mary. But insofar as we ought to strive to follow in Her path and Her image imaged in our human souls, just the same we ought to catch sight of the God and Son in each man. The sight of God -- in accord with the God-image and the God-likeness of the Son of God -- allows the human soul, having given birth to Christ within itself, by this as it were to

af-filiate itself in sonship with all the Body of Christ, all God-manhood, and each man separately also.

Be it however it may, it is upon human shoulders, upon the pathways of human God-likeness, there lies the cross. The human heart ought still to be transfixed by the double-edged swords, by weapons the crosses of others sundering the soul. The cross of one's neighbour ought to be for the soul a sword, piercing it. It ought to co-share in the fate of neighbour, to co-feel, to co-suffer. And it does not choose these swords, -- they are chosen by those, who accept them as a cross, lifted ashoulder. In the likeness of its archetype, the Mother of God, the human soul is drawn to Golgotha, in the footsteps of its son, and it cannot not be drawn there, it cannot not bleed.

It seems to me, that herein lies the authentic mystical grounds of human communality.

And it ought not to be confused as it were with an outwardly arrogant and haughty declaration, that our souls should relate maternally to whatever the other souls. A mother is not greater than her children, and often even less. And this maternalism signifies neither some aspect of spiritual growth nor measure of exploit, -- it expresses merely an humble and submissive striving to co-share in the Golgotha of an other, to the passive acceptance of it, to the opening up of its own heart for the blow of the double-edged sword. All this possibly can be said more simply in a single word. This maternalism signifies -- love.

It is not along the line of a certain loss of weight, still more of increasing the weight of our crosses, it is not along the line of a pious proclivity, a duty of developing our virtue, -- that we ought to relate towards man.

Only one sole law exists here. Our attitude should be defined only by this, that we ought to catch sight in the other man of the image of God, and from the other side, we ought to af-filiate him as a son. And herein duty, virtue, pious proclivity, -- all fade out.

She that assumed the exploit of love teaches us humble acceptance of these crosses of others. She summons each Christian soul to incessantly repeat after Her: "Behold the handmaiden of the Lord", ever flowing with blood, even while sensing the sword slicing at the heart.

Such is the measure of love, such is the extent, to which the human soul ought to strive. It might even be said, that such is the sole obligatory attitude of man towards man. It is only when the soul takes hold the cross of another man, his doubts, his grief, his temptations, downfalls, sins, -- only then can one speak about an obligatory attitude towards the other.

And likewise, just as the sole obligatory bearing of the cross in the world was the bearing of the Cross by Christ, so likewise the sole obligatory acceptance of the cutting sword was its acceptance by His Mother, standing at the foot of the Cross. In this was the uniqueness of Her sanctity. In this indeed was also Her pre-eternal measureless height of sanctity, an unattainable height of sanctity. And if it be thus unattainable, then every other attitude to the cross and to the

sword, is a various degree of sin, -- whether from the rarely fallen and unflagging Christian path in the consciousness of the ascetics, right down to a full and total refusal of it.

And herein here it is necessary to take the measure of our sins upon this Mother of God's path of our souls. It is essential, that they be all the sins against man -- both against the God-likeness and the af-filiative of sonship, that they include the sins against the Cross of God and against the human crosses, sins hindering their admittance into one's heart as a double-edged sword.

One might think it reasonable, that for each man it would seem, that from his heart there would be nothing left, it would all flow empty of blood, if he were to open it not even only for the innumerable swords of all God-mankind, but even only for the single sword of an other very near and dear, very beloved from amongst one's brethren. And it is difficult to object to this. It is difficult to deny the legitimacy and naturalness of a certain inner self-defensiveness of the human soul from whatever the things inundating it from all sides and weighing it down with things unneeded for it. It is difficult in context of natural law. And natural law, by whatever the false path having penetrated its way into the supernatural realm of spiritual life, definitely says: bear thine own cross responsibly, freely and honourably, and as occasion warrants open up thine heart for the cross-swords of thine near and dear, -- and that is all there is to it.

But if for the natural laws the Cross of Christ be a temptation or folly, then for them also the two-edged weapon, piercing the soul, has to be likewise a folly and likewise a temptation. For the Christian there is not only the cross, but also a cross having become a sword, without any limitations, without any attempts at a rational accounting of its powers, it has to be by the power of God and by the Wisdom of God. Moreover, everything that fails to be a fullness of the sword, taken to heart, is sin.

And if from suchlike a measure of sin we take stock of our attitudes towards people, then we shall see, that each of these is sinful. It is sinful ultimately our attitude towards the furthest, when we fail to accept them as in the image of God, and whom we make no sort of attempt to af-filiate in sonship. It is sinful also the attitude towards those, whom we as it were both hear, and help, but yet fail to be wounded by them, fail to sense all the intensity of their cross, as a weapon, transfixing the soul. Finally, sinful also is the attitude towards the very near and dear, whom we sometimes accept in a full measure of obligatory relationship, -- i.e. we are pierced by their crosses, and we see in them also the image of God, and we af-filiate them in sonship, -- but we do this only in whatever their special moments in our life, and then anew we stumble down into a natural, i.e. a sinful lack of discernment in relation to them. Ultimately, sinful also is our [relaation?] towards the Man from among men, towards the Son of Man, since rarely also is His Cross accepted by us as a weapon, transfixing our soul.

And wherein is the hindrance? What makes all our human community inwardly sinful and defective? It is this, that in our spiritual pathways we are guided under the measure of natural laws and by calculation of natural powers, forgetting, that upon the Christian path our powers are supernatural, -- and therefore also inexhaustible. It might more precisely be said, that what hinders us is the shabbiness of faith.

In Christian life there ought to be not only the folly of the cross, but also the folly of the sword, not only the crucifixion with oneself, but also a co-crucifixion with oneself, the standing at Golgotha, at the foot of each human cross. The Christian soul ought to be both filial as son, -- i.e. a cross-bearer, and maternal as mother, i.e. taking to heart one's sword.

It becomes terrible to look back upon one's life, taking stock of its fidelity to the cross-sword. There seems to be nothing, besides a falling-away, betrayals, coldness and lack of discernment. Each such attitude towards man -- is only sin, and always sin. Always in accord with the laws of this world, never in accord with the image of God. And the sinister reason of mind confirms the inevitability of these natural laws, the lack of measure and unbearableness of the cross, the lack of measure of the sword. What to do, if literally the cross be not folly, nor temptation?

The Son of God, the eternal archetype of every human soul, besought the Father in prayer: Thy will be done. And the same were the words spoken by the Mother: behold the Handmaiden of the Lord. And this the same we find in the very depths of our human hearts, imaged of God and maternal as to their spiritual essence.

This endows us a sort of power, -- not in that we are delivered from sin in relation to God and to people, -- but, in extreme measure in this, that we perceive this sin as sin, and not as a legitimate and natural condition, justifiable and reasoned as natural.

1939, *Put'* Journal

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### **Fr. Georges Florovsky: The Ever- Virgin Mary, the Mother of GOD**

From <http://orthodoxmartyria.blogspot.com/2012/05/fr-georges-florovsky-ever-virgin-mary.html>

...Jesus was (and is) the Eternal God, and yet Incarnate, and Mary was his Mother in the fullest sense.

Otherwise the Incarnation would not have been genuine. But this means precisely that for the Incarnate Lord there is one particular human person to whom he is in a very special relation,-in precise terms, one for whom he is not only the Lord and Saviour, but a Son. On the other hand, Mary was the true mother of her Child-the truth of her human maternity is of no less relevance and importance than the mystery of her divine motherhood. But the Child was divine. Yet the spiritual implications of her motherhood could not be



diminished by the exceptional character of the case, nor could Jesus fail to be truly human in his filial response to the motherly affection of the one of whom he was born. This is not a vain speculation. It would be impertinent indeed to intrude upon the sacred field of this unparalleled intimacy between the Mother and the divine Child. But it would be even more impertinent to ignore the mystery. In any case, it would have been a very impoverished idea if we regarded the Virgin Mother merely as a physical instrument of our Lord's taking flesh. Moreover, such a misinterpretation is formally excluded by the explicit teaching of the Church, attested from the earliest date: she was not just a "channel" through which the Heavenly Lord has come, but truly the mother of whom he took his humanity. St. John of Damascus precisely in these very words summarizes the Catholic teaching: he did not come "as through a pipe" [hos dia solenos] but has assumed of her [ex autes], a human nature consubstantial to ours (De Fide Orth., 111, 12).

Mary "has found favor with God" (Luke i. 30). She was chosen and ordained to serve in the Mystery of the Incarnation. And by this eternal election or predestination she was in a sense set apart and given an unique privilege and position in the whole of mankind, nay in the whole of creation. She was given a transcendent rank, as it were. She was at once a representative of the human race, and set apart. There is an antinomy here, implied in the divine election. She was set apart. She was put into a unique and unparalleled relation to God, to the Holy Trinity, even before the Incarnation, as the prospective Mother of the Incarnate Lord, just because it was not an ordinary historical happening, but an eventful consummation of the eternal decree of God. She has a unique position even in the divine plan of salvation. Through the Incarnation human nature was to be restored again into the fellowship with God which had been destroyed and abrogated by the Fall. The sacred humanity of Jesus was to be the bridge over the abyss of sin. Now, this humanity was to be taken of the Virgin Mary. The Incarnation itself was a new beginning in the destiny of man, a beginning of the new humanity. In the Incarnation the "new man" was born, the "Last Adam"; he was truly human, but he was more than a man: "The second man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. xv. 47).

As the Mother of this "Second Man," Mary herself was participating in the mystery of the redeeming re-creation of the world. Surely, she is to be counted among the redeemed. She was most obviously in need of salvation. Her Son is her Redeemer and Saviour, just as he is the Redeemer of the world. Yet, she is the only human being for whom the Redeemer of the world is also a son, her own child whom she truly bore. Jesus indeed was born "not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 13— this verse is related both to the Incarnation and to baptismal regeneration), and yet he is "the fruit of the womb" of Mary.

*His supernatural birth is the pattern and the font of the new existence, of the new and spiritual birth of all believers, which is nothing else than a participation in his sacred humanity, an adoption into the sonship of God—in the second man," in the "last Adam."* The Mother of the "second man" necessarily had her own and peculiar way into the new life. It is not too much to say that for her the Redemption was, in a sense, anticipated in the fact of the Incarnation itself,— and anticipated in a peculiar and personal manner. "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee" (Luke i. 35). This was a true "theophanic presence"— in the fullness of grace and of the Spirit. The "shadow" is exactly a theophanic symbol. And Mary was truly "full of grace," gratia plena, kecharitome. The Annunciation was for her, as it were, an anticipated Pentecost. We are compelled to risk this daring parallelism by the inscrutable logic of the divine election. For indeed we cannot regard the Incarnation merely as a metaphysical miracle which would be unrelated to the personal destiny and existence of the persons involved. Man is never dealt with by God as if he was but a tool in the hands of a master. For man is a living person. By no means could it be merely an "instrumental" grace, when the Virgin was "overshadowed" with the power of the Highest. The unique position of the Virgin Mary is obviously not her own achievement, nor simply a "reward" for her "merits,"— nor even perhaps was the fullness of grace given to her in a "prevision" of her merits and virtue.

It was supremely the free gift of God, in the strictest sense— gratia gratis data. It was an absolute and eternal election, although not unconditional— for it was conditioned by and related to the mystery of the Incarnation. Mary holds her unique position and has a "category of her own" not as a mere Virgin, but as the Virgin-Mother, parthenometor, as the predestined Mother of the Lord. Her function in the Incarnation is twofold. On the one hand, she secures the continuity of the human race. Her Son is, in virtue of his "second nativity," the Son of David, the Son of Abraham and of all the "forefathers" (this is emphasized by the genealogies of Jesus, in both versions). In the phrase of St. Irenaeus, he "recapitulated in himself the long roll of humanity" (Adv. Haeres., 111, 18, 1: longam hominum expositionem in se ipso recapitulavit), "gathered up in himself all nations, dispersed as they were even from Adam" (111, 22, 3) and "took upon himself the old way of creation" (IV, 23, 4). But, on the other hand, he "exhibited a new sort of generation" (V, 1, 3). He was the New Adam. This was the most drastic break in the continuity, the true reversal of the previous process. And this "reversal" begins precisely with the Incarnation, with the Nativity of the "Second Man." St. Irenaeus speaks of a recirculation from Mary to Eve (111, 22, 4). As the Mother of the New Man Mary has her anticipated share in this very newness. Of course, Jesus the Christ is the

only Lord and Saviour. But Mary is his mother. She is the morning star that announces the sunrise, the rise of the true Sol salutis: aster emphaion ton helion. She is "the dawn of the mystic day," *auge mystikes hemeras* (both phrases are from the Akathist hymn). And in a certain sense even the Nativity of our Lady itself belongs to the mystery of salvation. "Thy birth, O Mother of God and Virgin, hath declared joy to all the universe— for from thee arose the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God" (Troparion of the Feast of the Nativity of our Lady). ...

...The intimate experience of the Mother of the Lord is hidden from us. And nobody was ever able to share this unique experience, by the very nature of the case. It is the mystery of the person. This accounts for the dogmatic reticence of the Church in Mariological doctrine. The Church speaks of her rather in the language of devotional poetry, in the language of antinomial metaphors and images. There is no need, and no reason, to assume that the Blessed Virgin realized at once all the fullness and all the implications of the unique privilege bestowed upon her by the grace of God. There is no need, and no reason, to interpret the "fullness" of grace in a literal sense as including all possible perfections and the whole variety of particular spiritual gifts. It was a fullness for her, she was full of grace. And yet it was a "specialized" fullness, the grace of the Mother of God, of the Virgin Mother, of the "Unwedded Spouse," *Nympe anympeute*. Indeed, she had her own spiritual way, her own growth in grace. The full meaning of the mystery of salvation was apprehended by her gradually. And she had her own share in the sacrifice of the Cross: "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also" (Luke ii. 35).

The full light shone forth only in the Resurrection. Up to that point Jesus himself was not yet glorified. And after the Ascension we find the Blessed Virgin among the Twelve, in the center of the growing Church. One point is beyond any doubt. The Blessed Virgin had been always impressed, if this word is suitable here, by the angelic salutation and announcement and by the startling mystery of the virgin birth. How could she not be impressed? Again, the mystery of her experience is hidden from us. But can we really avoid this pious guesswork without betraying the mystery itself? "But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart" (Luke ii.19).

Her inner life had to be concentrated on this crucial event of her story. For indeed the mystery of the Incarnation was for her also the mystery of her own personal existence. Her existential situation was unique and peculiar. She had to be adequate to the unprecedented dignity of this situation. This is perhaps the very essence of her particular dignity, which is described as her "Ever-Virginity." She is the Virgin. Now virginity is not simply a bodily status or a physical feature as

such. Above all it is a spiritual and inner attitude, and apart from that a bodily status would be altogether meaningless.

The title of Ever-Virgin means surely much more than merely a "physiological" statement. It does not refer only to the Virgin Birth. It does not imply only an exclusion of any later marital intercourse (which would be utterly inconceivable if we really believe in the Virgin Birth and in the Divinity of Jesus). It excludes first of all any "erotic" involvement, any sensual and selfish desires or Passions, any dissipation of the heart and mind. The bodily integrity or incorruption is but an outward sign of the internal purity. The main point is precisely the purity of the heart, that indispensable condition of "seeing God." This is the freedom from passions, the true *apatheia*, which has been commonly described as the essence of the spiritual life. Freedom from passions and "desires," *epithymia*— imperviability to evil thoughts, as St. John of Damascus puts it. Her soul was governed by God only [theogyberneton], it was supremely attached to him.

All her desire was directed towards things worthy of desire and affection (St. John says: *tetamene, attracted, gravitating*). She had no passion [thymon]. She ever preserved virginity in mind, and soul, and body, *kai noi kai psychei kai somati aeipartheneusan* (Homil. 1, in *Nativitatem B.V. Mariae* 9 and 5, Migne, Ser. Gr. XCVI, 676 A and 668 C). It was an undisturbed orientation of the whole personal life towards God, a complete self-dedication. To be truly a "handmaid of the Lord" means precisely to be ever-virgin, and not to have any fleshly preoccupations. Spiritual virginity is sinlessness, but not yet "perfection," and not freedom from temptations. But even our Lord himself was in a sense liable to temptations and was actually tempted by Satan in the wilderness. Our Lady perhaps had her temptations too, but has overcome them in her steady faithfulness to God's calling.

Even an ordinary motherly love culminates in a spiritual identification with the child, which implies so often sacrifice and self-denial. Nothing less can be assumed in the case of Mary; her Child was to be great and to be called the Son of the Highest (cf. Luke i. 32). Obviously, he was one who "should have come," the Messiah (cf. Luke vii. 19). This is openly professed by Mary in the Magnificat, a song of Messianic praise and thanksgiving. Mary could not fail to realize all this, if only dimly for a time and gradually, as she pondered all the glorious promises in her heart. This was the only conceivable way for her. She had to be absorbed by this single thought, in an obedient faithfulness to the Lord who "hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden" and "hath done (for her) great things." This is precisely the way in which St. Paul described the state and the privilege of virginity: "the unmarried woman, and the virgin, thinks about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy in body and in spirit" (1 Cor. vii. 34, Douay version: *hina e hagia kai toi*

somati kai toi pneumatī). The climax of this virginal aspiration is the holiness of the Virgin Mother all-pure and undefiled. ...

...The mystery of the Incarnation is still, as it were, continuously enacted in the Church, and its "implications" are revealed and disclosed in devotional experience and in sacramental participation. In the Communion of Saints, which is the true Church Universal, and Catholic, the mystery of the New Humanity is disclosed as a new existential situation. And in this perspective and living context of the Mystical Body of Christ the person of the Blessed Virgin Mother appears in full light and full glory. The Church now contemplates her in the state of perfection. She is now seen as inseparably united with her Son, who "sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty." For her the final consummation of life has already come—in an anticipation. "Thou art passed over into Life, who art the Mother of Life," acknowledges the Church, "Neither grave nor death had power over the Mother of God... for the Mother of Life hath been brought into Life by him who dwelt in her ever-virgin womb" (Troparion and Kontakion for the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, koimesis). Again, it is not so much a heavenly reward for her purity and virtue, as an "implication" of her sublime office, of her being the Mother of God, the Theotokos. The Church Triumphant is above all the worshipping Church, her existence is a living participation in Christ's office of intercession and his redeeming love.

Incorporation into Christ, which is the essence of the Church and of the whole Christian existence, is first of all an incorporation into his sacrificial love for mankind. And here there is a special place for her who is united with the Redeemer in the unique intimacy of motherly affection and devotion. The Mother of God is truly the common mother of all living, of the whole Christian race, born or reborn in the Spirit and truth. An affectionate identification with the child, which is the spiritual essence of motherhood, is here consummated in its ultimate perfection. The Church does not dogmatize much about these mysteries of her own existence.

For the mystery of Mary is precisely the mystery of the Church. Mater Ecclesia and Virgo Mater, both are birthgivers of the New Life. And both are orantes. The Church invites the faithful and helps them to grow spiritually into these mysteries of faith which are as well the mysteries of their own existence and spiritual destiny. In the Church they learn to contemplate and to adore the living Christ together with the whole assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven (cf. Heb. xii. 23). And in this glorious assembly they discern the eminent person of the Virgin Mother of the Lord and Redeemer, full of grace and love, of charity and compassion— "More honorable than the cherubim, more glorious than the seraphim, who without [corruption] didst bear [God the] Word." In the light of this

contemplation and in the spirit of faith the theologian must fulfill his office of interpreting to believers and to those who seek the truth the overwhelming mystery of the Incarnation. This mystery is still symbolized, as it was in the age of the Fathers, by a single and glorious name: Mary— Theotokos, the Mother of God Incarnate.

--Father Georges Florovsky

### **The Ever-Virgin Mother of God\***

**From Chapter VI of Collected Works of Georges Florovsky, Vol. III: Creation and Redemption** (Nordland Publishing Company: Belmont, Mass., 1976), pp. 171-188.

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From Sayings of Mother Gavrilia Papayianni

95. The Lord said: Whoever wants something, believing, he will receive - As long as the request is in accordance with God's Commandments, that is to say, with Love.

96. Do not deny others the crumbs falling off your table from the Bread of Life which is given to you whole by the Lord. So many hunger and thirst for Love, like Lazarus who fed on the crumbs falling off the table of the rich man.

97. We have no right not to reflect the Light of the Lord. Nothing should be left in the shade, 'under the meal-tub'.

98. Everything has two sides, like a two-edged knife. What creates today, destroys tomorrow. 'Let him understand, he who may understand'.

99. Some of the sailors on a ship may quarrel and fight each other, but the ship sails on and reaches its destination. The same is true of the Church, because Christ Himself is at the helm.

100. If you knew that you are not Here, you would be There.

101. Love alone is enough to make a miracle happen. Neither Prayer nor the Komboskini (Prayer rope) have such power.

102. Experience has taught me that no one can help anyone, no matter how strong his wish and love may be. Help comes only in the Hour of God, from the One.

105. We are useful only when we do not exist for ourselves. And vice versa.

106. We must not take decisions on behalf of others. We should leave this to the Angels for they always find the best solution.

108. Like Simon of Cyrene, we must be always ready to rush to the help of our fellow-man.

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Since September 1<sup>st</sup>, the ecclesiastical New Year, is the day of Prayer for the Environment, let us consider the global statements (from Constantinople, Moscow and the canonical jurisdiction is the USA) of the Orthodox Church on this.

Patriarchal Encyclical for the Indiction and the Day for the Protection of our Natural Environment

Aug 29, 2012, Prot. No. 718



+ BARTHOLOMEW, By the Mercy of God Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome

To the Fullness of the Church: Grace and Peace from the Creator and Sustainer of All Creation: Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ

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Beloved brothers and children in the Lord,

Our God, who created the universe and formed the earth as a perfect dwelling place for humanity, granted us the commandment and possibility to increase, multiply and fulfill creation, with dominion over all animals and plants.

The world that surrounds us was thus offered to us as a gift by our Creator as an arena of social activity but also of spiritual sanctification in order that we might inherit the creation to be renewed in the future age. Such has always been the theological position of the Holy Great Church of Christ, which is the reason why we have pioneered an ecological effort on behalf of the sacred Ecumenical Throne for the protection of our planet, which has long suffered from us both knowingly and unknowingly.

Of course, **biodiversity** is the work of divine wisdom and was not granted to humanity for its unruly control. By the same token, **dominion** over the earth and its environs implies rational use and enjoyment of its benefits, and not destructive acquisition of its resources out of a sense of greed. Nevertheless, especially in our times, we observe an excessive abuse of natural resources, resulting in the destruction of the environmental balance of the planet's ecosystems and generally of ecological conditions, so that the divinely-ordained regulations of human existence on earth are increasingly transgressed. For instance, all of us – scientists, as well as religious and political leaders, indeed all people – are witnessing a rise in the atmosphere's temperature, extreme weather conditions, the pollution of ecosystems both on land and in the sea, and an overall disturbance – sometimes to the point of utter destruction – of the potential for life in some regions of the world.

Inasmuch as the Mother Church perceives and evaluates the ensuing dangers of such ecological conditions for humanity, already from the time of our blessed predecessor, Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios, established September 1<sup>st</sup> of each year as a day of prayer for the natural environment. Yet, we are obliged to admit that the causes of the aforementioned ecological changes are not inspired by God but initiated by humans. Thus, the invocation and supplication of the Church and us all to God as the Lord of lords and Ruler of all for the restoration of creation are essentially a petition of **repentance** for our **sinfulness** in destroying the world instead of working to preserve and sustain its ever-flourishing resources reasonably and carefully.

When we pray to and entreat God for the preservation of the natural environment, we are ultimately imploring God to change with mindset of the powerful in the world, enlightening them not to destroy the planet's ecosystem for reasons of financial profit and ephemeral interest. This in turn, however, also concerns each one of us inasmuch as we all generate small ecological damage in our individual capacity and ignorance. Therefore, in praying for the natural environment, we are praying for personal repentance for our contribution – smaller or greater – to the disfigurement and destruction of creation, which we collectively experience regionally and occasionally through the immense phenomena of our time.

In addressing this appeal, petition and exhortation from the sacred Center of Orthodoxy to all people throughout the world, we pray

that our gracious Lord, who granted this earthly paradise to all people dwelling on our planet, will speak to the hearts of everyone so that we may respect the ecological balance that He offered in His wisdom and goodness, so that both we and future generations will enjoy His gifts with thanksgiving and glorification.

May this divine wisdom, peace and power, which created and sustains and guides all creation in its hope for salvation in the kingdom, always maintain the beauty of the world and the welfare of humanity, leading all people of good will to produce fruitful works toward this purpose. And we invoke His grace and mercy on all of you, particularly those who respect and protect creation. Amen.

September 1, 2012

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**From *The Basis of the Russian Orthodox Social Teaching*, Chapter 13:**

XIII. 4. The Orthodox Church appreciates the efforts for overcoming the ecological crisis and calls people to intensive co-operation in actions aimed to protect God's creation. At the same time, she notes that these efforts will be more fruitful if the basis on which man's relations with nature are built will be not purely humanistic but also Christian. One of the main principles of the Church's stand on ecological issues is the unity and integrity of the world created by God. Orthodoxy does not view nature around us as an isolated and self-closed structure. The plant, animal and human worlds are interconnected. From the Christian point of view, nature is not a repository of resources intended for egoistic and irresponsible consumption, but a house in which man is not the master, but the housekeeper, and a temple in which he is the priest serving not nature, but the one Creator. The conception of nature as temple is based on the idea of theocentrism: God Who gives to all "life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:25) is the Source of being. Therefore, life itself in its various manifestations is sacred, being a gift of God. Any encroachment on it is a challenge not only to God's creation, but also to the Lord Himself.

XIII. 5. The ecological problems are essentially anthropological as they are generated by man, not nature. Therefore, answers to many questions raised by the environmental crisis are to be found in the human heart, not in the spheres of economy, biology, technology or politics. Nature is transformed or dies not by itself, but under the impact of man. His spiritual condition plays the decisive role here, for it affects the environment both with and without such an impact. The church history knows of many examples when the love of Christian ascetics for nature, their prayer for the world around them, their compassion for all creatures made a beneficial impact on living things.

Relationships between anthropology and ecology are revealed with utter clarity in our days when the world is experiencing two concurrent crises: spiritual and ecological. In contemporary society, man often loses the awareness of life as a gift of God and sometimes the very meaning of life, reducing it sometimes to the physical being alone. With this attitude to life, nature around him is no longer perceived as home and all the more so as temple, becoming only a "habitat". The spiritually degrading personality leads nature to degradation as well, for it is unable to make a transforming impact on the world. The colossal technological resources cannot help humanity blinded by sin, for, being indifferent to the meaning, mystery and wonder of life, they cannot be really beneficial and

sometimes become even detrimental. In a spiritually disorientated man, the technological power would beget utopic reliance on the boundless resources of the human mind and the power of progress. It is impossible to overcome the ecological crisis in the situation of a spiritual crisis. This does not at all mean that the Church calls to curtail the preservation activity, but in her hope for a positive change in the man-nature relationships, she relies rather on society's aspiration for spiritual revival. The anthropogenic background of ecological problems shows that we tend to change the world around us in accordance with our own inner world; therefore, the transformation of nature should begin with the transformation of the soul. According to St. Maxim the Confessor, man can turn the earth into paradise only if he carried paradise in himself.

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From Statement Affirmed by Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America, 7/8/2005:

#### Ecological Affirmations of Faith

We stand with awe and gratitude as members of God's bountiful and good creation. We rejoice in the splendor and mystery of countless species, our common creaturehood, and the interdependence of all that God makes. We believe that the Earth is home for all and that it has been created intrinsically good (Genesis1).

We lament that the human species is shattering the splendid gifts of this web of life, ignoring our responsibility for the well being of all life, while destroying species and their habitats at a rate never before known in human history.

We believe that the Holy Spirit, who animates all of creation, breathes in us and can empower us to participate in working toward the flourishing of Earth's community of life. We believe that the people of God are called to forge ways of being human that enable socially just and ecologically sustainable communities to flourish for

generations to come. And we believe in God's promise to fulfill all of creation, anticipating the reconciliation of all (Colossians 1:15), in accordance with God's promise (II Peter 3:13).

We lament that we have rejected this vocation, and have distorted our God-given abilities and knowledge in order to ransack and often destroy ecosystems and human communities rather than to protect, strengthen, and nourish them.

We believe that, in boundless love that hungers for justice, God in Jesus Christ acts to restore and redeem all creation (including human beings). God incarnate affirms all creation (John 1:14), which becomes a sacred window to eternity. In the cross and resurrection we know that God is drawn into life's most brutal and broken places and there brings forth healing and liberating power. That saving action restores right relationships among members of "the whole creation" (Mark 16:15).

We confess that instead of living and proclaiming this salvation through our very lives and worship, we have abused and exploited the Earth and people on the margins of power and privilege, altering climates, extinguishing species, and jeopardizing Earth's capacity to sustain life as we know and love it.

We believe that the created world is sacred - a revelation of God's power and gracious presence filling all things. This sacred quality of creation demands moderation and sharing, urgent antidotes for our excess in consumption and waste, reminding us that economic justice is an essential condition of ecological integrity. We cling to God's trustworthy promise to restore, renew, and fulfill all that God creates. We long for and work toward the day when churches, as embodiments of Christ on Earth, will respond to the "groaning of creation" (Romans 8:22) and to God's passionate desire to "renew the face of the Earth" (Psalm 104.30). We look forward to the day when the lamentations and groans of creation will be over, justice with peace will reign, humankind will nurture not betray the Earth, and all of creation will sing for joy.