

endowment funds. The other half will be used immediately to handle current expenses. We will be seeking trustees from the parishes for each of these funds, to govern the parameters of use of the reserved monies. As you can see, the greater the funds, the more self-sufficient becomes the Diocese. I hope to run the fund drive after every Pascha, so plan ahead. If the funds can generate enough interest to become nearly self-sufficient, we will expand the area to other funds, such as youth work. The long term vision of these funds will have a significant impact on the Diocese.

I finish this with a thought. Like the parable of the three servants left by their master with the various numbers of talents. We, like the servants, must invest our monies wisely to have a profitable return for when the master makes them accountable. Look at your gift to the Diocese as an investment in the future. The more investment we each make into our Diocese, the greater return for the good of all of us. ♦

## Father Lev Gillet: The Monk in the City, a Pilgrim in many worlds

By Fr. Michael Plekon

"The whole teaching of the Latin Fathers may be found in the East, just as the whole teaching of the Greek Fathers may be found in the West. Rome has given St. Jerome to Palestine. The East has given Cassian to the West and holds in special veneration that Roman of the Romans, Pope Gregory the Great. St. Basil would have acknowledged St. Benedict of Nursia as his brother and heir. St. Macrina would have found her sister in St. Scholastica. St. Alexis the 'man of God,' 'the poor man under the stairs,' has been succeeded by the wandering beggar, St. Benedict Labre. St. Nicolas would have felt as very near to him the burning charity of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Vincent de Paul. St. Seraphim of Sarov would have seen the desert blooming under Father Charles de Foucauld's feet, and would have called St. Therese of Lisieux 'my joy.' [1]"

Fr. Lev Gillet - a complicated man, a wandering monk.

Among the extraordinary people of the Russian emigration was Sister Joanna Reitlinger, the nun-iconographer. In the chapel of the now closed St Basil's House in London, there were two remarkable frescoes by her which brought to life the vision of the "one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church" alive in holy men and women, despite the centuries of schism and distance. (These and much of the iconography of St Basil's have been transferred to a

monastery in Wales.) Assembled before the Great Church of Holy Wisdom in Constantinople are Anthony the Great and Dorotheos, Gregory the



Theologian, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, Nicholas, Athanasius and Macrina. On the opposite wall, in front of St. Peter's in Rome, are gathered Benedict, Genevieve of Paris, Leo the Great, Martin of Tours, Augustine, Monica and Irenaeus of Lyons. [2] The saints in the frescoes as well as those in

Fr. Lev's text above are icons not only of what he taught and wrote but also of who he himself was and the churchly life he tried to live. In a century in which the divisions of the churches continued to separate people of faith, a century of wars and depressions and rapid social change, there also was the surprise of the ecumenical movement, the sometimes feeble, sometimes defiant urge to recover the original unity of the Church. As with his friends Paul Evdokimov, Fr. Bulgakov and Mother Maria Skobtsova, Fr. Lev became a kind of pilgrim between the churches, truly the citizen and inhabitant of various worlds.

Living in both Western and Eastern monasteries, then among the Russian Emigres and the homeless of Paris and later in London, Beirut and Geneva, the little monk had a large soul, an amazingly expansive and diversified life. His life-long friend and biographer, herself part of the sweep of church history in this century, Elisabeth Behr-Sigel, has captured something of the quixotic character

and nonconformist life of Fr. Lev. She refers to him as the "monk in the city" and a "pilgrim" in many worlds.

This he most certainly was, a monk both of the Western Church's Benedictine order and of the Eastern Church, but only for a brief time of his long life actually resident in a monastic community. Fr. Lev had the soul of a pilgrim. He was never tied down for very long to one position or place. Born on August 6, 1893 in Saint-Marcellin, in Isere, France, he did combat service in World War I, then university studies in philosophy and psychology. He produced the first French translation of Freud's *On the Interpretation of Dreams*, underwent psychoanalysis and acquired a life-long sensitivity to the complexity and the suffering of the soul, as Freud called it. After the war he entered the Benedictine Order at Clervaux abbey in Luxembourg. Later he served under one of the leaders of the liturgical renewal movement, Dom Ferdinand Cabrol at Farborough abbey in England. Chosen for further study, he was sent to San Anselmo in Rome, where he made deep friendships with two monks with whom he would be a co-founder, at least in spirit, of the mixed Eastern-Western church monastery of Chevetogne in Belgium.

Later in life, work as priest and scholar would take him across Europe and to the Near East. He would be a member, albeit briefly, of a fledgling monastic community in the Ukraine, also priest in a mission near Nice. After entering the Orthodox Church, he was rector of the first French language Orthodox parish in Paris. He served as chaplain in a number of locations: to Russians and others held in French prisons, at Mother Maria's hostel, and at St. Basil's House in London. In between and after, he was an itinerant preacher and retreat master, spiritual father and advisor to bishops, priests, monastics, church youth movements and many individuals. He supported himself at various points in his life, not so much by clerical appointments and stipends but by free-lance, independent writing, editing, translating and research. And if nothing else, he was a go-between, a traveler between numerous "worlds," that of the past century and the present, that of the Western Christian churches and tradition and that of the East, between clergy and laity, intellectuals and artists and ordinary working people, and, most significantly, between

an apparently secular, even Godless world and the reality of God and the Kingdom, one which he experienced in a most intense, even mystical manner. Several of his most widely read books took the form of dialogues between the soul and the Lord, prayer "out loud."

From his book, *In Thy Presence*:

So then, Lord, it is this? It is truly this? It is only this? This is the whole law and all the prophets? To love with one's whole heart...To love Him who first loved us, to love everything that He loves, all men, all women, all creatures...Yes, my child, that is it, and that is all. Everything "else" has value only inasmuch as it is the expression, the carrying out - under so many various forms - of that initial impulse which is my limitless Love....The heart transplants, which in our day have become possible, are a wonderful sign of a spiritual reality. To give one's heart to another, to accept the heart of another...It is the parable of limitless Love's triumph... [3]

For years, many of Fr. Lev's writings were published under the pen name of "A Monk of the Eastern Church," a device first contrived to avoid controversy but later continued because of the anonymity and perhaps also the mystery it afforded. A Westerner always, he nevertheless was surely a priest and "monk of the Eastern Church." In this he was a precursor, with Elisabeth Behr-Sigel, of many others from the Western churches who would become part of the Eastern Church in the 20th century, to some a curious, even suspect phenomenon. Nevertheless, as Paul Evdokimov and Mother Maria and many of the Russian Emigres came to understand it, the destructive Bolshevik revolution also had a very positive outcome, the return of eastern Orthodox Christians to the West, the opening of contacts of prayer, study and common work between them. Perhaps surprisingly, there appeared pilgrims from The West to the Eastern Church, men and women whose love for the Church would repair and create bridges between the divided churches.

After a long life, just such a pilgrim, Fr. Lev, was buried from the Greek Orthodox cathedral in London by his friend and younger colleague, Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of the Russian Patriarchal diocese of Sourozh. In addition to all

the prayers of the Orthodox funeral service, one from the Roman Missal was also read by Metropolitan Anthony. Even in death, Fr. Lev kept trying to live in an undivided Church. He understood himself to be a priest of the Orthodox Church, but this did not prevent him from ministering to Christians all across the spectrum, preaching in Hyde Park as well as Protestant churches in London and elsewhere, giving retreats to Orthodox, Anglicans, Roman Catholics and Protestants as well, in short, serving all of the people of God like his friend Paul Evdokimov, as if there had never been schisms.

Fr. Lev seems to shatter every typology of personality. He was intense and passionate, extremely private and revealing at the same time. He is described as child-like and open, most accessible and yet often difficult, brooding even cranky. Though his thinking was straightforward, his friendships deep and lasting and his attitude warm and outgoing, he remained an enigma, a mystery, even to those who knew him well and over a lifetime. Yet in this man of apparent contradictions, there was an amazing resolution or transcendence of conflicts that would destroy and divide. Just as Fr. Lev was moved and transformed by the spirituality of the Russian Orthodox Church and its clinging to the "kenosis," the self-emptying of Christ, Bishop Kallistos Ware has described the monk of the Eastern Church as a most "kenotic" personality himself. Bishop Kallistos cites an early letter of Fr. Lev, his vision of his life, one of giving.

The more I examine myself, the more I see that a life devoted to constructing and organizing, a life which produces positive results and which succeeds, is not my voca-

tion, even though, out of obedience, I could work in this direction and even obtain certain results. What attracts me is a vocation of loss—a life which would give itself freely without any apparent positive result, for the result would be known to God alone; in brief, to lose oneself in order to find oneself. [4]

Fr. Lev's life might be described by many as a loss, with no substantial accomplishments in many of the projects he worked for and more often than not, lack of any ecclesiastical action. Since his death, even the ecumenical vision he had has been lost or rejected in the churches. But it is my conviction that his contributions remain alive, a gift of life to Christians, his life a kind of icon of faithful struggle and love. ❖

#### Endnotes

[1] A Monk of the Eastern Church, *Orthodox Spirituality*, 2nd. ed., (Crestwood NY: SVSP, 1978), x-xi. The biographical material here is indebted to Elisabeth Behr-Sigel's masterful and extensive biography, *Lev Giller: "Un moine de l'Eglise d'Orient,"* (Paris: Cerf, 1993), now in English, *Lev Giller: 'a monk of the Eastern Church,'* Helen Wright, trans., (Oxford: Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, 1999).

[2] Reproductions of these are in the Cerf, French language edition of Elisabeth Behr-Sigel's biography, between 312 and 313.

[3] *In Thy Presence*, (Crestwood NY: SVSP, 1977), 71-72).

[4] Letter of 9 March 1928, in *Contacts*, 49, no. 180, 1997, 309. This is one of a series of letters from Fr. Lev to his bishop, Metropolitan Andrei Szeptycky, recently discovered in archives in Lviv and here excerpted and translated by Elisabeth Behr-Sigel. Also see Cyril Korolevsky, *Metropolitan Andrew Sheptytsky*, Serge Keleher, ed. and trans., Fairfax VA: Eastern Christian Publications, 1997).

## Christ Bestows This New Life Through His Mysteries

In the sacred mysteries, then, we depict His burial and proclaim His death. By them we are begotten and formed and wondrously united to the Savior, for they are the means by which, as Paul says, "in him we live, and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

Baptism confers being and in short, existence according to Christ. It receives us when we are dead and corrupted and first leads us into life. The anointing with chrism perfects him who has received [new] birth by infusing into him the energy that befits such a life. The Holy Eucharist preserves and continues this life and health, since the Bread of life enables us to preserve that which has been acquired and to continue in life. It is therefore by this Bread that we live and by the chrism that we are moved, once we have received being from the baptismal washing. - Nicholas Cabasilas, *The Life in Christ* (The First Book, #6) ❖

## Christianity as Life: Proclaiming the Message to College Students

By Gary Cattell

In speaking to college students over the past 19 years I have seen spiritual life slowly drained out of them as America turns decidedly Deist. I do not know if students can be considered representative of America's spiritual condition, but if so America's light is all but extinguished. I minister at the Pennsylvania State University four to five hours a day five days a week and what most students seem to believe is that God exists but He cannot be known. As a result of this way of thinking one cannot really know what the right religion is and by extension the correct morals. So they are free to believe and do what they want, and God understands because their ignorance is of no fault of their own. This is modern day Deism and it is fast becoming our national religion.

I personally believe this state we find ourselves in is the direct result of Protestant relativism. Once the doctrine of sola scriptura took hold it was not long before anyone with a Bible was deciding for himself the doctrines of Christianity. This gave a relativistic nature to Protestantism so that within certain boundaries one could decide for oneself what to believe. Once free to personally decide what the scriptures meant it was not much of a leap to deciding which parts of the scriptures were really true, and of course from there it was a small step to questioning the truth of Christianity itself. Once this was accomplished and other religious traditions began to be better known in the West the corresponding confusion lead to a collective shrugging of the shoulders and an attitude of "we don't know what is true so believe what you wish." This is very alluring to college students as it is a heady experience to choose your own God and morals. It is at the same time lifeless, in that somewhere in the mind and conscience of the students is the understanding that it is not real. There is no life or intensity in their beliefs because to one degree or another they have made them up.

The other thing that drains the life out of college students is the idea that organized religion is corrupt. If I had a nickel for every time I heard someone say, "I believe in God, but I don't like organized religion. It's the woods that are my

church." I'd be a wealthy man. Evangelical and Pentecostal Protestants have played on this idea and assured people that Christianity is a relationship not a religion. In giving the students' rock and roll worship, few doctrines, and little in the way of demands, they have filled their fellowships with enthusiastic, but ultimately shallow converts. Christianity in these churches has become a party and true religion is sacrificed for an emotional experience and a good time. In fact, what is considered "the moving of the Spirit" in these churches and fellowships is usually nothing more than the exciting of emotions through pop music. This relating of the "Spirit" to a state of excitement not only hurts the Christian involved, but also hurts our ability to bring an Evangelical Protestant into Orthodoxy so he can experience the true life of the Spirit which has been in the Church for 2,000 years. It is difficult to bring evangelicals into the Church when they believe the very feelings, of which the church is distrustful, is a sign of the Holy Spirit's presence.

What the Evangelical/Pentecostal Christian does not understand is that the reason he needs to have an emotional experience is because in rejecting communion as the body and blood of Christ he has no concrete way of taking in and experiencing Christ in his worship. Most of these churches at least in practice have separated the spiritual from the material and don't really believe that God works through matter anymore. They would say that maybe God worked through material objects in the Old Testament, but such thinking today smacks of idolatry or superstition. Any experience of God they have now must be solely ethereal which over the years has become associated with how they feel. This is why things like "holy laughter" and other experi-



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