

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE ON MOUNT ATHOS

a conference organized by the Friends of Mount Athos to be held at

Madingley Hall, Cambridge, on 8–10 March 2013

The venue

This will be our sixth weekend conference at Madingley. We continue to return there because it is the ideal venue for a meeting such as ours. The house, which dates from the sixteenth century, stands in its own grounds amid beautiful country just 3 miles to the west of Cambridge. The surrounding park was landscaped by ‘Capability’ Brown in 1756. In the 1860s Queen Victoria rented the house as a residence for the Prince of Wales when he was an undergraduate. It was bought by the University of Cambridge in 1948 and has been extensively refurbished as a conference centre with disabled access, en-suite facilities to all study bedrooms, well-equipped meeting rooms, and a bar. All meals are taken in the great hall where the cuisine achieves a high standard.

The theme of the conference

Spiritual guidance is the real business of Mount Athos, the principal service that the Fathers offer to each other and to the world. Athonites have been purveyors of spiritual guidance for more than a thousand years in a tradition that goes back to the fourth-century Desert Fathers. The recent renewal on the Mountain is testimony to the Fathers’ continuing power to attract disciples and pilgrims to listen to what they have to say. The papers to be given at this conference will examine some of the many aspects of this venerable tradition.

The programme

There will be a total of six main presentations, each lasting about 40 minutes with time at the end for discussion, plus one proxy address. The speakers are all experts on their chosen themes, but all are concerned to make their subject accessible to everyone in their audience.

On the first evening Metropolitan Kallistos, himself something of a spiritual guide to us all, will speak about ‘Spiritual Guidance in the Eighteenth Century – St Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain, St Paisy Velichkovsky, and the *Philokalia*’.

On the Saturday morning the lectures will have a Russian flavour. First Sister Seraphima will speak about ‘The Athonite Tradition of Spiritual Fatherhood – from St Gregory Palamas to Father Sophrony Sakharov’. Then the twin brothers, Fathers Kirill and Methody, will present a joint paper entitled ‘Spiritual Guidance in Mount Athos and Russia and the Theological Notion of the Person’.

After lunch a paper on ‘Athonite Spiritual Guidance in the Tradition of Elder Joseph the Hesychast’ will be read on behalf of Father Philotheos of St Andrew’s Skete.

After tea another English-born monastic, Sister Theoktisti of the Monastery of St John the Forerunner near Larissa, will speak about ‘The Renewal of Women’s Monasticism in the Twentieth Century through the Guidance of Athonite Monks’.

After dinner the last paper of the day (on a topic to be confirmed) will be given by Bishop Alexander Golitzin who was a disciple of Elder Aimilianos at Simonopetra and is now a bishop in the Orthodox Church in America.

Finally, on the Sunday morning, after a celebration of the Divine Liturgy, Dr Andreas Andreopoulos from the University of Winchester will round off the proceedings with a paper on ‘The Challenges of Spiritual Guidance in Modern Greece’.

The speakers

Metropolitan Kallistos holds a doctorate in theology from the University of Oxford where from 1966 to 2001 he was a Fellow of Pembroke College and Spalding Lecturer in Eastern Orthodox Studies. He is a monk of the monastery of St John the Theologian, Patmos, and an assistant bishop in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain. In 2007 he was raised to the rank of metropolitan.

Sister Seraphima studied modern languages at Cambridge, theology in Paris, and classics in London before gaining a doctorate in theology and cultural history from Oxford in 2006. She is currently British Academy Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Faculty of Theology and Oriental Institute at Oxford and a Research Fellow of Christ Church. She is a nun of the Monastery of St John the Baptist, Tolleshunt Knights, Essex.

Hieromonks Methody and Kirill were born in St Petersburg in 1969 and graduated from St Petersburg Technical University in 1992. Having experienced what they describe as ‘a dramatic shift in our worldview due to the crash of the communist system, the works of Feodor Dostoevsky, and an encounter with our spiritual father’, they entered St Petersburg Theological Seminary and Academy in 1995, took monastic vows in 1999, and were ordained priests in 2002. Since then they have been lecturing in Dogmatic Theology and Patristics.

Hieromonk Philotheos was born and educated in Oxford before moving to Mount Athos. He is a member of the brotherhood of St Andrew’s Skete in Karyes.

Sister Theoktisti is also English-born and studied PPP at St Anne’s College, Oxford. She then taught in London before moving to study in Germany and then on to a doctorate at the Pontifical Liturgical Institute in Rome. She is now a nun of the Holy Monastery of St John the Forerunner, Anatoli, Greece.

Bishop Alexander Golitzin is a monk of the monastery of Simonopetra. Having completed a doctorate at Oxford under the supervision of Metropolitan Kallistos, he moved to the USA where he became Professor of Patristics at Marquette University, Wisconsin. He is now Bishop of Toledo and the Bulgarian Diocese in the Orthodox Church in America.

Deacon Andreas Andreopoulos was born and bred in Greece and studied psychology, sociology, and theology in Greece, Canada, the UK, and the USA. He is now Reader in Orthodox Christianity at the University of Winchester and was ordained deacon in 2012.

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I/we wish to attend the conference.

- ☐ Please reserve a single/shared room @ £270 / €370 / \$470 per person (£135 / €185 / \$235 for students).
- ☐ Please reserve non-residential place(s) @ £130 / €180 / \$230 per person (£65 / €90 / \$115 for students).

If you can attend only certain lectures, please contact Simon Jennings for special rates.

Dietary requirements (if any)
Name of member/guest
Address
..... Tel. or e-mail

Please send this slip with a non-refundable deposit of £50 (€70 / \$85) per person, payable to the Friends of Mount Athos, to Simon Jennings, Rawlinson & Hunter, Eighth Floor, 6 New Street Square, London EC4A 3AQ. He may be contacted by e-mail at FOMA@rawlinson-hunter.com