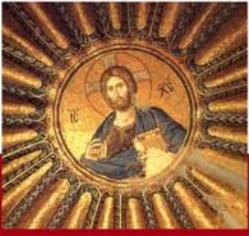


Christmas and New Year Newsletter 2011/2012

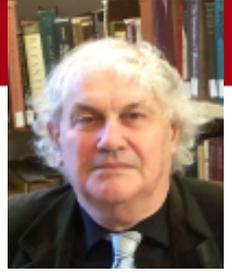


The Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies / Cambridge



IOCS COURSE ADOPTED FOR THE WHOLE OF ROMANIA

Professor David Frost, Director of THE WAY



In late September this year, my wife Christine Mangala and I visited Romania at the invitation of the Patriarchate, with the specific mission of presenting the Institute's course for adult education, THE WAY, to the Fourth Annual Congress of 'Christ to the Children', a gathering of some seventy senior

was immensely heartening. I said at one point that I felt 'a zealot among zealots' - though the audience's surprised reaction made me fear that 'zealot' may have somewhat more negative connotations in Romanian than it does in English! But there was a proper appreciation of the demands so novel a method of catechesis would make both on clergy and laity, and of the quite radical changes in attitude that were involved. It was said that the concept of a meal to precede important business had died out, if it ever existed, and though there were social gatherings on feast-days and occasions such as house blessings, only rarely was there discussion of basic human issues and matters of faith. Communication was from the top down, with no habit of dialogue, no confidence in one's ability to have an opinion, and a basic unwillingness to disclose inner feelings - exacerbated, of course, by years of communism. The idea of the Church as a community of friends sharing their faith as equals under God seemed to have been lost. Even the rite of confession was rarely an occasion where major problems of personal life and belief were discussed.



Professor David Frost addressing the Fourth Annual Congress 'Christ to the Children'

clergy who are charged with the responsibility of overseeing Christian education for children and adults throughout Romania.

To say we had a friendly reception would be a gross understatement: I said in my introductory remarks at the opening of the Congress that the whole Christian Church faces challenges from secularism, militant atheism, and false belief as never before, and the scale of the challenge means that we have to pull together internationally, using the methods of modern communication as effectively as do our opponents and taking help from wherever we can find it.

The two of us spoke in turn to an hour-long PowerPoint presentation alternately in English and then Romanian, prepared by our Institute staff, and we were aided by a remarkably competent translator. So the message was repeated paragraph by paragraph, with several of the audience commenting that a 'superb exposition' had the further merit of being a free English-lesson!

The quality of the hour-long debate that followed

Nevertheless, there was at the conference, along with a realistic understanding of what THE WAY would involve, an eagerness to implement it. The Synod of Romania had already adopted THE WAY in principle, and the Congress itself made plans for immediate implementation, translations of the material to be ready by early December 2011, to



The Patriarchal Cathedral, Bucharest

be followed by extensive experimentation. These detailed plans have now been endorsed by the Synod. A remark early in debate from a highly influential priest - that, just because THE WAY came from a tiny Orthodox community in the West, Romanians should not automatically dismiss it - crystallized a feeling I had found daunting since my arrival. Who were we, from a tiny, struggling Institute in a largely non-Orthodox country, to be offering anything at all to an ancient national Orthodox Church, with its history from the earliest days of the Christian era, its distinguished saints, theologians, and fathers of the Church, its record of suffering, its martyrdoms, and its heroic battle to survive, even within living memory? People were kind to us: the abbot of a monastery we visited had obviously picked up my diffidence and said spontaneously that guests from the West were always welcome, for they had generally chosen to be Orthodox and were renewing the understanding of the Orthodox faith. But to go from Britain's tiny and fragmented Orthodox communities, with their divisions, their ethnic preoccupations, their occasional oddities, and to find oneself in a country where Orthodoxy is the national religion, where there is dynamic leadership, a wealth of intellect and talent, resources that we could only dream of, and (in an admittedly highly selected group) a corporate zest and vigour, is a quite overwhelming experience. It is as if the Church of England, with all its potential for power and influence, had become Orthodox overnight! And in the case of the Romanian Church, a recent and independent survey has shown it to have an approval rate of around 78% among the general population. All I can say is that, with whatever limitations the Romanian Church may have, I relished my taste of the 'Church Triumphant' and felt the honour and the burden of the Institute being allowed to serve it.

In a mere week in Romania we spoke at length to many of the seventy or so clergy who took part in the Congress, and thanks to the great kindness of Father Naclad Costin, the indefatigable Director of Catechesis for Romania, we saw a fair part of the country north of Bucharest, especially the Ceahlau Mountain, which Father Costin dubbed 'our Holy Mountain' because of its numerous monasteries and churches. So with all the confidence of a week's experience, I venture some impressions of the Romanian Church as it relates to THE WAY.

The first is their general situation as being in a post-communist society. As in much of eastern Europe, there are symptoms of radical social breakdown, and much as in post-Christian capitalist society in the West, the prime mission of the Church is to re-build a Christian society. Though I am as nervous of top-down instruction as any academic of my age, Romania benefits from a reforming Patriarch who has the spiritual perception and authority to direct what the situation requires and an army of clergy who undertake what he directs. His energy

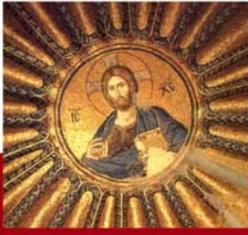
seems inexhaustible and his grasp of what needs to be done is impressive. Everywhere we went in Romania, we were told 'The Patriarch has had this church re-built', 'The Patriarch has bought this building for the Church', 'The Patriarch instigated this', 'The Patriarch has promoted that'. I was tempted - though I never got the chance when introduced to him - to quote to Patriarch Daniel what is inscribed

about Christopher Wren in St Paul's Cathedral: Si monumentum requires, circumspice: 'If you want to see his monument, just look around!'

We were told that one of the hotels where we stayed was built by the communists to put holidaying 'workers' slap in the midst of a beautiful monastic



Dr Christine Mangala Frost addressing the Fourth Annual Congress 'Christ to the Children'



IOCS COURSE ADOPTED FOR THE WHOLE OF ROMANIA (continued)

Professor David Frost, Director of THE WAY

setting. The Patriarch had had the wit to demand such properties as reparation for the wrongs done to the Church by the Communist State, and in one stroke turned a violation into a recreational and educational Church facility.

A prime focus of the Patriarch's attention has been the children who are the future of the faith, and much of the Congress was taken up with reports from various parts of the country about the progress of the 'Youth Bible Curriculum', much better entitled in Romanian something like 'Communicating Christ to the Children'. As with THE WAY, it emanates from the diaspora (and in that case from American Armenians) but is being used under the auspices of World Vision (a body we would think as having a Protestant ethos) and in various local Orthodox adaptations and languages to teach the Bible faith and what that faith requires in terms of human relations. Many of the reports we heard at the Congress related to camps for over four thousand deprived children, situated in monasteries and elsewhere over the summer for the fourth year running, where those who have nothing were accommodated and fed for free, given clothing if needed, trained in creative activities, and generally given a good time. The monasteries where they gathered are remarkable in their setting and their buildings, and must make an enormous impression on children of 'the beauty of holiness', when God's creation and Man's synergic cooperation bear silent witness to the nature of the divine. Pictures of the work done by the children, their entertainments, and the grateful comments from campers and their carers were quite tear-jerking. THE WAY is seen as a parallel outreach to an adult generation largely uneducated in Christian values and relationships, and it is an enormous privilege to be used as the follow-on to such a radical effort in re-Christianising a whole society. Both ventures in education have been undertaken with the Patriarch's instigation and blessing.

Nevertheless, like Shakespeare's villain Iago, 'I am nothing if not critical', and in our brief stay we noticed things that THE WAY will help to redress. The Congress heard many complaints



Patriarch Daniel of Romania, addressing the participants of the Congress 'Christ to the Children'

on its first day: of overloaded priests, of priests isolated and lonely, of lack of resources, personnel and money. Plainly, that is one drawback of the 'top-down' system of operating. I revised the preamble of my presentation to say, 'I hear all these genuine complaints: but I'm moved to ask 'Where are your educated, cooperative and supportive laity? That is what THE WAY is designed to create.'

There is no doubt that Romanian society, despite communism, is permeated by an underlying reverence for the faith – sometimes disconcertingly. Walking into a monastic church with my hands behind me, pressed together into a sore back, I had to be told gently that my apparent irreverence was attracting attention. It is common, even in Bucharest, to see people cross themselves as they pass by the door of a church. However, these moving acts of folk-piety are sometimes in danger of obscuring the central act of worship. On Sunday in Father Costin's church in Iasi, where he preached for over an hour after the liturgy without notes, because his congregation is educated and intellectual and so accept it, people flocked to kiss the icons during the liturgy, crowded to greet all the figures on the iconostasis, touched the relics of the saints, held the train of the reader who proclaimed the holy gospel, queued to kiss the gospel book when it was displayed before the Liturgy, knelt in Roman fashion for the prayer of consecration – but only about twenty of us from a congregation of several hundred took

communion. The desire to be in touch with the holy is strong; but all these secondary devotions need to culminate in the one essential contact with the holy that we were told to make: 'Take, eat . . . Drink of this, all of you. Do this in remembrance of me'. The emphasis of THE WAY on the central importance of communion will help to give such devotions their proper focus.

One obstacle, according to the priests, is an inappropriate dominance of what laity there are. A priest in an outlying village may want his people to hear the prayer of consecration – but he will be reproved by the old ladies of the congregation (who are said to be the backbone of most churches) for a departure from

time-honoured custom. Romanians may approve of their Church – but not many of them attend, and still less ask questions. THE WAY invites questions – and many of the priests at the Congress were aware that they would have to have answers, and the answers would need to be good and stand up to scrutiny.

Hopefully, THE WAY, by creating a culture where honest questions may expect a true and satisfying answer, will prove to be a relatively painless stimulus to change. At the church in Iasi we saw a custom which seemed to us to be in urgent need of reform – so urgent that we overstepped the manners suitable to guests and indicated our alarm afterwards. At intervals throughout the liturgy what I could only think of as a service-hatch opened in the iconostasis, and behind it stood a priest to receive the long queue of people, each holding a candle and presenting a request for prayer, accompanied often by a gift of money. The practice seemed to us to inevitably encourage the

misunderstanding that prayers could be requested – but for cash down! Our friends seemed a little surprised, pointing out that the cash payment was not a necessary accompaniment if you wanted someone prayed for. We suspect that a little discussion of the apparent meaning of the action in a WAY

session might lead to a separation of requests for prayer from the offering of the gifts of the faithful. Then the symbolism of the candle – 'letting your light shine before men' – would regain its meaning by association with giving.

In general, our trip to Romania convinced us of the importance of the Institute in strengthening the links between the Orthodox of the United Kingdom and the eastern Churches

where Orthodoxy is embedded as the national religion. Our ecumenical setting has enabled us to offer a course whose methodology derived from western understanding of communications and owes a debt to the Alpha course of Protestant origin, yet is acceptably Orthodox in its theology. In turn, we have made contact with a major national Church and there is a stream of potential students keen to enjoy what we can offer – if only we can give them scholarships. What we most need from them is the contact with a rich and still lively tradition of Orthodox thought, and in my thank-you letter I have invited Patriarch Daniel to come to Cambridge next year

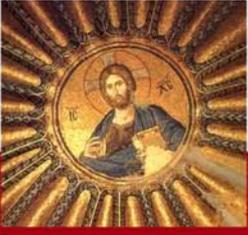
and to lecture to the University under Institute auspices on 'The Romanian Contribution to Orthodox Theology'. As he has tentatively accepted an invitation to Lambeth next September and Archbishop Rowan Williams is an enthusiastic Patron of our Building and Development Appeal, we have hopes of a double event. Watch this space!



Patriarch Daniel of Romania, together with the participants of the Congress 'Christ to the Children'



All photographs: © Romanian Patriarchate



THE WAY TO THE SUMMER SCHOOL

Abolade E. Olagoke



I grew up in Nigeria, West Africa, where regular attendance in the Anglican church was normal and where I even attended an Anglican primary school. After my high school years, my interest in the church diminished momentarily, but was recaptured thanks to a friend whose testimony greatly rekindled my spiritual quest. I left Nigeria for the United States to continue my studies with the hope that I would not only broaden my horizons but would also deepen my spiritual journey. My graduate education in the US included attendance and graduation from Wheaton College, Illinois - still referred to as the 'Evangelical Harvard.'

My father has always deemed me a 'glutton'

I came to think that the church or the Christian faith could not adequately respond to the issues raised and addressed by the challenges of modernity.

Encountering Orthodox Christianity

My church attendance had by this time substantially subsided until a colleague, John Thompson at Waynesburg University, invited me to his Orthodox church in Morgantown, West Virginia, about nine months ago. I witnessed for the first time the chrismation of a convert into the Orthodox faith. I

found the entire service to be different, archaic and outlandish, compared to my Protestant-Anglican background. My curiosity to understand Orthodoxy led to another visit to the Monastery of Transfiguration at Ellwood City, PA. Again, the service was unusual but I found the community to be hospitable, personable and genuinely spiritual. After a guided tour of the Monastery, I retired to the small Monastery library before lunch was served. The first book that got my attention was "I Love, Therefore, I am" by Father Nicholas Sakharov (the nephew of Elder Sophrony). This book led me to readings of other authors and works from the Orthodox Christian tradition, including: Kyriacos Markides, *The Way of the Pilgrim*, *The Holy Fire: The*

Story of the Fathers of the Eastern Church by Robert Payne, St. Silhouan the Athonite, Alexander Schemann, *The Orthodox Church* by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Faith* by Father Thomas Hopko, and various works on St. Gregory Palamas. It was like waking up from a dogmatic and spiritual slumber! My interest in Orthodoxy led to searching the internet where I stumbled upon the website of Conciliar Press. Prominently displayed and advertised on the Conciliar Press website was



A group of Summer School participants, among whom the author of this article, at the Monastery of St John the Baptist, Essex.

when it comes to books, and this was also true of my period in Illinois. I would read voraciously both in the evangelical tradition and in the secular domain. At the time, I found more resonance and fulfillment in the critique of modernity through the readings of the "masters of suspicion" and subsequently culminating in the writings of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory (Max Horkeheimer, Theodor Adorno, Eric Fromm, Walter Benjamin and Jurgen Habermas).

“The Way.” The caption went further by stating, “This series presents the Orthodox Christian Faith in 12 Lessons on 4 DVDs, with one CD.” Furthermore, it stated, “A catechism and adult education program on DVD from the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies, in Cambridge, England. Speakers include: Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, Fr. Michael Harper, Professor David Frost and more.” I immediately realized, looking at the gallery of ‘stars’ featured in the DVDs, that this is a set I must have in view of my earlier readings on Orthodoxy. I requested the set and received the package in less than five days.

The Way

In my search, I had read books by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware before and had heard of Professor David Frost as well, but hearing them on the DVD provided another rationale for making the trip to Cambridge for the advertised IOCS Summer School. I invited three college students and another adult to watch the DVDs with me. To my surprise, their interest was as intense as mine, lecture after lecture. I was basically glued to the set absorbing every bit of it like a little boy gripped and arrested by a story told by grandpa, wanting to see how it ends!

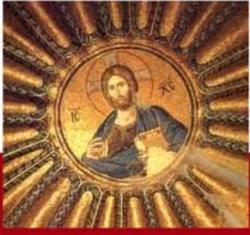
When the next lecturer appeared and we saw Dr. Christine Mangala Frost with her unique background and her eloquent testimony, it became clear to me that my attendance in the IOCS Summer School due to take place in July was becoming a certain fact. She basically addressed and removed the cobwebs of ethnic captivity of Orthodox Christianity that had surfaced for some time. The same sentiment was expressed by the other four watching the documentary with me. After watching the entire series, I immediately started making arrangements for the air flight to England. July was a high season and prices were rather high, so I nearly decided to wait until next year, but the desire was just too strong! Within a few days, I was able to get a good flight, and thereafter registered for the conference.

The Summer School

I have travelled to England a few times during the past ten years, but this is the best trip and the best conference so far. It was not just cerebral, but was a spiritual experience for me. I was able to chat with Dr Mangala Frost over coffee and I told her how I had listened to her through “The Way” and how that was the deciding factor to come for the conference. The trip to the Monastery was another milestone. I met with Father Nikolai Sakharov, who autographed a copy of his dissertation “I love, therefore, I am” which I purchased from the Monastery bookstore during the visit. He prayed for me, and I proudly even took a picture with him. I was elated and felt wholeheartedly that this trip was worth it. I am grateful to God and the organizers of this conference, and I will certainly endeavour to be part of future conferences. I have not ceased telling others of my experience at the conference. The pilgrimage continues.



Summer School participants meeting Fr Nikolai Sakharov at the Monastery of St John the Baptist, Essex.



From the Editor's Desk

A Special Celebration

On 25 November of this year, the Feast Day of St Catherine of Alexandria constituted again a day of great rejoicing for the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies, as, for the third year running, we celebrated St Catherine, the Patron Saint of the Institute, a day which by tradition is also seen as a 'birthday' celebration of the Institute. This year our Academic Director, Dr Marcus Plested, blew out the twelve candles on a festive cake, representing the twelve years of existence of the Institute – a time to look back on the Institute's now long history, but also to devote a prayer for the future which now seems to hold more in stock than ever! This year's celebration also inaugurated a new co-operation, this time with the esteemed 'neighbour' of Wesley House, Jesus College. Through the kind generosity of Revd Dr John Hughes, Dean of Chapel at Jesus College, this year's celebratory service was housed in the beautiful chapel of Jesus College, the oldest college chapel in Cambridge.

This year the Institute has added to the celebrations a formal Commemoration of Benefactors, whom the students, staff, Members and friends of the Institute prayed for by name in the course of the Festal Liturgy. Another novelty this year was that at the end of the service the Principal of the Institute, Professor David Frost, and the Director of Distance Learning, Dr Constantinos Athanasopoulos, presented the Certificate in Orthodox Christian Studies by Distance Learning to those students who have graduated this year. This represented a very special ceremony for our Institute since these are the first ever graduates from the Distance Learning Certificate course, and the awards mark the end of a successful two-year cycle of studies. In his speech Professor Frost praised the efforts of our students and said that 'to study a demanding course with able peers, but in the special conditions of distance learning, is no mean feat. It requires great

self-discipline, for there is no one to stand over you and persuade you to meet the deadlines. Work, family, illness often disrupt progress, and however much you keep in contact with your tutor and your fellow-students by Skype and the internet, there is always 'the loneliness of the long-distance student' who is also inevitably a long-distance runner. Nevertheless the first brave students have made it through, and it is my great pleasure as Principal to welcome you to the finish-line.'



The Principal reads the Commemoration of Benefactors during the festive Liturgy



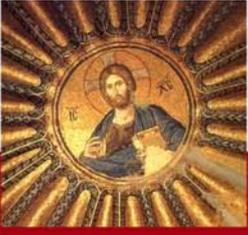
One of the Distance Learning students receiving the Certificate from the Principal

After the service the participants walked back to Wesley House where a light but festive lunch awaited them in the Dining Hall. The beautifully bright and sunny day added to the warmth and joyfulness of the day – a warmth and joy that dwelt in the hearts of those present, who enjoyed the festivities in a positive and prayerful atmosphere. Upon leaving the Institute the participants took with them ‘prayer cards’ with the prayer for the Institute – which can be read on the right-hand side column. No better way to keep them and all our friends and supporters in close community with the Institute and no better way indeed to prepare for the new year ahead!

PRAYER FOR THE INSTITUTE FOR ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN STUDIES

Lord our God,
true light who enlightens everyone that
comes into the world:
look with mercy upon the Institute for
Orthodox Christian Studies.
Guide those who teach in wisdom and
humility.
Impart to those who learn the knowledge
that comes from you.
Grant the members and directors to seek
your will,
for the well-being of our holy Orthodox
Church.
Support our benefactors,
filling their treasuries with good
and inclining their hearts to your glory.
Keep us all in harmony and oneness of
mind,
so that all who teach, research, and learn
may come to know you,
the one true God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
through the prayers of Saint Catherine
the Great-Martyr,
always, now and for ever, and to the ages
of ages.
Amen.





From the Editor's Desk

Plested in Princeton

Our Vice-Principal and Academic Director, Dr Marcus Plested, was privileged to spend the academic year 2010-11 as a Member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. He writes as follows:



The Institute for Advanced Study is one of the world's leading centres for theoretical research and intellectual inquiry. It pursues a policy of 'curiosity-driven research', deliberately refraining from setting boundaries around or defining outcomes to the work pursued by its scholars. In addition to its permanent faculty, IAS recruits a number of scholars from around the world to spend a year working on their own academic projects in surroundings that constitute, for the academic, complete bliss. Founded in 1930, IAS has long sponsored work in Mathematics, the Natural Sciences, and the Humanities. It numbers figures such as Albert Einstein, Ernst Kantorowicz, and Robert Oppenhemier among its former faculty. It has also produced dozens of Nobel Laureates and Fields medallists (the Mathematical equivalent of the Nobel). It is not difficult to feel humble in such company.



IAS has rarely sponsored work in theology, let alone Orthodox theology, before – something that gave me a particular sense of the extraordinary opportunity on offer. I used the time given me to produce a draft of my book on *Orthodox Readings of Aquinas*, taking the story of the Orthodox reception of this towering Catholic theologian from the first Greek translations of his work in the 1350s down to the present day. The book will be published by Oxford University Press. Watch this space for further details!

New Distance Learning Diploma

Our Distance Learning endeavours have intensified recently through the launch of a new Distance Learning Diploma (lasting for two years through part time on-line distance learning methodology, in the same way as with our successful Certificate). The IOCS Diploma offers Modules on Orthodox Church History and Worship, Ecclesiology, Bible Studies, Dogma and Iconology. More information can be found at: http://www.iocs.cam.ac.uk/resources/texts/Diploma_Brochure.pdf During the October intake we had a significant increase in our student numbers (studying for both the Certificate and the Diploma levels) making us feel an increasing responsibility for the on-going support in their studies. We continue to provide a high quality level of support and resources and we always strive to improve our services through student feedback and regular revisions and improvements in the provided resources. We are in the process of creating a strategic plan for our future Distance Learning Development and we are looking forward to input from all those who would be interested to help. We would be grateful if you could send any suggestions or ideas to the Director of Distance Learning, Dr. C. Athanasopoulos, FHEA, at ca356@cam.ac.uk for further consideration.



Front cover: The Principal of IOCS presenting the boxed set of THE WAY to Patriarch Daniel of Romania (© Romanian Patriarchate)
Back cover: Icon of the Transfiguration painted by Mariamni Plested ©

NEW!

On special Saturdays in spring and early summer 2012, the Institute invites visitors from all over to a day in the fair city of Cambridge, to hear and ask questions of some of Orthodoxy's greatest teachers on something they specially want to say to church people, with a splendid community lunch in the Hall of Wesley House, plenty of time to meet the speaker and fellow-guests, a late start for those who travel and an early finish, concluding with Vespers for those who can stay.



Saturday, 31 March 2012

**METROPOLITAN KALLISTOS
WARE**

WHAT IS PRAYER?

11 -12.30: *'Heaven on earth': the inner meaning of the Divine Liturgy*
2.30 - 4 pm: *Finding the place of the heart: the practice of the Jesus Prayer*

Saturday, 21 April 2012

SISTER MAGDALEN
Monastery of St John the Baptist

**'INSTRUCT THE YOUNG':
TEACHING FAITH**

11 -12.30: *Teaching at home*
2.30 - 4 pm: *Teaching in the parish*

Saturday, 12 May 2012

FATHER IOAN SAUCA
Director of the Ecumenical Institute,
Bossey, Geneva

**CONTEMPORARY ISSUES
IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH**

11 -12.30: *Orthodox Laity:
Assistants or Con-Celebrants in
Church Services?*
2.30 - 4 pm: *The Church Beyond
our Boundaries*

Saturday in June 2012

ALEXANDER OGORODNIKOV

Seven years in Soviet
prisons for his faith, peace activist, and
founder of humanitarian organizations

**SUFFERING FOR THE FAITH
AND WHAT IT TEACHES**

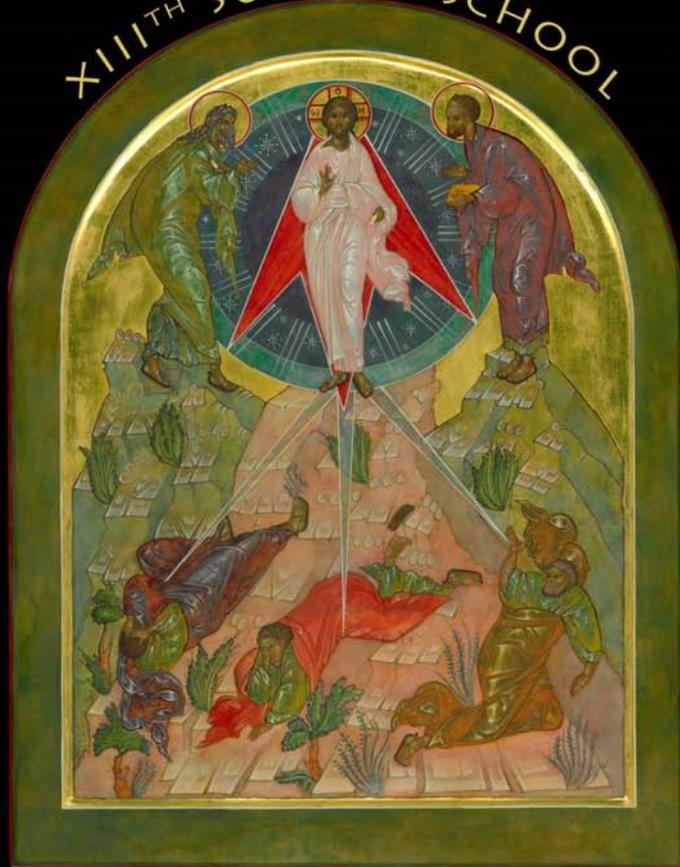
Date and titles to be announced

Fee per person for each day: £30 (including lunch and coffee)

Please e-mail info@iocs.cam.ac.uk prior to the event to confirm attendance. For more information please contact the Institute's office by email at the above address or phone 01223 741037.

IOCS

XIIITH SUMMER SCHOOL



THE ICON

A BRIDGE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

22-27 JULY 2012

WESTMINSTER COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

SPEAKERS WILL INCLUDE:

METROPOLITAN KALLISTOS WARE, AIDAN HART

REVD PROFESSOR ANDREW LOUTH

DR MARCUS PLESTED

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO MAKE A BOOKING PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
WWW.IOCS.CAM.AC.UK OR CONTACT US BY EMAIL AT INFO@IOCS.CAM.AC.UK
OR BY PHONE ON +44 (0)1223 741037