

# **OCTOBER 2024 NEWSLETTER**

*By Michael Galovic*

“I find the best part of travelling is coming back home” said a friend. After my most recent overseas trip to the South of Italy and cruising to some of the Greek islands, I concur, much to my own surprise.

Group tourism and masses of people crawling all over the place and talking (some very loudly and all the time) is not my thing. I am perfectly ready to blame it on myself, on my solitary icon painting, tacit dialogues with austere, stern and taciturn saints, incomprehensible Byzantine intricacies, with Christ never smiling yet full of Grace, with pregnant silences laden with contemplative yearning...

There you go, I laid it all in the open.

Yet, I LOVE travelling, maybe just NOT with a group of individuals constantly seeking to entertain and charm each other.

I admit, I am already plotting my next big trip, hardly a week after this one I am still recovering from. Contradiction? Maybe I am even a walking contradiction!

But, time to resume work, better called labour of love.

Until now this year has been entirely focused on the preparation and production of my monograph *Sailing Back to Byzantium*. Then there was a book launch followed by sales.

No one, including myself, did not expect the publication on religious art to sell well in Australia. Yet, the book is selling furiously and I am compelled to go to my local post office so frequently that a friend suggested I rent a room there.

It is a good news, if not a great news. But, some of us wonder, what is the reason behind this entirely unsuspected surge in interest in something that has been around for over 30 years without being so frenetically sought after? Some

3000 people visited my website since its inception in late July.

Naturally, we don't know, but can only offer theories.

It seems the automated, largely mechanical way of life, pretty predictable in its development and sorry end, becomes obvious to those who are part of such lives but never stop thinking how to make it better if not more meaningful.

There is a recorded surge of interest in revisiting old traditions, rituals, spiritual concepts, guidances, religion itself (perhaps not the institutionalised ones), drumming, ancient calligraphy, iconography, rare languages...

God is the best medicine, says on the sandwich board of my local pharmacy. I smile as I know the extent of the knowledge and interest in the matters of religion and faith of my pharmacist, yet she chose to display this next to her shop.

Jesus the carpenter needs joiners, says on one church in Rockdale. I smile again and applaud the sense of humour so important in my view.

This outstanding sale of *Sailing Back to Byzantium* brought many new faces, new friends, enriched and coloured my life, so I salute all of them/you and welcome you to my newsletters which in general showcase my work and talk about my takes on icons and religious art in general.

“Old” friends and recipients of my news I salute you and thank you for the loyal following.

I am embarking on a new phase, the one which I chose to call “the last one” by which I do not mean anything sinister. I am in good health and “full of beans”, but as far as my active art activities go, I would like to focus to this stage as the last meaningful one, disregarding how long it may last. For now, I think of 5 years, but it can be longer or shorter, depending least on myself.

So, I made a list of projects I would like to realise in this stage and it confirmed it requires at least those five years to achieve it all. So, I better start. Out of many, I select to approach again the body of work I have been cultivating for decades: The Son of Man.

We know that much was written about Christ but not about his physical countenance and appearance. "What did Christ look like" is a title of the book dedicated to the subject, but in the next newsletter I will show more of my own research into this phenomenon of us humans depicting God-Man without knowing how He really looked like.

A couple of authors chose my artworks/icons for the front covers of their books recently. "To call on His name", Perspective on the Jesus Prayer by John F.Gill is one of those deceptive small books as with their misleading size, they pack so much wonderful and utterly significant information that I can not recommend it enough. I am so honoured John has placed my icon on its front cover. Those who want to get this jewel can do it contacting John directly, for a particularly low price of only \$20 plus a wee postage fee. The book costs much more in the shops, BTW.

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**"John Gill brings a wealth of understanding, both academic and more personal, and a generosity of perspective that admits of spiritual insights far beyond the boundaries of his own theological background. He has given us a book worthy of careful reading and frequent revisiting."**

— The Revd Dr Duncan Reid

Adjunct Lecturer at Trinity College Theological School, Melbourne, Australia

***"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,  
have mercy on me, a sinner."***

The Jesus Prayer is an ancient mystical practice that originated in the Christian East, but is now widely used by Christians around the world. John F. Gill, a deacon of the Melkite Catholic Eparchy of Australia and New Zealand, considers the historical development of the prayer and its basis in scripture, patristic spirituality, theology, and psychology, and compares it with Eastern practices such as yoga and meditation.

Having developed within the heart of the Christian tradition, the Jesus Prayer is a personal prayer expressing fundamental Christian faith; it is therefore a prayer which can hold universal appeal to Christians of all denominations.

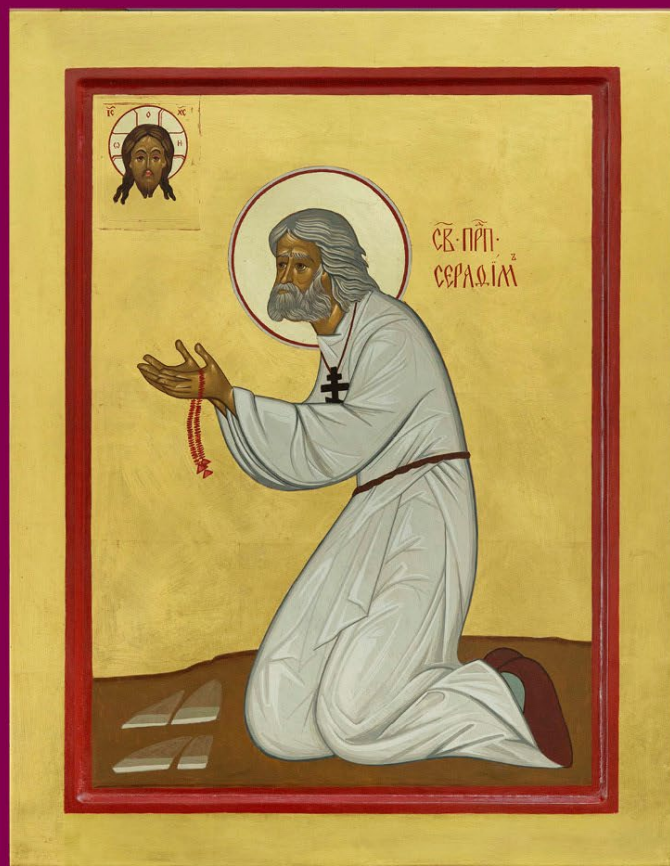
The book also includes guidance for those who want to learn to use the Jesus Prayer as part of their spiritual practice and suggestions for further reading.

Cover image: St Seraphim of Sarov depicted praying the Jesus Prayer in an icon written by Mr Michael Galovic

John F. Gill

# TO CALL ON HIS NAME

Perspectives on the Jesus Prayer



TO CALL ON HIS NAME

Perspectives on the Jesus Prayer

John F. Gill

Sacristy Press

ISBN 978-1-78959-070-8



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www.sacristy.co.uk

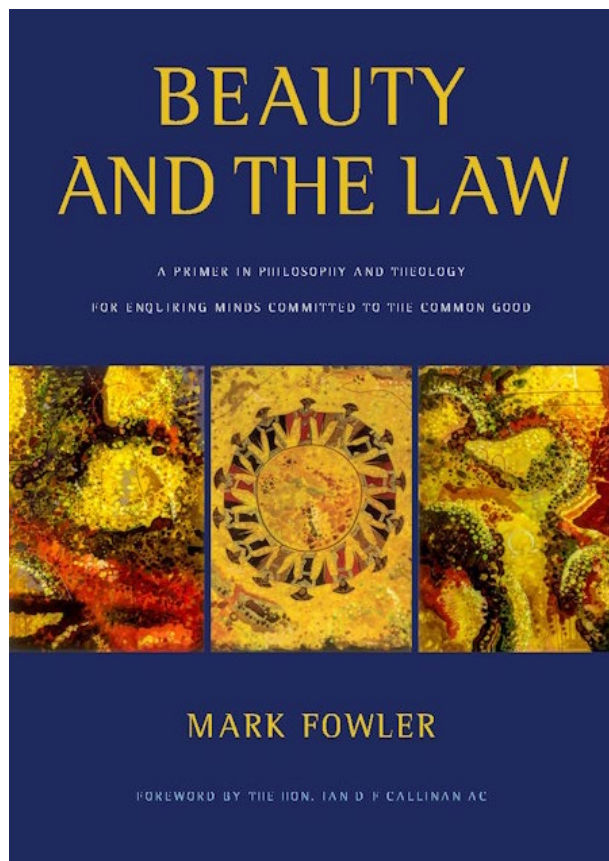
The other one is called *Beauty and the Law* by Dr Mark Fowler. As it is being published only now, I haven't had a chance to read it yet, but from talks with the author I am convinced it is a great read. The book will be launched later in October and this is how it is presented:

*Beauty and the Law* - Mark Fowler,  
9781923224438

'Nothing could be more apt for the times than the publication of Dr Fowler's original and insightful lectures about Western Civilisation ... Dr Fowler's elegantly constructed lectures drawing upon history, law, literature, the Bible and the Constitution itself deal at a philosophical and practical level with the paradoxes of an increasingly secular age. This anthology is not however written exclusively for the philosopher or the lawyer. It is enlivened by poetry, parable and anecdote. *Beauty and the Law* could not be more relevant than it is today. It is to be commended to everyone.'

The Hon. Ian D F Callinan AC, former Justice of the Australian High Court

'If beauty can light up pathways to human flourishing, we are greatly indebted to Mark



Fowler for helping us find the switch again, so long lost in the gloom of our blind materialism.'

John Anderson, former Deputy Prime Minister of Australia.

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The third review of *Sailing Back to Byzantium* has just been completed by Gordon Morrison. It will most likely feature in the Quadrant thus preventing it from release until then. It will be a delight to share it with you in the next newsletter!

May you all be well.

*Michael Galovic*

October 2024



*Sailing Back to Byzantium: Art of Michael Galovic*  
is available to purchase on the website.