

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

DIOCESE OF SOUROZH

CATHEDRAL OF THE DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

67 ENNISMORE GARDENS, LONDON SW7 1NH



# *Sourozĥ Messenger*

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## *Great Lent - Journey to Pascha*



*Artwork produced by pupils  
of the church school*

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## Diocesan News

### MEETING OF BISHOP MATTHEW OF SOUROZH AND BISHOP IRENEI OF SACRAMENTO

On 25 January 2018 at the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Mother of God and the Holy Royal Passion-Bearers in London, Bishop Matthew met with Bishop Irenei of Sacramento, Administrator of the Diocese of Great Britain and Ireland of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

Their Eminences surveyed the decor and murals of the ROCOR Cathedral followed by talks where they were joined by Archpriest Stephen Platt, Dean of the South of England (Sourozh) and Archpriest Vitaly Serapinas, Sacristan of the ROCOR Cathedral



### BISHOP MATTHEW OF SOUROZH ATTENDS MEETING OF THE LORD MAYOR OF LONDON WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

On February 8, 2018, Bishop Matthew of Sourozh attended a reception for Archbishops and Bishops together with other religious leaders given by the Lord Mayor of London, Charles Bowman, at Mansion House, his official residence. The tradition of the Lord Mayor's meetings with leaders of religious communities goes back to the 18th century. Representatives of many different religions are invited to these meetings in the capital of Great Britain.

### QUESTIONS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND ROSSOTRUDNICHESTVO

On 20 February, in the Dormition Cathedral, Bishop Matthew met with A. A Chesnokov, a representative from Rossotrudnichestvo (Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation).

During the meeting, the parties discussed topical issues of cooperation between Rossotrudnichestvo and the Diocese of Sourozh, and exchanged



views on the potential for organising joint events at a parish level in various cities of Great Britain.

Bishop Matthew remarked on the important part clergy could play in cultural and humanitarian initiatives aimed at consolidating Russian compatriots and facilitating dialogue with all interested parties. In turn, A.A. Chesnokov expressed confidence that the cooperation of the Church and Rossotrudnichestvo in the UK will help create new models of public diplomacy, which are so much needed now in the relations between the two countries.

Following the meeting, the parties agreed on the coordination of the agenda and the development of joint projects, with the involvement of the

Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriots and the Committee “Russian Heritage in the UK.” Also present at the meeting was Acting Secretary of the Diocese, Priest Dmitry Nedostupenko and the Acting Head of the diocesan Department for the Relationship between the Church and society, Archpriest Anthony Ilyin.



## Cathedral News

### YOUNGSTERS CELEBRATE 'WINTER NAME-DAYS'

On 27 January 2018, pupils from the cathedral school celebrated the 'day of winter name-days'. On this day, pupils whose name-days fall in the winter months are able to bring to school items they've made about their patron saints and share stories of their lives. This time, the celebration took place on a special day – the day of Saint Nina Equal to the Apostles, the Enlightener of Georgia.



In his introductory remarks, Archpriest Dmitry Karpenko explained why it is so important for Orthodox Christians to know the lives of the saints, and especially their patron saints. Through the examples of the lives of the saints, we can directly see the impact of God's grace on an individual, helping over-

come the sorrows and flaws of this world.

The pupils and parents were able to watch a film from the series 'Stories of the saints: Saint Nina Equal to the Apostles, Enlightener of Georgia'. Afterwards pupils from classes 3-8, their parents and teachers jointly created some decorative works on the life of Saint Nina, which were then displayed on the walls of the Cathedral. Everyone was then offered refreshments which had been prepared by parents and teachers.

### CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL IN THE CATHEDRAL SCHOOL

On 17 February 2018, in the Cathedral school, London, junior and senior pupils and their parents and teachers worked together to produce a festive





concert which included a play about Christian virtues.

Bishop Matthew of Sourozh, accompanied by the acting secretary of the Diocese, Priest Dmitry Nedostupenko, attended the performance and warmly greeted all the participants, wishing everyone a worthy and fruitful Great

Lent and Pascha. Bishop Matthew thanked the Director of the school, E. N. Poplavskaya, and all the teachers for their efforts in organising the school and this festive event. Everyone was then invited to enjoy refreshments.



### *For reflection*

**Fasting, prayer, alms, and every other good Christian deed is good in itself, but the purpose of the Christian life consists not only in the fulfillment of one or another of them. The true purpose of our Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God. But fasting, prayer, alms and every good deed done for the sake of Christ is a means to the attainment of the Holy Spirit. Note that only good deeds done for the sake of Christ bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Everything else that is not done for the sake of Christ, even if it is good, does not bring us a reward in the life to come, not does it bring the grace of God in this life. This is why our Lord Jesus Christ said, “Whoever gathereth not with me scattereth” (Matt. 12:30)**

*(St. Seraphim of Sarov, Conversation on the Goal of the Christian Life)*

## *Notes on the Church calendar*

### SELECTED QUOTES OF THE FATHERS ON GREAT LENT

“As we are therefore beginning this sacred season, dedicated to the purification of the soul, let us be careful to fulfill the Apostolic command that we cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and of the spirit (2 Cor. 7:11), so that restraining the conflict that exists between the one and the other substance, the soul, which in the Providence of God is meant to be the ruler of the body, may regain the dignity of its rightful authority, so that, giving offense to no man, we may not incur the contumely of evil mongers. With just contempt shall we be tormented by those who have no faith, and from our wickedness evil tongues will draw weapons to wound religion, if the way of life of those who fast be not in accord with what is needed in true self-denial. For the sum total of our fasting does not consist in merely abstaining from food. In vain do we deny our body food if we do not withhold our heart from iniquity, and restrain our lips that they speak no evil.” - **St. Leo the Great - 'Lent the Season of Purification' (The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers)**

“Blessed is the mind that passes the time of its pilgrimage in chaste sobriety, and loiters not in the things



Photo - <https://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-church-year/lenten-fasting>

through which it has to walk, so that, as a stranger rather than the possessor of its earthly abode, it may not be wanting in human affections, and yet rest on the Divine promises.” - **St. Leo the Great - 'Homily 49: On Great Lent'**

“...We must then so moderate our rightful use of food that our other desires may be subject to the same rule. For this is also a time of peace and serenity, in which having put away all stains of evil doing we strive after steadfastness in what is good. Now is the time when generous Christian souls forgive offences, pay no heed to insults, and wipe out the memory of past injuries. Now let the Christian soul exercise itself in the armour of justice, on the right hand and on the left, so that amid honour and dishonour, evil report and good, the praise of men will not make proud the virtue that is

well rooted, the conscience that has peace, nor dishonour cast it down. The moderation of those who worship God is not melancholy, but blameless.” - **St. Leo the Great – ‘Lent the Season of Purification’ (The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers)**

“When He had fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards was hungry, He gave an opportunity to the devil to draw near, so that He might teach us through this encounter how we are to overcome and defeat him. This a wrestler also does. For in order to teach his pupils how to win he himself engages in contests with others, demonstrating on the actual bodies of others that they may learn how to gain the mastery. This is what took place here. For, desiring to draw the devil into contest, He made His hunger known to him. He met him as he approached, and meeting him, with the skill which He alone possessed, He once, twice, and a third time, threw His enemy to the ground.” - **St. John Chrysostom (The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers)**

“Special services, special foods, continence, not going to dances and events, all this awakes one to piety and reflection on our present purpose, on the past and on eternity. Seeing in ourselves a falling away from the commandments of God, we try to reconcile ourselves to God through repentance and communion of the most pure and life-giving Mysteries of Christ, which burn the thorns of our

sins. You, when you have not fulfilled this duty during the year, of course will fulfill it during the Fast. The most merciful Lord loved us so much, that He gave us, through food and drink, His most pure Body and life-giving Blood, as a token of life eternal and the incorrupt future feast. Let us offer Him thanksgiving with pure hearts, lips and acts!” - **St. Macarius of Optina (Letters...)**

“And though every day a man lives may rightly be a day of repentance, yet is it in these days more becoming, more appropriate, to confess our sins, to fast, and to give alms to the poor; since in these days you may wash clean the sins of the whole year.” - **St. John Chrysostom (The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers)**

“Brethren and Fathers, our good God who gives us life and brings us from year to year, has brought us also with love for mankind to this present time of fasting, in which each of the eager, as their choice directs, enters the contest; one devoting himself to self-mastery, eating only every two or three days, another to vigil, keeping vigil for so long or so long, another spending even longer in prostrations, and others in other ascetic actions. Quite simply during these holy days it is possible to see great zeal and attention. But the true subject behaves with obedience not at any particular time, but keeps up the struggle always. What is the struggle? Not to walk according to one’s own will, but to let oneself be



ruled by the disposition of the superior. This is better than the other works of zeal and is a crown of martyrdom; except that for you there is also change of diet, multiplication of prostrations and increase of psalmody are in accord with the established tradition from of old. And so I ask, let us welcome gladly the gift of the fast, not making ourselves miserable, as we are taught, but let us advance with cheerfulness of heart, innocent, not slandering, not angry, not evil, not envying; rather peaceable towards each other, and loving, fair, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits; breathing in seasonable stillness, since hubbub is damaging in a community; speaking suitable words, since too unreasonable stillness is profitless; yet above all unsleepingly keeping watch over our thoughts, not opening the door to the passions, not giving place to the devil. If the spirit of the powerful one, it says, rise up against you, do not let it find your place. So that the enemy has power to suggest, but in no way to enter. We are lords of ourselves; let us not open our door to the devil; rather let us keep guard over our soul as a bride of Christ, not set about with tumult, unwounded by the arrows of the thoughts; for thus we are able to become a dwelling of God in Spirit. Thus we may be made worthy to hear, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Quite simply, Whatever is true, whatever noble, whatever just, whatever pure, whatever lovely, whatever of good report, if there is anything virtuous, if there is

anything praiseworthy, to speak like the Apostle, do it; and the God of peace will be with you all, in Christ Jesus, our Lord, to whom be the glory and the might, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen." - *St. Theodore the Studite - Catechesis 53* "On fasting; and that the true fast of the obedient and the subject is the cutting off of one's will. Given on Cheesefare Sunday."

[www.full-of-grace-and-truth.blogspot.co.uk/2011/03/selected-quotes-of-fathers-on-great.html](http://www.full-of-grace-and-truth.blogspot.co.uk/2011/03/selected-quotes-of-fathers-on-great.html)

## LENTEN FASTING

A special word must be said about fasting during lent. Generally speaking, fasting is an essential element of the Christian life. Christ fasted and taught men to fast. Blessed fasting is done in secret, without ostentation or accusation of others (Mt 6.16; Rom 14). It has as its goal the purification of our lives, the liberation of our souls and bodies from sin, the strengthening



of our human powers of love for God and man, the enlightening of our entire being for communion with the Blessed Trinity.

The Orthodox rules for lenten fasting are the monastic rules. No meat is allowed after Meatfare Sunday, and no eggs or dairy products after Cheesefare Sunday. These rules exist not as a Pharisaic “burden too hard to bear” (Lk 11.46), but as an ideal to be striven for; not as an end in themselves, but as a means to spiritual perfection crowned in love. The lenten services themselves continually remind us of this.

Let us fast with a fast pleasing to the Lord. This is the true fast: the casting off of evil, the bridling of the tongue, the cutting off of anger, the cessation of lusts, evil talking, lies and cursing. The stopping of these is the fast true and acceptable (Monday Vespers of the First Week).

The lenten services also make the undeniable point that we should not pride ourselves with external fasting since the devil also never eats!

The ascetic fast of Great Lent continues from Meatfare Sunday to Easter Sunday, and is broken only after the Paschal Divine Liturgy. Knowing the great effort to which they are called, Christians should make every effort to fast as well as they can, in secret, so that God would see and bless them openly with a holy life. Each person must do his best in the light of the given ideal.

In addition to the ascetic fasting of the lenten season, the Orthodox alone among Christians also practice what is known as eucharistic or liturgical fasting. This fasting does not refer to the normal abstinence in preparation for receiving the holy eucharist; it means fasting from the holy eucharist itself.

During the week days of Great Lent the regular eucharistic Divine Liturgy is not celebrated in Orthodox churches since the Divine Liturgy is always a paschal celebration of communion with the Risen Lord. Because the lenten season is one of preparation for the Lord’s Resurrection through the remembrance of sin and separation from God, the liturgical order of the Church eliminates the eucharistic service on the weekdays of lent. Instead the non-eucharistic services are extended with additional scripture readings and hymnology of a lenten character. In order that the faithful would not be entirely deprived of Holy Communion on the lenten days, however, the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is celebrated on Wednesday and Friday evenings.

Even during Great Lent, Saturday (the Sabbath Day) and Sunday (the Lord’s Day) remain eucharistic days, and the Divine Liturgy is celebrated. On Saturdays it is the normal Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, usually with prayers for the dead. On Sundays it is the longer Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great.

The well-known teaching that Saturdays and Sundays are never days of fasting in the Orthodox Church, an issue emphasized centuries ago when controversy arose with the Latin Church, refers only to this eucharistic-liturgical fast. During Great Lent, even though the eucharistic fast is broken on Saturdays and Sundays, the ascetical

fast continues through the weekends since this fasting is an extended effort made from Meatfare Sunday right to Easter itself.

<https://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-church-year/len-len-fasting>

## *Legacy of Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh*

### **MEETING A NON-ORTHODOX SOCIETY:**

#### **Part 2**

#### **Fear Not**

When the Apostles moved from place to place they did not simply change location; they went from place to place with the newness of life which they could impart to others. What about us? Do we impart anything to the people whom we meet, who are around us? What happens to us, to the Christian community, is that with the recognition of Christianity by Constantine and its later spread, the Christian community became secure and sedentary. And these two things are evils. Secure means that we do not realise how dangerous are the paths we tread, as one of the epistles tells us. We do not realise that we are not simply embarked in a ship that will carry us across the ocean of life into eternity. Every step is a challenge. Every step is a danger. Every step is a risk. At every moment evil is before



us and God is with us. And we forget too often that the power of God is beyond all the power of evil. Hermas, one of the Seventy, says in one of his epistles, ‘remember, never to fear the power of evil more than your trust in the power and love of God.’ So, this is an element which the Apostles could bring, because in the pagan society in which they lived people were terrified of evil, of evil powers, of Satan. And the Apostles came and said, ‘fear not; Christ has conquered. The devil is defeated. If you are with Him, you are invincible.’ That is not something we often hear today.

### **Martyrdom and Security**

Today, people cling together and do not look outwards, they are afraid of living to the full, of going into the unknown, of meeting face to face those who will reject them, or endanger them. Bishop Basil [one of the other speakers at the Conference ed.] has spoken of the baptism of blood. Yet, how far we are from it, and how often and easily we speak of it. The French preacher Bossuet says, 'How comforting it is to hear that practically in every Church, priests preach on martyrdom. When martyrdom is here one does not speak of it, one endures it. If there is so much talk of martyrdom, it means that we feel secure. Alas.' We feel we are secure. But we are also sedentary in another way. We are encrusted in one place. We have formed Christian communities that are not outward looking. We have services and so many people feel that it is the services that are the centre; people come to a service on a Sunday and exclaim, 'if only it was possible not to leave the precincts of this church, because outside there is an alien world', and we forget that Christ said to us, 'go, like sheep among the wolves, go into the world to make disciples of all nations.' This is as it were, the fruition of the Liturgy. If in the Liturgy we have entered into communion with the Holy Spirit and with Christ, then our function is to go out and to bring the glory, the joy, and the love of it to others. A mentality has developed us that we must be secure

within the walls of the Church, within the limits of a Christian community. Going out is dangerous, that is exactly what we should be doing and we have forgotten it.

### **Monasticism and the Giving of One's Life**

It began very early in the Church, the moment we became Christians many things changed. The men and women who had been prepared to live to die for Christ were of another stature than the many who joined the Church because the Emperor had joined it. And having entered the Church, they wanted to be secure, but secure under what? Under God? No. Very often under the authority of the imperial power. And at this moment certain things happened: it was the beginning of monasticism. Men of a daring spirit left the cities and the comfort of a state Christianity to go into the wilderness to fight evil in themselves and the evil that was spreading around. Fr George Florovsky insists on the fact that these people were not running away from a still pagan society; they were not running away from persecution. They were running away from a Christianity that had 'lost its salt.' They were going away because the Christian community had become tasteless; it was no longer the heroic body it had been in the beginning.

That is the beginning of monasticism, and has been the impetus for it throughout the ages. Even now this

should be the attitude of anyone embracing the monastic life. We refuse to accept the anaemic, weak, irresponsible attitude of the sedentary community. We want to be alone with God, and together with God to go into all the situations that need His presence and the giving of our lives. When I speak of giving our lives I do not mean dying; at times, to live a long time in circumstances that are tragic or painful may be more important than to die at once. A Russian bishop, a hero of the years of Soviet persecution of the Church, often said that at times the duty of the believing Christian is to survive. Ever since Cain murdered Abel all the Cains of the world have

been trying to murder all the Abels of the world, but the Abels of the world have a function to fulfill and we have learned to survive as long as necessary for this function to be fulfilled without compromise, but allowing God to choose the moment when we will be killed. And Abel was killed.

### ***Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom)***

*This article was originally presented by Metropolitan Anthony at 'Our Orthodox Presence in Great Britain,' a Conference of the Diocese of Sourozh held in Headington, England (1995) and published subsequently by The Russian Orthodox Diocese of Sourozh, 1996.*

## *Holy Places of England*

### **BATH ABBEY, SOMERSET**

The present very large and beautiful former abbey church of Sts Peter and Paul in the centre of the city of Bath in Somerset in western England is 500 years old. It is now used as an Anglican parish church and is frequently taken for a cathedral by visitors due to its dimensions. The first Convent of St Peter appeared in this former Roman town in the 670s. This was enlarged in the eighth century. It was in this monastery that the Holy Bishop Ethelwold of Winchester anointed St Edgar the Peaceful the first King of all England in 973 (Queen Elizabeth II visited the abbey to mark the



*Bath Abbey, Somerset  
(photo by Irina Lapa)*

anniversary this great event in 1973).

In the early 980s the Hieromartyr Alphege, who had been born just



*St Alphege's Chapel inside Bath Abbey,  
Somerset  
(photo by Irina Lapa)*

outside this city and had lived as a hermit near Bath, became the illustrious abbot of Bath Abbey. Later, as Archbishop of Canterbury, he took care of the poor, worked miracles, lived as an anchorite, advised the king, acted as peace-maker, preached to the pagan Danes and finally gave his life for his people. The Holy Archbishop Dunstan of Canterbury was personally responsible for the revival of monastic life in Bath in the same century.

In 1090 Bishop John of Wells moved his see to Bath and started building a great Romanesque cathedral and monastery here. From that time on Bath was known as a prominent spiritual and monastic centre. Some stones from that building still survive. The most outstanding scholar of Bath was Adelard (1080-1152) who was one of the first to introduce the Arabic (originally Hindu) numeral system to Europe. From 1245, the diocese was

shared between the cities of Wells and Bath so it was a joint see. In 1499 Bishop Oliver King, after a miraculous vision in which he saw a ladder and angels ascending and descending and a voice telling him to build a new abbey there, initiated a large-scale project of building the present abbey church in Bath. It was the last large building in England in the Gothic Perpendicular style. Oliver King never saw his building project completed as he died in 1503.

Sadly, soon after the completion the Reformation began and all the monasteries in the country were closed. The current church was thus a



*The Stained glass window in the chancel  
of Bath Abbey, Somerset  
(photo by Irina Lapa)*

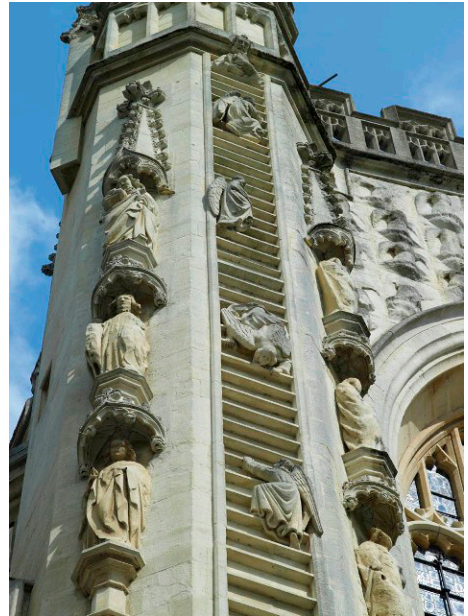
monastic church for only a very short time. It was largely due to Elizabeth I that the church was saved. This church does have many treasures to admire despite the serious restoration works by George Gilbert Scott in the nineteenth century. Its fan vaulting (a distinctive feature of perpendicular style ceilings) in the local Bath stone is fantastic. The south transept has a beautiful 'Jesse Tree' window showing the pedigree of our Lord from Jesse, the father of King David. The abbey boasts a large number of monuments and plaques dating to various periods (617 wall memorials and 847 floor stones) and commemorating not only Church figures and heroes, but also local wealthy families, war victims, scientists, inventors.

Among those buried in the abbey are Richard Nash (1674-1761), a local 'master of ceremonies' who helped establish the fame of Bath as a spa resort; and the Oxfordshire botanist John Sibthorp (1758-1796). The distinguished portraitist William Hoare (1707-1792) lived most of his life in Bath and is commemorated in the abbey. There is a huge famous stained glass window above the high altar depicting 56 scenes of Christ's life. Late in the twentieth century a new Chapel in honour of St Alphege was consecrated near the altar to mark the abbey's greatest abbot. The chapel has a very warm atmosphere. It has an Orthodox icon of St Alphege along with a stained glass depicting the anointing

of St Edgar as king by St Ethelwold. The west façade contains sculptures of angels from King's vision, as well as those of the apostles. There is an abbey heritage museum in the church vaults. The abbey is c. 70 metres (c. 225 feet) long and c. 25 metres (c. 80 feet) wide; it seats over 1000 worshippers and is also famous for its musical traditions. The abbey is known as 'the Lantern of the West' due to the light shining from its many windows at night.

### ***By Dmitry Lapa***

*Main source: <http://orthochristian.com/93007.html>*



*West facade of Bath Abbey, Somerset  
(taken from Bathabbey.org)*

## *British and Irish Saints*

### **SAINT CUTHMAN OF STEYNING**

*Commemorated 8/21 February*

St Cuthman of Steyning, one of the most venerated saints in southern England, lived in the late seventh to mid-eighth century. He is best remembered in the town of Steyning in West Sussex. Sussex people have for centuries venerated him for his meekness, humility, love, compassion, closeness to people and miracles.

Cuthman was born in about 681 in Chidham, now a small village not far from Chichester. Sussex was the last ancient English kingdom to embrace Christianity in the late seventh century. A great missionary, St Wilfrid, the future Bishop of York, preached in Sussex from 680 to 686, and he is considered to be the apostle of the 'South Saxons'. It was probably Wilfrid who converted Cuthman's parents to Christianity and baptised them together with their son Cuthman.

From childhood the future saint revered his parents, obeyed them in everything and devoted much time to prayer; young Cuthman worked very hard to help his parents. It is known that he tended sheep. The saint's father died when he was a very young man and soon after that his mother



*The 'St Cuthman - Shepherd' window*

was paralysed. Cuthman took care of her. When Cuthman and his mother grew so poor that they had nothing to eat, they started begging, going from cottage to cottage of God-loving people. The saint made a hand-barrow for his mother and carried her in it.

He never grumbled at his destiny but always thanked the Lord for everything. Living this simple life, full of hardships, Cuthman offered up his fervent prayers to the Creator day and night. In time, Cuthman and his mother decided to leave their native home. One morning they set out, heading eastwards. He pushed his mother in the cart, which



he had tied up with a rope. He decided that as soon as the rope had frayed through, he would take it as a sign from God and stop there. The rope frayed through at a place called Steyning - now a quiet and pretty little town near Chichester. Cuthman stopped there and prayed: 'Lord Almighty! Thou hast put an end to my wanderings. Help me to start my work. For who am I, O Lord, to build a holy church in honour of Thy Name? My hope is only in Thy help, O Lord!' And he began his work. First he built a small hut for himself and his mother. Local people began to help the saint build the church. But some of them did not wish to help the saint and began to laugh at him. They were suddenly caught out by Divine retribution: extremely heavy rain began to fall and all their hay was spoilt.

Soon the little church was nearly complete; only the roof beam had to be added, but Cuthman did not know how to finish it. At that moment a stranger appeared and showed him how to finish the roof. The saint thanked the man, asked him his name and the latter answered: 'I am the one in whose honour you are building this church.' Cuthman realised that it was the Lord Himself who had helped him! Cuthman lived as a hermit in Steyning until his death. After the repose of his mother he spent his days and nights constantly praying in his small church. Often he went out to preach the Word of God to the residents of neighbouring



*Fragment of St Cuthman window inside  
St Mary's Church in Chidham,  
West Sussex*

settlements, where many miracles of healing took place due to his prayers. Soon the whole local population came to believe in Christ and began to live a devout life. The people loved Cuthman for his kindness, simple life, and sincere faith. And Cuthman loved everyone.

The enemy of mankind was so irritated with Cuthman that he plotted to kill the Christians of Sussex. One night the evil one began to dig a tunnel under the ground near the hill fort called Chanctonbury Ring, intending to dig a channel as far as the sea and so drown all the inhabitants. But the Lord revealed Satan's cunning plot to the ascetic. The saint lit a candle and prayed for the devil to be banished. The candle began to burn so strongly that it seemed to turn into a pillar of



*Parish Church of Sts Andrew and Cuthman in Steyning, West Sussex  
(photo from Wikipedia)*

light; the evil spirit was weakened, and, exposed, moved away, unable to complete his plot.

One day when Cuthman was a herdsman, after praying he drew a circle around his sheep with his staff and went to find some food. Having returned, Cuthman noticed that no sheep had strayed beyond the invisible border, and from that time on he lost no sheep! This miracle occurred in a field near Chidham, which over many years was known as St Cuthman's Field. A great rock in this field, on which the holy shepherd Cuthman used to sit and pray, had healing powers and provided cures from many diseases.

Cuthman, who so much loved to pray in his church dedicated to the Lord, was venerated in Sussex and especially in Steyning. In time, part of his relics were translated to the monastery of Fecamp in Normandy, where they

were much venerated; this contributed to a wider veneration of the saint in Europe.

St Cuthman is depicted among the carvings of the choir stalls in Ripon Cathedral in North Yorkshire - his figure with a three-wheeled cart (mid-fifteenth century) can be seen there. It is amazing that the memory of this humble, quiet, rural saint has not been erased by centuries of reforms and secularism and that he is still commemorated and loved!

The present charming Church of Sts Andrew and Cuthman in Steyning, which stands on the site of his original church, dates back to the thirteenth



*The modern statue of St Cuthman in front of his church in Steyning, West Sussex  
(photo from Wikipedia)*



*St Mary's Church in Chidham,  
West Sussex  
(photo from Wikipedia)*

century, and one of its chapels is dedicated to Cuthman. Among other relics, there are a few stained glass windows in the church, depicting scenes of St Cuthman's life. A moving statue of the saint, produced by the

sculptor Penny Reeve in 2000, stands in front of the church. Notably, King Ethelwulf of Wessex, father of St Alfred the Great, is buried within this church. St Cuthman, carrying his mother on his cart, is depicted on the emblem of Steyning. The meek hermit Cuthman is now venerated as the patron-saint of shepherds. He is also the patron of Steyning and West Sussex. At the saint's birthplace in Chidham there is the Church of the Mother of God, which contains stained glass windows depicting St Cuthman with his mother along with St Wilfrid. There is a modern St Cuthman's Anglican Church in Whitehawk – a suburb of the City of Brighton. Brighton also has an Old Catholic Oratory of Sts Cuthman and Wilfrid.

***By Dmitry Lapa***

*Main source: <http://orthochristian.com/68721.html>*

### *For reflection*

**It is needful to do everything with discernment, and to take your own measure, so that you will not be confused later. To perform alms, fasting, or anything else at the highest degree (beyond one's limits or personal measure) lacks discernment, since later it will lead the one who performs them into confusion, despondency, and grumbling. Even God requires that which is according to the strength of man.**

*(St. Barsanuphius the Great, Instructions, 627)*



**“I LOST MY FEAR”:  
A CONVERSATION  
WITH FATHER SERGEI  
OVSIANIKOV**

*Fr Sergei Ovsianikov, longtime rector of St Nicholas of Myra Russian Orthodox Church in Amsterdam, died 7 January 2018. He was 65.*

*When the future Father Sergei was in the army he was held in solitary confinement for 3 months. Without company or books he was left with only one thing to do - to think. In this interview with Jim and Nancy Forrest he speaks about how he was able, in such conditions, to find freedom and to come to faith.*

**Jim Forest: I recall that being in jail provided a turning point in your life...**

Fr Sergei: I was in two jails while I was in the army. The first time I was accused of doing propaganda for the American style of life. In fact it wasn't true — I knew almost nothing about the American style of life. What could I say about it? They also accused me of disobedience, and that was true. I was

disobedient to the authorities. So I was sent to prison, originally just for a few weeks. That was nice. I was with other people and we had good discussions. But when we walked to work together, we were followed by a soldier with a machine gun. Not so pleasant. It was at this time I realized that we are always being followed by such a soldier, only usually he is invisible. In normal life you don't see him. But somewhere inside of you he is controlling what you think and what you say, controlling your behaviour. You had to become your own guard, your own censor. You must abide by the system.

**J: And it's all based on fear...**

- Yes. In fact the prison was to create fear. At some moment I shared this thought with someone else, another prisoner. He told one of the jail administrators what I had said and this resulted in my being put in solitary confinement. I was there three months. This was hard. You can do nothing. You can't really sleep — the floor is wet. You cannot read — there are no books. You cannot write — no paper, no pencil. You have four walls and that's it.

**J: No window?**

- Yes. Light comes in but the window is too high to look through it. So all you can do is think. It was in this situation that I realized I didn't know how to think. I had thought that thinking is a very easy thing. I used to be a physicist so I thought about physics, laws of physics, formulas. But after a few days, perhaps a week, these topics were

exhausted. Finished! Then you have to really think, but I didn't know how. Then something happened. I began to think about freedom. What happened next is very difficult to describe. Maybe I can say there was a kind of light. I heard the words "freedom is in God." But — a big but — I knew nothing about God! I didn't believe in God! (laughter) This was a problem — freedom is in God but I didn't believe in God! But it seems God believed in me. I experienced joy. Only much later did I realize that it is comparable only to one thing, the joy you experience on the night of Pascha. Easter night. Finally I came to realize that the state you enter on Pascha night is intended to be the natural state of the human being. In fact many people experience this joy at the all-night Pascha service, but we lose it again and again, some after a few hours, some after a couple of months.

So I was given this joy while in solitary confinement. This kind of joy is indescribable and unbelievable. I lost my fear. That was the most important thing. I realized if they sent me to a labour camp with a long sentence it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter because I was free. Of course gradually I came to realize freedom is not just given — you have to take responsibility for it. You have to do something about it every moment of your life.

Anyway it was a beginning. I understood that I had to know about God. I had to read the Gospel — it was difficult even to find a Bible in those days. But it was the real beginning of

my life.

Finding my way into the Church was much more complicated. It was the beginning of the 70s. Not many churches were open and churches were watched closely.

**Nancy: When you had that experience in prison, did you sense there were things they couldn't take away from you any more?**

- Certainly. They couldn't take away my freedom. They could do what they liked to my body but I was not afraid anymore.

**J: What happened then, once you were out of solitary?**

Their first plan was to send me to a labour camp, but then they realized there was no basis for convicting me of a crime. So they decided on a completely different course and instead sent me to school for officer training! Six months. Instead of being a good soldier they made me into a bad officer! School was wonderful. I spent many hours in the library and found a book by Solzhenitsyn — *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* — and books by other forbidden writers. Lucky for me the librarians had failed to remove such books.

**J: I have noticed in your sermons how often you use the word "svaboda" — freedom.**

- Yes. Sometimes people tease me for speaking so often about freedom. It's such an important topic. It is what we lost in the Garden of Eden. It's at the centre of the story of Adam and



*Fr Sergei Ovsiannikov in Alkmaar  
25 July 2017 (photo: Jim Forest)*

Eve. That's where the problem started. After eating the forbidden fruit they tried to hide from God. God said to Adam, "Where are you?" And Adam responded, "I heard the sound of you in the garden and I was afraid." This is the first time in the Bible we hear about fear. In place of freedom Adam and Eve got fear. Human nature was damaged. All of us are damaged. We are not born in freedom but there is the chance to find the way to freedom. We have to pass through the difficulties of life, but the chance is quite big. We have somehow to be born in freedom. Christ is awaiting our freedom. Christ wants only free people. Of course he accepts many other people too, but he wants free people.

**N: As Christians we can say that without Christ there is no true freedom, yet there is the paradox that Christ only accepts free people. What comes first?**

- First comes the icon. Each person is an icon of God. In Genesis we read, "Let us create man according to our image." The Greek word for image is icon. This was a favourite topic of Metropolitan Anthony [Bloom]. Everyone has this icon but the icon is damaged. Life is given to man in order to repair — restore — the icon. With the help of Christ to return to freedom.

**J: Peacemaking is the removal of the smoke-darkened varnish that masks the icon...**

This is why Christ is so often described as a physician. Perhaps the most important thing he does is heal the heart and open our eyes. One consequence is that we become capable of seeing beauty. One of the favorite sayings used by Metropolitan Anthony was "beauty is in the eye of the beholder." What does that mean? It doesn't mean that beauty is something we can manipulate. Yes, you must open our eyes, but not only your eyes. You must enlarge your heart. Otherwise we see beauty only partially or not at all. If the heart is too narrow, the beauty that we see will seem ugly. What you see depends on you — on you and your spiritual condition.

***Interview by Jim and Nancy Forest | 25 July 2017***

*Source: <http://jimandnancyforest.com/2017/07/ovsiannikov/>*



## *For and about Children*

### **THE MEETING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**

**(February 15)**

Nice to meet you our young reader. In the last issue, we told you a story about the miracle of the birth of Jesus Christ and his baptism. That story is just the beginning. We suggest that you sit down and listen to another story about Jesus Christ.

This happened when the child was forty days old, his parents, Mary and Joseph, brought him to the church.

At that time, there was a law, in gratitude for the first-born son, to offer God a sacrifice (gift). Joseph and Mary were not rich, and could only bring two pigeons.

At that time in Jerusalem there lived a very old, righteous person, Simeon. The Holy Spirit promised him that he would not die until he saw the Saviour of the world. Simeon read about this Saviour in the ancient



books of the Old Testament, how this Saviour had long been waited for by all the Jews. Simeon lived and waited for him for many years.

Once the Holy Spirit told Simeon to go to the Temple. When he came there, he saw Joseph and Mary, the Mother of God, with a baby in her arms. Simeon took the Infant in his arms and said: "Now You release me in peace, my Lord, as You promised me, because I saw with my own eyes

the Saviour, who will be a light for all people.”

Simeon blessed the Mother of God and told Her that Her child would be for “the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against” (St. Luke 2:34). This means that through the Lord Jesus Christ, people can become closer to God, and by refusing Him, fall. Simeon also said to the Mother of God: “so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed — and a sword will pierce your soul as well”.

The day when we remember this event in the church, is called the ‘Meeting’ (or ‘Presentation’) of the Lord. It was a meeting of the Old Testament, according to which Abraham, Moses and King David lived, and the New Testament, in which the Lord Jesus Christ is brought to us.

*(Gospel of Luke 2:23-35)*

## **FORGIVENESS SUNDAY**

**(February 18, 2018)**

The last Sunday before the beginning of Lent is called Forgiveness Sunday (or Cheesefare Sunday). This day is like a bridge leading us into Great Lent. The peculiarity of this day is that believers ask forgiveness for each other for visible and unseen offences. But to ask for forgiveness is not enough, it is also important to forgive.



In the Gospel of Matthew it is said, “If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you, but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses” (Matthew 6:14, 15).

Try to remember, maybe you offended someone with a word or deed, hurt or upset them. If so, ask them for forgiveness. Pay attention to your feelings, maybe in your heart you are hiding anger at someone else, and try to forgive them. Let a pure heart be a good helper to you during the Great Fast.

## **GREAT LENT**

**February 19, 2018 to April 7, 2018.**

After Forgiveness Sunday comes Great Lent.

Our young reader, you have probably already heard about the fast from your parents. What is the difference between a great fast and others?

Firstly, the great fast is the strictest



and longest, lasting 48 days.

It consists of the Forty Days and the Passion Week (the week before Easter). Between them is the Feast of Lazarus Saturday and the Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday).

The Holy Forty Days recalls the forty days that Jesus Christ spent fasting and praying in the wilderness. Each of the seven weeks has its own peculiarity, and is called: the first, the second, etc., week.

**1st week (from February 19 to February 25):** begins with “Clean” Monday. It is distinguished by its strictness and the length of the church services. The week ends with the Feast of the “Triumph of Orthodoxy”. Many years ago, on this day, the veneration of icons in the Orthodox Church was finally established.

**2nd week (from February 26 to March 4):** This leads to the Sunday of St Gregory Palamas. The Church prays to the Lord for the blessed illumination of those who fast and live in repentance. Also on Saturday of the second week, we remember all those who left this world and the church serves a memorial service.

Although the fasting diet is strict, in matters of food, we recommend that you listen to the opinion of your parents and spiritual mentor. Also, we want to draw your attention to your thoughts and behaviour. Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

said about the rules of the fast: “They are designed to help us shake off the relaxation and indulgence of our weaknesses, awaken in us sensitivity and cheerfulness, not to let us become stuck in our earthiness, which prevents us from ascending to God.”

You might ask: “How to go through these 48 days and save yourself and your loved ones.”

Imagine that you are a sentry who is on guard. The sentry has a very important job, to protect the loved ones from unwelcome guests. And you, as a sentry, are called to be on duty. Let your weapons be kindness, humility, love, obedience, health, conscientiousness, prayer and faith. And then none of the unwelcome guests like: strife, quarrels, cunning, deception, harm, anger - will disturb you and your loved ones. We wish you to be attentive, to observe yourself, and as a sentry at the guard post to drive back enemies, visible and invisible. Also, you can create a special calendar and mark all the weeks and important days of the great fast.



## *Path to Orthodoxy*



### **THE BUDDHIST WHO BECAME AN ORTHODOX MONK**

An extract from an article by Father Stephen Powley, an Orthodox prison chaplain in the USA, in which he talks about how men whom society had written off entirely as unreformable became deeply believing and practicing Orthodox Christians—some of them even became monks, right there in prison.

.... The man who helped bring the Rastafarian to Orthodoxy was studying to be, of all things, a Buddhist priest. As a chaplain I have to help each person with whatever faith they adhere to, and they come up with some whacky ones. If this man was going to be a Buddhist priest, my job was to make sure he got his correspondence

courses in from Japan where he was studying with a sensei. But you know, as I helped him, we developed a relationship, and he began to watch the videos on TV about Orthodoxy.

One of them in particular was on Mt. Athos. It was ‘A thousand years as one day’—I think that’s the name of it. Anyway, it was about Mt. Athos. And one day he says to me, ‘You know Father, I think the Buddhists and the Orthodox have a lot in common.’ I said, ‘Yeah? In what way?’ And he said, ‘Well, you guys use incense, we use incense. You got bells, we got bells.’ I said, ‘Yeah, there are a lot of similarities there!’ He said, ‘You believe in this sense of interior prayer, and so do we.’ And so I said, ‘Well, would you like to read some books about that interior prayer?’ I sent him books on the

Jesus prayer. He began to read these books, as well as other books on the Early Fathers, and one day as I was visiting him in his cell, he said, ‘Father, you know, if somebody like me decided that I should become Orthodox, would the Orthodox Church have me?’ I said, ‘In a heartbeat.’

And so I had the privilege of baptizing this man after some time. He also got out of prison; he’s been out for several years now, and I’m happy to report to you that this man was one whom we didn’t select to be a monk because he was going to get out of prison. Part of my criteria for their tonsure was that they were going to spend their life in prison. I didn’t think it was right for

somebody to be tonsured a monastic and then get out of prison and face all the temptations of the world, not knowing where they’re going. This man was getting out, and so he wasn’t tonsured, but he always told me, ‘I want to be a monk. I want to be a monastic. That’s the call of God in my life.’ Well he’d been out for several years, got off his probation, and this last September he was tonsured a monastic in California. Incredible.

**Fr Stephen Powley**

*The full article can be found at: <http://orthochristian.com/107543.html>*

## THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY UNCTION IN THE LONDON DORMITION CATHEDRAL

During Lent in the Dormition Cathedral the Sacrament of Holy Unction will take place every week:

### **2nd week**

Thursday, 6:00pm - 1 March

### **3rd week**

Thursday, 6:00pm - 8 March

### **4th week**

Thursday, 6:00pm - 15 March

### **5th week**

Thursday, 6:00pm - 22 March

### **6th week**



Thursday, 6:00pm - 29 March

### **Holy Week**

**Great Wednesday, 6:00pm - 4 April**

Children of 7 years or under, who do not yet participate in Confession, do not participate in Holy Unction. Upon completion of Holy Unction you

can take sanctified oil from the church in order to anoint therewith children or other family members at times of illness.

During the Mystery of Holy Unction, the faithful are anointed with the holy oil seven times, on the forehead, nostrils, cheeks, lips, chest, and both sides of the hands. It is important to come dressed appropriately. Hair and scarves should be arranged so as to leave the face open, shirts and blouses must be open at the neck to permit anointing of the chest, sleeves should be short so that the oil does not come into contact with them.

If you are holding a candle, please give it to your neighbour when the priest comes to anoint you so that it does not get in the way.

During the Lent it is blessed to participate in the Sacrament of Holy Unction only once.

It is essential to determine in advance the date of your participation in the Sacrament of Unction and to record your name at the candle desk or in the bookshop for commemoration during the sacrament.



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