

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

DIOCESE OF SOUROZH

CATHEDRAL OF THE DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

67 ENNISMORE GARDENS, LONDON SW7 1NH



Souroz h Messenger

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*Saint Mary of Egypt
Commemorated on the 5th Sunday
of Great Lent*



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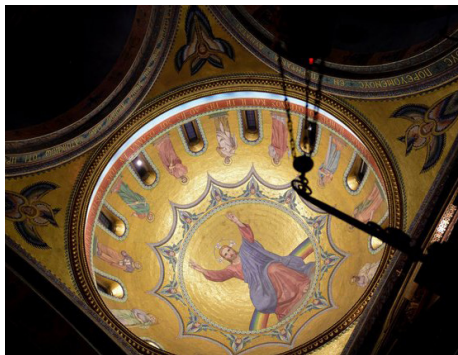
Dear Readers,

We are happy to inform you that the Media and Publishing Department of the Diocese of Sourozh now has an online store, Sourozh Publications, where you can obtain the publications of the diocese. You can subscribe to the English or Russian editions of Cathedral Newsletter, and purchase the diocesan journal 'Sourozh' and the Diocesan Calendar and Lectionary. For prices and full information please visit the store at <https://sourozh.myshopify.com>.

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Diocesan News

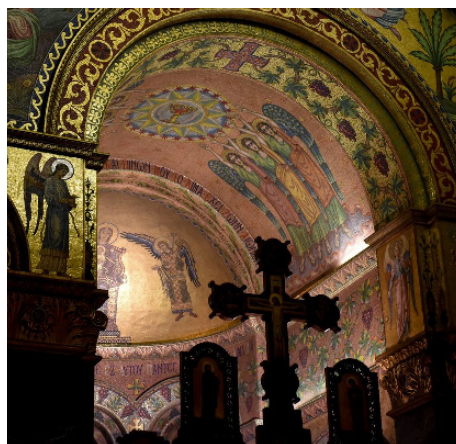


PAN-ORTHODOX VESPERS CELEBRATED IN LONDON

The traditional Pan-Orthodox Vespers was celebrated on the first Sunday in Lent at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Wisdom in Bayswater, London. His Grace, Bishop Athanasios of Tropaëou, presided in place of His Eminence, Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain. Archimandrite Theonas (Balkalis), the senior priest of the Cathedral, was principal celebrant, and clergy from all ten dioceses of the Local Orthodox Churches represented in London concelebrated. Despite the unseasonably cold weather, a large crowd of worshippers comfortably filled the Cathedral.

The chanters of the host Cathedral together with the choirs of the Antiochian, Russian, Serbian, Romanian and Georgian cathedrals sang the service in their respective languages. The address was delivered

by Archimandrite Chrysostomos (Michaelides). At the end of the service, there was a procession with the holy icons, commemorating the dogmatic definition of the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787 AD concerning the veneration of icons and the restoration of the icons to the churches by the Empress Theodora in 843 AD. After the service, everyone present was invited to a splendid Lenten meal in the Cathedral crypt.



GIVE TO THE LORD HONOUR AND PRAISE

On Sunday 25th February, the Parish of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker In Oxford celebrated the services for the First Sunday of Great Lent.



On this day, the Church makes its annual celebration of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, commemorating the restoration of the holy icons by the Empress Theodora and her son the Emperor Michael in 843AD, and the end of iconoclasm. At the end of the divine liturgy, the Rector, Father

Stephen Platt, preached a sermon explaining the significance of the Orthodox veneration of icons, and the need to remember that every human person is a living icon, made in the image of God, and so worthy of veneration. As has been the local custom for many years, the Divine Liturgy at St Nicholas’s was followed by a procession with the icons through the streets around the church. Many parishioners, including children, had brought their own favourite icons from home to carry in the procession. After the procession returned to the church, worship concluded with the special office for the Sunday of Orthodoxy, and the reading of the Synodikon in defence of the holy icons.



In the evening of the same day, with the blessing of HG Bishop Matthew of Sourozh, St Nicholas Church hosted the local Pan-Orthodox Vespers for Oxford. Clergy and faithful from the parishes belonging to the patriarchates of Constantinople, Moscow, Serbia and Romania all joined together in worship and celebration of our unity

as Orthodox Christians. The preacher at the service was HE Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia, who reminded the congregation of Christ's unique relationship with each person and his invitation to them to become a true icon of Him. At the end of the service,

there was an informal buffet reception, and an opportunity for those present to share in fellowship with each other.

Fr Stephen Platt

Cathedral News



BISHOP MATTHEW OF SOUROZH CELEBRATED THE SERVICES OF SATURDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF GREAT LENT

On the evening of February 23, 2018, before Saturday of the first week of the Great Lent, His Grace, Matthew, Bishop of Sourozh led the Matins with polyeley at the Dormition Cathedral in London.

On February 24, His Grace Bishop Matthew performed the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom in the Cathedral of the Diocese of Sourozh assisted by Priest Dimitry Nedostupenko,

acting Secretary of the Diocesan Administration and Protodeacon Vadim Santsevich, clergyman of the Cathedral.

On this day, the memory of the Venerable Dimitry of Prilutsk, the heavenly patron of the priest Dmitry Nedostupenko, is celebrated. At the end of the service, Bishop Matthew performed the Magnification before the icon of St Dimitry, after which he warmly congratulated the Secretary of the Diocesan Administration on the occasion of his namesday.

TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY CELEBRATED IN THE DORMITION CATHEDRAL

On February 25, 2018, the Feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, His Grace Bishop Matthew of Sourozh led the Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great at the Dormition Cathedral in London. His Grace was assisted by clergymen of the cathedral: Archpriest Dmitry Karpenko, acting Sacristan of the Cathedral, Protodeacon Vadim



Santsevich and Deacon Vladimir Castravets. On this, the first Sunday of Lent, a large number of parishioners took part in the sacrament of Holy Communion, which was distributed to the faithful from five chalices.

At the end of the Liturgy, His Grace Bishop Matthew, with the concelebrating clergy, performed the Rite of Orthodoxy. At the end of the service, Bishop Matthew congratulated

all participants of the divine service on the feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, which takes place in memory of the restoration of icon-worship in the ninth century, after the victory of Orthodoxy over the heresy of iconoclasm.

DECISIONS OF THE HOLY SYNOD ON MARCH 7TH, 2018 CONCERNING THE DIOCESE OF SOUROZH

1. In connection with the end of the period of secondment, Archpriest Dmitry Karpenko is relieved of the duties of a clergyman of the Diocese of Sourozh and placed at the disposal of Bishop Sophrony of Gubkin and Grayvoron.

2. In connection with the end of the period of secondment, Hieromonk Innokenty (Kolesnikov) is relieved of the duties of a clergyman of the Diocese of Sourozh and placed at the disposal of Bishop Sophrony of Gubkin and Grayvoron.



For reflection

“I love them that love me, and glorify them that glorify me.” (Proverbs 8:17, I Kings 2:30,) says the Lord of His saints. The Lord gave the Holy Spirit to the saints, and they love us in the Holy Spirit. The saints hear our prayers and have the power from God to help us. The entire Christian race knows this.

(St. Silouan the Athonite, Writings, XII.1,8)



*On behalf of the Parish of St Paul and Peter in Portsmouth,
Orthodox community with Fr Dmitry Karpenko and Matushka Elena
(Photo - A. Sanders)*

FATHER DMITRY AND MATUSHKA ELENA WILL BE GREATLY MISSED!

Fr Dmitry Karpenko and his wife Matushka Elena were sent to us only what feels like only a few months back but what a journey it has been.

Over the past year we had three different priests which hasn't been easy on the community, dealing with constant changes and we noticed a slight drop in attendees at each service. The Portsmouth Orthodox community wasn't huge to start with but it felt like Fr Dmitry wasn't phased by that and was ready to give us all the right support to help us grow, which was a real breath of fresh air and we are so grateful to him for believing in us.

Fr Dmitry managed to get a perfect balance during the service of praying in both languages which had always been tricky considering that we have a

large number of only English speaking parishioners, some of whom were the original members of the Portsmouth Orthodox Community.

Matushka Elena sang so beautifully in the choir: she seemed to be the missing part of a puzzle, being able to sing in Slavonic in our small but wonderful choir.

We are all so sorry to see them go. Our time together seems to have been cut short but so it must be if Fr Dmitry is needed more elsewhere. He left an unforgettable mark on our community and gave us strength to carry and battle whatever hurdles are thrown our way. Father and Matushka will be greatly missed and on behalf of the Portsmouth Orthodox Community of St Peter and Paul I would like to say a massive thank you for our time together, for the dedication to our small parish, for the long journeys from London and for all the care and support given to us.

We would like to wish Fr Dmitry and his family a safe return home and will pray that our paths will cross again one day.

Anastasia Sanders

MESSAGES OF MEMBERS OF THE DIOCESE OF SOUROZH TO FATHERS DMITRY AND INNOKENTY IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR RETURN HOME:

‘Father Innokenty, you are truly a kind and radiant person. Thank you for everything. After meeting with you and thanks to your prayers, my soul became light and peaceful. So it’s impossible to say ‘goodbye’; I do hope we will remain in contact.’ (Ekaterina Smolyakov)

‘May all go well for you both, dear Fathers. You will be much missed in our diocese!’ (Archpr. Stephen Platt)

‘Very sorry to hear this news and very many thanks for your inspiration and enthusiasm and for all you have contributed to our diocese. Let’s keep in touch and God speed your future.’ (Michael Wynne-Parker)

‘Thank you, Fr Joseph for the photo: you have captured their essence. ... I would like to say this: had the chance to drive Fr Innokenty around Brighton when within a short period, he managed to give several rites of Communion of the Sick and the rite of blessing the house etc. We all liked his quiet reverence during the

liturgies, softly spoken sermons and his attention to every need of the member of our community. Will remember the telephone call to say goodbye and the humble acceptance of God’s will to go back home. I would like to express my gratitude to Fr Dmitry for his help in commemorating St Innokenty (Veniaminov): his interesting talk about the life of the Saint, which was so well received by the London parish. Will pray for God’s help in their mission.’ (Svetlana Yegorova-Johnstone)



*Photo - Archpr. Joseph Skinner
‘A photo I took less than a year ago, when Frs Dmitry Karpenko and Innokenty Kolesnikov had just arrived to begin their service in the Diocese of Sourozh. A small thing by which to remember two fine priests and the great contribution they made in the short time they were with us.’*

OBITUARY

On 4 March 2018, the oldest parishioner of the St Nicholas parish in Oxford, Irina Pavlovna Zhivkovich (Fidler), reposed in the Lord.



Irina Zhivkovich in Russia
(Photo - <http://www.pravmir.ru/vladyika-antony-govoril-anglichanam-smotrite-kak-molyatsya-russkie/>)

Irina Pavlovna Zhivkovich (Fidler) was born in 1927 in France. Her father, Pavel Fidler, a Protestant by birth and upbringing, emigrated from Moscow after the Revolution. He became Orthodox in 1926 after studying theology. He wrote about 20 books on theology, religious philosophy, church history and Orthodox culture.

Irina Pavlova lived all her life outside of Russia, most of it in England. A widow and the mother of six children, she was the spiritual daughter of Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of Sourozh. She loved Russia all her life and often visited Optina Pustyn.

Memories of Irina Zhivkovich

In Oxford, on the night of 4 March, Irina Pavlovna Zhivkovich died. The daughter of Russian emigres of the first wave. Many people found a warm welcome in her hospitable home, including: the future Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, then still a young Hieromonk just arrived from France with limited English and Staretz / Elder Sophrony (Sakharov). Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) was also a frequent visitor. Next to the well-known names in her guest-book were the autographs of Orthodox students from different countries, university teachers from Russia, England, and many ordinary people. On the wall an icon made for Irina Pavlovna by Archimandrite Zinon (Theodore) hangs unobtrusively.

Irina Pavlovna's life was not simple. As a child, her family suffered all the burdens of emigration, as an adult, the Lord sent sorrows – a daughter's illness and the early death of her son. Irina Pavlovna was a joyful person, I will never forget her smile, our conversations about people, life, God, and

Russia. She knew how to love and was always interested in people and open to them, relating to them on a deep level.

I don't know when I will next be in Oxford, but even if it's not for a long time, I know one thing, that the Oxford of Irina Pavlovna Zhivkovich will always be dear to me. May the Lord grant her the Kingdom of Heaven and Eternal Peace.

Hermann Sunait

Notes on the Church calendar

TWO KINDS OF ASCETICISM. THE “STANDING OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT”

Our Lenten journey has several important markers, several special liturgical days. One of these remarkable landmarks is the “standing of St. Mary”—the day [in the fifth week of Great Lent] when at the evening service the entire Canon of repentance of St. Andrew of Crete is read, and along with it, the faithful listen to the amazing life of a woman acetic who lived in the late fifth-early sixth century—St. Mary of Egypt.

I remember when I was fifteen years old, I went for the first time to the Standing of St. Mary Service, and heard the Life of the saint. It made an indelible impression on me. Even now I remember this service in minutest in detail: the unforgettable feeling of the triumph of life over sin, which this Saint's Life impressed upon me. This



(Source - <https://foma.ru/stoyanie-marii-egipetskoj.html>)

feeling remains with me even now, two decades later; the life of St. Mary continues to amaze and inspire me.

I would like to note a number of remarkable moments in that life. First there is the figure of the ascetic monk Zosima, “of glorious life and gifted in speech, raised from childhood in monastic labourers and virtues.” The image of the Elder who had lived his entire life far from the vanity of the world and its temptations, from his

earliest years practicing asceticism, made worthy of spiritual vision—is this not the ideal Christian ascetic? The confirmation of this can be heard in elder Zosimas’s question: “Is there a monk on earth who can be of use to me and show me a kind of asceticism that I have not accomplished? Could another wisdom loving desert dweller be found who has surpassed me in life or contemplation?” This question opens the amazing life of the ascetic woman, the history of a life so different from that of the Zosima, that you could even call it the direct opposite of the elder’s life, like black-and-white, if it weren’t for the second half of the story, which provides such an astounding contrast with the first half.

The story of Mary before her conversion to God is particularly realistic; it contains all the details of her life of fornication in her youth. One would think that the Author of this saint’s life would do well not to go into such detail about this, recalling various unseemly circumstances, so dissonant with the traditional example of a saint and angel in the flesh. But nevertheless, this fact of her life is underlined, and the author of the life through Zosima accents this part: “Speak, for the sake of God, my mother. Speak and do not break the thread of such an edifying story.”

The edification itself in the life begins with the episode in which Mary the harlot tells about her attempt to enter along with the faithful into the church



*Icon of St Mary of Egypt, XIX century
(Source - <https://foma.ru/stoyanie-marii-egipetskoj.html>)*

for the services to the Exaltation of the Lord’s Cross: “When I stepped onto the threshold over which all the others were passing unhindered,” the saint relates to Zosima, “When I trod on the doorstep which everyone passed, I was stopped by some force which prevented my entering. Meanwhile I was brushed aside by the crowd and found myself standing alone in the porch. Thinking that this had happened because of my woman’s weakness, I again began to work my way into the crowd, trying to elbow myself forward. But in vain I struggled. Again my feet trod on the doorstep over which others were entering the church without encountering any obstacle. I alone seemed to remain unaccepted by the church. It was as if there was a

detachment of soldiers standing there to oppose my entrance. Once again I was excluded by the same mighty force and again I stood in the porch.”

From the Saint’s words we get a picture of the incompatibility of a sinner’s inner impurity with the true life going on outside of it; not with the life of “this world” but with the sacred Cross, thanks to which the world still stands. It is certainly no accident that Mary cannot get in to the church during the service to precisely the Cross of the Lord—this most important holy shrine of Christians and the first symbol of Christianity. From apostolic times, the Cross of Christ was understood to be the new tree of life—the symbol of God’s uniting with fallen man, the symbol of the path to the heavenly fatherland. A little later Christian apologists would treat the cross as a symbol of the whole of the world’s creation, or more precisely what strengthens it, upholds it, fills it with meaning, and prevents it from dissolving into chaos. Mary wants to see the life-Giving tree of the Cross but she cannot, for she had dedicated her entire existence to what opposes the cross—sin, mad passions, deeds of death.

And now the time has come for her to see. Horrified at the inexorable reality—her alienation from the sacred, from true life, Mary for the first time turns her mental gaze within: “The word of salvation touched the eyes of my heart, showing me that the impurity of my deeds barred my entrance.”

Mary’s entire being is shaken with a deep, heartfelt repentance; in tears she turns to the mother of God, begging her to open the way for her to the church, that she might worship the life-creating cross. Mary makes a vow to the Heavenly Queen to abandon her sinful life, renounce the world, and go wherever she might lead her.

Thus, Mary finds the path to salvation first of all within herself, in repentance, in a self-denying yearning to follow God’s will. She embarks on the way of the Cross. And, finding herself on this path in her heart, she no longer meets that terrible external Barrier that separates her from the cross of life: “Having got as far as the doors which I could not reach before—as if the same force which had hindered me



Jose de Ribera. Mary of Egypt, 1651
(Source - <https://foma.ru/stoyanie-marii-egipetskoj.html>)

cleared the way for me—I now entered without difficulty and found myself within the holy place. And so it was I saw the Life-giving Cross. I saw too the Mysteries of God and how the Lord accepts repentance.”

Having turned into the path of salvation, Mary did not immediately become a saint. She had to pass through many trials, and overcome great temptations. The saint tells of her temptations in the Trans-Jordan desert, where she had been commanded from on high to go, far from the world, and again the details are just as realistic as they were in the narration of the sinful period of her life. The ascetic tells how over the period of seventeen years since she departed into the desert, she lived “amidst thousands of dangers”: She was drawn to her former way of life, to entertainments and pleasures. Lustful thoughts and the fire of passion scorched her heart. She warred with her passions as with wild beasts. It is beyond human strength to withstand such mighty violence from the devil, but God, as the Life shows us, strengthened her in her struggle. The story of St. Mary’s temptations shows us the true cooperation between man and God in spiritual struggle. Here we also see the ascetic’s colossal effort of will to reject temptations and sinful passions; we see also the presence of God’s grace, illuminating the exhausted hermitess, and giving her blessed respite from temptation. Even more: we see here the link between human and divine

will—the icon of the mother of God in the ascetic’s consciousness. Mary the desert dweller counters all the evil one’s calumnies with the Virgin Mary—the image towards which she strives with all her strength; her leader, to whom should promised to live a new life, and to fulfill the task that had been entrusted to her. The presence of the image of the Mother of God in St. Mary’s soul is also the presence of God in her life, strengthening and transforming her. It is also the ultimate expression of all her yearning—to correspond to the image of the true human being, the true Mary.

The figure of elder Zosima continues to be quite noticeable throughout the entire Life of St. Mary. As we said before, the life of St. Mary of Egypt begins with the question posed by this monk made wise through the reading of sacred books, ascetics, and years: “Is there any monk on earth who can show me and give me something new, Some Is there a monk on earth who can be of use to me and show me a kind of asceticism that I have not accomplished?” From the Life of St. Mary we receive not only an unambiguous answer that, yes, there are ascetics who are greater, but we also notice a certain sinfulness in Zosima’s question. First of all, we are given to know the relative nature of human measuring in the spiritual realm. No outward criteria can make a man righteous before God. The (formally) ideal monk Zosima pales

in comparison with the former harlot, the unlearned desert dweller, the one who found within herself the boldness to call out to God from the abyss of her sin and to confirm herself in the word of God through the help of God himself. St. Mary ascends to sanctity entirely in God, without the support of a single step on the “ecclesiastical ladder” (traditions and canons) in her spiritual ascent.

After the period of temptations and trials, Mary acquires blessed repose in God, but in this angelic state she presents herself as an earthly human: she forbids Zosima to tell anyone about her life until she has left this temporary life; she resist the elder’s reverence for her, wishes to receive the holy gifts



Donatello. *Magdalene Penitent*, 1454
 (Source - <https://foma.ru/stoyanie-marii-egipetskoj.html>)

from the hand of a priest, asks that he pray for her, and shows concern for the churches, the kings, and the people. Despite the fact that the Saint renounced the world, she does not separate herself from the earthly Church, or from sinful mankind. Even at the recollection of the miracles the saint performed, the reader does not get the impression of a saint completely estranged from the earthly life— she continues to be a person on earth, while at the same time, a dweller of Heaven.

Nevertheless, the mystery of her sanctity, her transformed, grace-filled state, came to be only between herself and the one to whom she dedicated her life. Through Christ is St. Mary given the whole world; she needs nothing in particular, possesses everything in her communion with God—*“I eat and clothe myself with the word of God, the Master of all things.”* Having acquired *“the mind of Christ”*, the acetic possesses perfect knowledge of everything—*“I never studied from books. Neither have I heard anyone singing or reading from them. But the word of God, living and effective, itself teaches men knowledge.”* Without a doubt, these words not only testify to the grace-filled, spirit-filled state to which she came after seventeen years of spiritual struggle in the desert. It is also an instruction to elder Zosima, who dared to consider himself perfect based on his scrupulous following of a traditionally correct life vocation,

at which he had been placed from his early childhood. Mary, on the other hand, never sought the ideal way of life, but sought God Himself in Whom she attained perfection. The essence of this instruction helps us understand the remarkable theologian, ascetic, and monk—St. Maximos the Confessor. He distinguishes different kinds of knowledge of Christ—knowledge of Christ according to the flesh—this is the knowledge of God received indirectly through the letter, text, rites, history, or tradition. The knowledge of Christ according to the flesh isn't perfect, because “fleshly” measuring is imperfect in and of itself. Here the word of God is present, but not directly—it is diffracted through the thickness of linguistic, cultural, and other human layers. The person who knows Christ only through the flesh is imperfect in his knowledge of the divine—though he may know all the church dogmas, canons, and texts of Holy Scripture. You see, human language (no matter which one) cannot express the word of God flawlessly, to the full. In full measure and perfectly, the Word of God Itself is expressed from Himself, in the Spirit; and to be a possessor of the Spirit is the portion of him who strives towards the Living God through the multitude of reflections and images of the Divine Word in the in the “human” sphere; who strives to behold the word of God directly, to make his mind touch the divine Word, pulling away the veil that envelopes Him. According to St. Maximos's thought,

the apostle Paul witnesses precisely to this: Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more (2 Cor. 5:16). (Chapter on theology, 2:61). St. Mary called such knowledge of the Word of God the knowledge of Christ Resurrected. This knowledge can be obtained only through personal experience, as opposed to knowledge of Christ after the flesh, which is accessible to all.

St. Mary's ascetic labour surpasses Zosima's asceticism precisely by its all-conquering aspiration towards the Risen Christ. This is not even the ascetic labour comprised of some series of self-denying acts, but the state of the ultimate openness to God, to His action, which makes any ascetic labour, any action in the name of the Creator possible.

I am sincerely convinced that at the remarkable service of the Great Canon and “Standing of St. Mary” we can feel, comprehend, and understand the essence of Christian ascetic labour, co-standing with St. Mary in her fiery, bold striving toward the Saviour, Who seeks out the soul of a sinner.

Priest Maxim Prikhodko

Source: <http://orthochristian.com/92473.html>



Legacy of Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

MEETING A NON-ORTHODOX SOCIETY

Part 3

Fools For Christ

At other moments the fools for Christ's sake appeared. They too rejected the secure sedentary approach. If you look at the history of the Byzantine Empire, or of Russia, you will discover that the fools for Christ's sake appeared in numbers at a moment when the state, the empire began to assert its right to build a secure society. At that moment fools for Christ's sake appeared who were an offence to everything that is security. They behaved like fools, while we all treasure our intellect. We want to be safe, to have our intellect working because the intellect cannot be destroyed, otherwise than together with our physical body. But they refused to behave in a socially acceptable manner because the state and the Church within the state proclaimed a certain behaviour, a certain way of being and that was no longer acceptable.

Later, we find in Russia and in other countries pilgrims; people who wandered from one holy place to another, or spent long periods of time in the vastness of Russia to be uncompromisingly alone with God and to visit places where they could



*Fr Sergei Ovsyannikov and
Metropolitan Anthony*

find a spark of the divine. These people rejected the security of a sedentary life, because it was a place of ultimate insecurity, because their only security, their only safety was God. And God is totally unsafe and insecure for us when we want to be supported, held, protected. They went into an adventure of ultimate and total risk.

Possessing and Being Possessed

You may ask, what can we do? We cannot become all pilgrims, or fools for Christ's sake, however "foolish" we may be. It is not a question of what we possess. It is a question of our attitude to our possessions. Possession is a way of being possessed and you may be possessed even by a very small thing. And that is how all of us live to a greater or lesser extent. In the Gospel we find a passage of immense importance, the story of the

king calling his closest friends to the bridal feast of his son. One refuses because he has bought five pairs of oxen, another one refuses because he has just got married himself. What does this amount to? It means that not only have I bought land, but I think I possess it. I am like a tree which cannot move from the place of rootedness. I have five pairs of oxen, that is, I have something to do in life, and, therefore, it is more important than anything, than friendship, than love, than generosity, than sacrifice. I must do my work. I have married someone, my heart is full, I have no space in my heart for anyone else's joy. And who are the invited? The king sends his servants to bring in the beggars, the lost people who are called to come into the king's presence and they come with a feeling of fear and trembling; "we, in our rags, we, who live a life of thieving and begging and low morality, how can we enter into the presence of our king?" At the door they are met by the angels of God who say to them, "come, we will change your clothes, we will bathe your bodies, we will comb your hair and you will then come worthily into the presence of the king." Only one refuses, saying: "I was invited to eat, not to bathe, not to be pampered; I want my food." And that one is expelled. This is very often our attitude. We have bought a plot of land, we have oxen, we have attachment, we cannot give our lives to anything that is beyond us and our enslavement. That

does not mean that we cannot be free. The question is, are you attached or not? There is a difference between love and attachment. You may be the slave of a relationship, but you may be free within it.

Liturgy

This process has gone deeper into the Church, because our liturgical forms have also been penetrated by the effect of our relationship with the state. Our Orthodox Liturgy is deeply influenced by the court ceremonial of Byzantium. In the early Church there was a variety of forms. In Byzantium it had to become worthy of the Emperor and of his court. And so, it was structured in such a way that it could coincide with the forms familiar to the imperial court. The result was the magnificent Liturgy that we possess. But it is a mistake to imagine that this is the only form, because in the early centuries there were a number of Liturgies that belonged to the same undivided Christian Church. There was the Liturgy of Rome, of St Gregory Dialogos, there was the Liturgy of St Ambrose of Milan, there was the Liturgy of Lyons, there was the Arabic Liturgy, there was the St Germain Liturgy in Paris and a number of others. They were all basically identical because each of them had the same identical core. But they were different in form, in expression and they corresponded to a freedom which very often we have lost, a freedom which corresponded

both to the culture of a place and the social context. We must learn to pray within the Liturgy, to receive from all our services all the richness it can give, but not to be slaves of it.

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

ST HIERITHA'S CHURCH AND HOLY WELL IN CHITTLEHAMPTON, DEVON

This ancient, elegant church stands in Chittlehampton (‘farm of dwellers in the hollow’) – a picturesque, tranquil village, set in the north Devon countryside, amid hills and valleys. Its patron-saint, St Urith (Hieritha), a holy virgin and martyr, lived in the sixth or the seventh century. Born in East Stowford, young Urith took up monasticism, led a holy life in chastity on the site of the present-day Chittlehampton and even built a church. She was slain by pagan Saxons who at that time were invading Britain. According to another story, the holy maiden was beheaded with a scythe at the instigation of her pagan stepmother. Immediately after the saint’s death a holy spring gushed forth on the same site and flowers began to blossom. The virgin was buried in Chittlehampton

and a church was erected above her grave. Every year a great many pilgrims visited the wonderworking relics and the holy well of St Urith. Miraculous



The pulpit carving of St Urith inside Chittlehampton church, Devon (photo provided by the vicar of Chittlehampton)



St Hieritha's Church and tower in Chittlehampton, Devon (photo provided by the vicar of Chittlehampton)

healings were performed, and people brought generous donations. This contributed to the appearance of the very tall, massive bell tower of the Chittlehampton church and the church itself was considerably enlarged.

Urith became one of the most celebrated saints of Devon. Her relics were annually taken from Chittlehampton and visited many neighbouring parishes for veneration by all.

Before the Reformation the shrine with St Urith's relics stood in a chapel in the north of the chancel of the Church of St Hieritha in Chittlehampton where her image was located. There is a tradition that Urith's relics were not destroyed during the Reformation, but were hidden under a very tall stone

slab approximately on the site of the original chapel. Her body still lies under the church floor, below the slab that covers it. The grave slab - symbolic tomb - of Urith is in an alcove to the north side of the altar. The gravestone is believed to belong to another woman of local importance – Joan Cobley. The martyr is one of a few early English saints whose relics lie undisturbed in their resting-places. The church has an ornate pulpit dating to 1500 and containing ancient stone carved figures of saints, including Urith, who holds a palm branch as a sign of the martyrs and a rock as the foundation of the Church.



The tower statue of St Urith, the Chittlehampton church, Devon (photo provided by the vicar of Chittlehampton)



The Slab and the holy well in Chittlehampton, Devon (photo provided by the vicar of Chittlehampton)

A modern statue of Urith holding the instrument of her martyrdom was installed high in a niche on the exterior of the Chittlehampton church tower, on its south side. The church is huge and built in the late Perpendicular style. The first eighth-century church was wooden, in the twelfth century it was rebuilt in stone and the current church was built between 1470 and 1520. Among its treasures are a splendid sixteenth-century carved font, a fourteenth-century parish chest and fine seventeenth-century memorials to local families. Its bell-tower is the tallest in Devon and is famous for its excellent peal of bells.

St Hieritha's holy well on the eastern edge of Chittlehampton still exists. This spring is 1,500 years old and it was formerly covered by a chapel. From ancient times it was famous for curing eye diseases. The waters of this well are annually blessed. As wrote one of

the former vicars of Chittlehampton, 'The well has a volume of more than two cubic metres and if it is emptied it fills up overnight, and the water is pure, sweet and cold.'

Every year, on the Sunday nearest to 8th July (her feast according to the old calendar), the church service begins by the people processing from the church to the well (about five minutes walk), where the glass cover is lifted, and water drawn from it. The vicar prays for God's blessing on the water, and the people are given a sign of the cross on their foreheads, using the blessed water. A hymn is sung by the people. Its final words are as follows:



St Urith's tomb inside the Chittlehampton church, Devon (photo provided by the vicar of Chittlehampton)

*Sing, Chittlehampton, sing;
Let all Devon's meadows ring
with holy gladness for our saint's
renown!*

*And thou, blest maiden, pray
that we in this your day
may bear our cross and win our
heavenly crown.*

*When the procession is made,
there is a prayer used:*

*Almighty and everlasting God,
who didst adorn Saint Urith
with the angelic joys of virginity*

*and martyrdom,
grant to us Thy servants that,
by her merits and intercessions,
we may be worthy to attain to
the eternal joys of heaven,
through Christ our Lord.*

Some girls in Devon are called and baptised with the name 'Urith'.

By Dmitry Lapa

Main source: <http://orthochristian.com/106352.html>

British and Irish Saints

VENERABLE MILBURGH, ABBESS OF MUCH WENLOCK

*Commemorated:
23th February/8th March*

The name of St Milburgh (Milburga) means 'gentle protection.' She was born in the mid-seventh century and reposed in 715 or 722. Her mother was a saintly Kentish princess Ermenburgh and her father was the Mercian ruler Merewald.

Merewald ruled the western Mercian sub-kingdom of Magonsaete. St Ermenburgh and Merewald had four children: a son and three saintly daughters: Milburgh, Mildred and Mildgyth. Under the influence of his spouse, Merewald was converted to Orthodoxy, establishing several



St Milburgh

(Source - <http://orthochristian.com/77751.html>)



*Much Wenlock Priory ruins
(Photo by Irina Lapa)*

monasteries, including Much Wenlock in Shropshire. Milburgh was the eldest of the three sisters.

She was tonsured by St Theodore of Canterbury when she was very young. When Milburgh still was living at home she refused all riches, cared for the poor and the sick and converted many to Christ. One wealthy man sought Milburgh's hand but the holy woman had vowed to serve God as a virgin. The nobleman pursued her with armed force. The saint crossed the river that turned into an unpassable flow and stopped the wicked men.

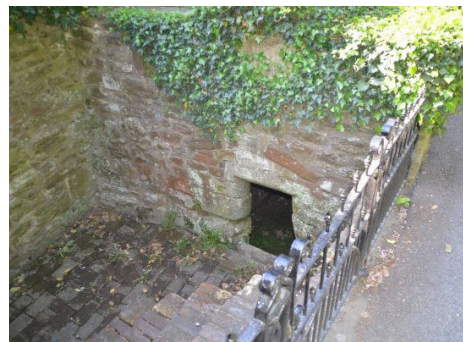
The site where Milburgh hid from the noble is named Stoke St Milborough. Through the saint's prayers a holy well gushed forth in that place which healed many sick people, especially those with eye diseases. This holy well still exists

and there are reports of miraculous cures of sore eyes from its water even nowadays.

Milburgh's father founded Much Wenlock Monastery in 670 and placed it under the direction of the great missionary St Botolph. He was Milburgh's spiritual mentor. Milburgh became its second abbess and ruled it for the rest of her life.

Unlike her younger sisters, Milburgh never left her native kingdom and remained in Shropshire until her death. During the abbacy of Milburgh life in Wenlock prospered as in Paradise. Everybody loved her for meekness, humility, softness and simple holy life. The saint herself practised manual labour, working in the monastery fields and gardens, grew many kinds of sweet fruit and numerous beautiful flowers.

Despite the strict discipline, the holy mother was very hospitable, received many guests—among them were widows, the sick, the needy and



*St Milburgh's Holy Well in Much Wenlock,
Shropshire*

suffering. The saint herself frequently visited local villages helping their dwellers with compassion and giving consolation. She healed the sick by her prayers and also with herbs which she knew perfectly. She helped arrange evangelization and pastoral work in parts of Shropshire, sending out priests from her monastery.

Already in her lifetime Milburgh obtained the abundant grace of God and led many to repentance. The Lord bestowed the ability to work great miracles on His holy maiden: she had the gifts of discernment and clairvoyance, and saw many events at a great distance. Once a woman with her newly-reposed little child



Coffin thought to be that of St Milburgh inside Holy Trinity Church in Much Wenlock, Shropshire



*Ruins of Much Wenlock Monastery
(Photo by Irina Lapa)*

came to her, imploring the saint to pray for a miracle. Milburgh began to pray so fervently that the woman to her astonishment saw her raised up above the ground, surrounded by flames. Milburgh prayed for several minutes and the child rose up alive and absolutely sound.

Milburgh communicated closely with the natural world. The people of Shropshire believe that Milburgh has special power over wild animals and birds; gardeners and farmers invoke her name for protection of their corn, fruit, crops and fields; and for many she is the patroness of wild and domestic birds. Milburgh 'instructed' wild geese, which were plaguing local fields, and they obeyed her. Once, before the harvest, a tremendous flock of birds

alighted on fields and started pecking the corn. All the people panicked. The holy woman began praying to God and at once the flock rose high and flew away. To this day geese around Much Wenlock do not eat from local fields and do not alight on the ground on her feast-day!

Milburgh was very kind, attentive, friendly and caring to everyone: children and adults, men and animals. She reposed at Wenlock in her sixties after a long disease. Before her death she blessed all her nuns. The last words of Milburgh were: ‘Blessed are the pure



*Ruins of Much Wenlock Priory, Shropshire
(Photo by Irina Lapa)*



*St Milburgh
(Source - <http://orthochristian.com/77751.html>)*

in heart, blessed are the peacemakers.’

The shrine with her relics was visited by multitudes of pilgrims seeking her help. Wenlock Abbey was destroyed by Danes in 874, and the tomb with her relics was lost. Cluniac monks from France refounded Much Wenlock as Roman Catholic priory in 1079. The place of the grave of the holy abbess was unknown but a miracle occurred: the monks started excavating an old unused church, and one day boys playing nearby suddenly fell into a tomb. The site was examined and the sweet-smelling incorrupt relics of Milburgh were dug out, together with remains of her coffin and a church altar. The indescribable fragrance that followed resembled all the flowers that the saint used to tend in her garden.

Countless miracles began to occur: blind people and lepers were cured at her shrine. A drowned child was returned to life. Monks who fell from the scaffolding during the building of

the new church were uninjured. In the late medieval period, Milburgh was among the most venerated female saints of England. Believers from all corners of England and Wales flocked to her shrine. The Much Wenlock Priory of Archangel Michael and St Milburgh flourished till the Reformation. It was dissolved under Henry VIII in about 1540: the enormous priory church was partly destroyed, the monastic buildings either demolished or converted for private residences and Milburgh's relics burned by bloodthirsty iconoclasts. Today a considerable part of this huge church (107 metres long - one of the longest in England), though roofless, still survives and attracts pilgrims. The atmosphere of holiness and spirit of Milburgh are present here.

The small pretty town of Much Wenlock is situated between the towns of Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury. The beauty and holiness of the site inspired the poet Alfred Housman and the great composer Ralph Vaughan Williams: the former composed several of his poems in the town and the latter set them to music. Much Wenlock also boasts the Norman parish church of the Holy Trinity, standing on the site of the original monastery (an ancient chest inside this richly decorated church is thought by many to be the original coffin of Milburgh) as well as the holy well dedicated to St Milburgh, known for curing eye diseases. Every year this well is lavishly adorned, a custom throughout England called

‘well-dressing’.

Churches dedicated to Milburgh can be found in Beckbury and Stoke St Milborough (Shropshire), Wixford (Warwickshire), Offenham (Worcestershire). A Catholic church in the Shropshire town of Church Stretton is dedicated to St Milburgh.

Dmitry Lapa

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.rulenglish/77751.htm>



Holy Trinity Norman Church in Much Wenlock (photo by Irina Lapa)

A THOUSAND YEARS OF ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY: A LECTURE ON THE HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN ICON

On 28 February 2018, Rossotrudnichestvo hosted a lecture on 'The History of the Russian Icon' by musician and public figure Olga Storey. The lecture was organised by the committee of Russian heritage in the UK with the support of Rossotrudnichestvo.



*Olga Storey and Julia Pliauksta
(Photo - Julia Pliauksta)*

This was without doubt one of the most interesting and impressive lectures of recent times. The presentation included stunning sequences of brilliant images, beautiful reproductions of icons, pictures of churches and religious services, archival photographs from the period of Soviet religious repression accompanied by carefully selected pieces of classical and sacred music including troparia from feast

days celebrating the Mother of God performed by the choir of Sretensky monastery.

The event was attended by British people with an interest in Russian spiritual art and the history of Orthodoxy, parishioners from the Diocese, members of the Russian Community Council, diplomats from the Russian Embassy and connoisseurs of Russian icons. Amazingly, on that day, London was covered in a blanket of snow: as the audience saw the snowflakes falling outside the window, it was easy for them to imagine that they really were in Russia. This impression complemented the exhibition of pictures of ancient Russian fortresses and monasteries displayed around the walls of the venue.

The high standard of the presentation, the carefully selected visual and audio content and importantly, Olga Storey's excellent English, made the lecture interesting and informative: the fate of the Russian church, the unique ritual and artistic traditions, the profound faith of the people were represented so clearly that it was impossible not to feel that the lecture was also championing a cause. The lecture ranged beyond the scope of its title and presented the history of Orthodoxy in Russia and neighbouring countries, the tragedy of the New Martyrs and Confessors of the early twentieth century, the fate of the royal family and the 'second baptism of Rus' in the late 1980's and 1990's.



Archpriest Anthony Ilin from the Dormition Cathedral, acting head of the Diocesan department for the relationship between the Church and Society, attended the lecture and remarked that the presentation reveals the multifaceted nature of Orthodoxy, its history and modernity. He felt that the presentation should be made available to a wider audience in the UK. Cambridge University Professor Neil Kent said that the amount of information in one presentation exceeded all his expectations and the lecture was profound, informative and educational.

At the start of the event, Julia Pliauksta, Secretary of the Committee of Russian Heritage in the UK, noted that the Orthodox icon was an expression of Russian spirituality, part of the culture both in church and in ordinary families: icons are venerated and handed down from generation to generation, and even in Soviet times there remained, even if not clearly understood, a spiritual aspect of life. At the same time, we are now witnessing the return of Western society to spiritual art in the form of the very iconography

that was preserved in Russia, in its canonical forms, which had originated in Byzantine tradition. Icons of the Mother of God, and the Saviour in Russian or Byzantine style can be seen in almost every Anglican and Catholic church in Great Britain, and Rublev's 'Trinity' is the most popular icon sold in the shop at the Roman Catholic Westminster Cathedral.

The Committee of Russian Heritage in the UK thanked Olga Storey for her interesting presentation and also Rossotrudnichestvo for their assistance in creating an opportunity for lovers of Russian history and culture to meet and find out new and useful information about the spiritual life of the Russian people and Orthodox iconography.

Julia Pliauksta



Kazanskaya (Chimeyevskaya) Icon of the Mother of God (Photo - <https://azbyka.ru/days/ikona-kazanskaja-chimeevskaja>)



For and about Children

EXPLANATIONS ABOUT THE GREAT LENT

Dear young reader,

How wonderful you are to keep on reading our newsletters, that were especially put together for you.

The first two weeks of Great Lent have passed. In our last letter to you we explained how and why those first weeks were special to all Christian children. We truly hope that you could feel it yourself. Remember that the time of Great Lent can be compared to the journey up the mountain that is never easy. But your hard journey is worth doing because once you reach the summit you will have an amazing view around you. Great Lent leads us to the bright Easter, Resurrection of Christ. In our next newsletter, we will tell you more about Easter (Pascha). Today, we will take you to the journey through the 3, 4, 5, 6th weeks of Great Lent.

3RD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT - VENERATION OF THE CROSS, 11th March 2018

The third week of Lent is called the “Veneration of the Cross “. It is called so because on the third Sunday of Great Lent the Holy Cross is brought out to the centre of the church from the Altar for veneration. It remains there until Friday. Three times the veneration of the Cross is performed while singing “We venerate Thy Cross, O Master and we glorify Thy Holy Resurrection”. The Orthodox tradition teaches us to make a full prostration to the ground every time we hear these words.



The Cross is a holy symbol of victory over death and sacred to every Orthodox person. As you know, the cross is given to us at our baptism. When we pray, we impose the cross on ourselves. Why is a cross so important for a Christian? Let us turn to the words of the holy righteous John of Kronstadt: “A cross without love cannot be imagined, where there is a cross, there is love; you see the crosses everywhere in the church, so that everything reminds you that you are in the temple of the God of love, in the temple of Love, the one who was crucified for us.”

The cross is a symbol of freedom, a symbol of light, a symbol of the victory of good over evil. It is holy, it's our hope and faith. Through it, we will find the way to God.

Do you always remember to wear your cross, that protects you from all evil, visible and invisible?

**4TH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT
- THE SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN
CLIMACUS, 18th March 2018**

This week is devoted to a great monk— Saint John Climacus. St. John got his name after his book “Lestvica”, “The Ladder of Divine Ascent”, where he teaches us how to climb a spiritual ladder. Life is a spiritual ladder, which leads to the Heavenly Kingdom. We climb it step by step. Sometimes we fall down and it is painful to hit the



ground when we make mistakes. We stand up and carry on and then we fall again. It takes a lot of courage, faith and determination to carry on our spiritual journey. Remember, young reader, that everything is possible with the help of God. During Great Lent, try to find out more about the works by St. John Climacus and learn about the great virtues that help us to climb the ladder to the Kingdom of God.

**5TH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT
SUNDAY OF ST. MARY OF
EGYPT, 25th March 2018**

On the fifth Sunday of Great Lent, the church remembers the great example of repentance that was shown to us by St. Mary of Egypt. When St. Mary came to Jerusalem



Mary’s life story shows us that when we admit our mistakes, misconduct, repent and try to change - God forgives us, because He loves us. He is very kind and helps us to become better people if we are making an effort to change ourselves. *Saint Mary of Egypt pray for us.*

6TH SATURDAY OF GREAT LENT - LAZARUS SATURDAY, 31st March 2018

This Saturday is very special to all Christians and called Lazarus Saturday. On this day, the Lord wonderfully resurrected His dear friend and close disciple Lazarus who was a brother to Martha and Mary.

for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross something stopped her from entering the church. Mary realized that her numerous sins stopped her. She turned to the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God and prayed: ‘O Lady Virgin, who gave birth in the flesh to God the Word! I know that I am unworthy to look upon your icon. I know also that God became Man in order to call sinners to repentance. Help me, O All-Pure One’. Then Mary felt confidence that the Mother of God answered her prayers and she could join those entering the church, and was not pushed back or prevented from entering.” Mary entered the holy place and in thanksgiving dedicated all her further life to God.

Jesus once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with



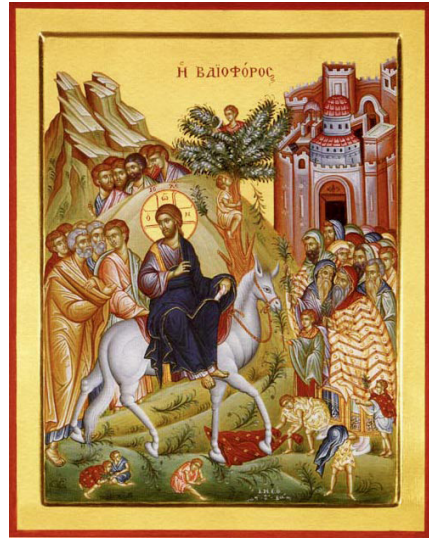
a stone laid across the entrance. “Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.” When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Many of the Jews who saw this believed in Christ and glorified him as the Messiah, the Son of God. That’s why Lazarus’ disease was not to death but to the glory of God.

This message wonderfully spread throughout the area and everyone started to wait for Christ to enter Jerusalem. People were preparing palm trees branches to welcome Christ like a king.

6TH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT – PALM SUNDAY, 1st April 2018

On Palm Sunday, we begin the celebration of Holy Week— a long procession to the Cross, to the tomb, and to the Holy Resurrection.



The Lord entered the Holy City, Jerusalem on a donkey, not a horse. The donkey, as you might know, is a symbol of peace, while a horse is a symbol of war. Jesus came with peace and He wanted to bring His peace to all on earth. The crowd welcomed Him as an earthly king and were expecting earthly rewards from the king. Everyone was happy and you could pick out from the noise the repeated chant, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord!”

On Holy Friday, the same crowd that once cried, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” would be crying, “Crucify Him! His blood be upon us and upon our children!” How tragic! Can you imagine yourself being among that cruel crowd?

It is true that on Palm Sunday we sing and wave our palm branches with joy and hope for a better life. But we are mistaken if we accept Christ as an earthly king and are constantly expecting from Him earthly rewards such as fame and everyday comfort. We should remember that Christ is our Heavenly King and He brings divine values of love, kindness and compassion. He teaches us to follow Him and do things without expecting any rewards at all but because “The Lord has need of it”.

Palm Sunday teaches us to remain loyal to God whatever life brings. Try not to follow the voice of the crowd but the voice of your heart, the place where God dwells.



*An artwork by one of the pupils
from the cathedral school
(Photo by Julia Pliauksta)*

For reflection

It is joyful to feel that we do not and cannot have any enemies among men, but only unhappy brethren, who are deserving of pity and help, even when, through misunderstanding, they become our enemies and fight against us. Woe! They do not understand that the enemy is found within ourselves, and that first of all one must cast him out of oneself, and then also help others to do the same. We have only one enemy: the devil and his evil spirits. But man, no matter how far he has fallen, never loses certain sparks of light and goodness which may be blown into a bright flame. But for us there is no reason to fight against people, even when they consistently send against us all kind of blows and rebukes ... To fight against people is to take a false position in relation to our enemies. Even if we succeed, we gain nothing from this fight, but rather become estranged from our own success.

(Martyr Roman Medved, Letter to His Daughter from the Gulag, 1932)

Path to Orthodoxy



Fr. Stephen Powley

FR. STEPHEN POWLEY AND THE PRISONERS WHO STOLE PARADISE

**An extract from a story about
how 300 American criminals
became Orthodox, and five of
them, monks.**

ANTHONY THE ICON PAINTER, ‘WHO COULD MAKE WEAPONS AND BOMBS FROM ANYTHING’

After we’d been there a while, a man rolled in. The first thing I got from him when he arrived was he had watched our videos and was going to sue me. We had closed-circuit television there, and on the closed-circuit TV I could put videos, and so wherever I would go I’d videotape—I would videotape Divine Liturgies, I’d have studies and we’d put those on the TV as well. I

had to put on different videotapes for all the different faiths as well. So, this man wrote me and said, “I’m suing you, because you don’t have any white supremacist videos on your television.” I thought, “Oh boy, here we go.” So I went down to meet this guy; we had heard before this man came that he was an absolute animal, that in the course of his stay at another prison, he got so angry one day that he ripped the sink off his wall, and pounded a hole through a concrete wall into the next cell. So they rolled him up and brought him to our prison. I went up to his cell, I opened the first door, walked in, stuck my hand through the bars, and said “I just wanted to introduce myself to you.” He came over and took my hand, and I just held his hand for a while and we talked. He

told me later that it was the first time in 5 years that anyone had touched him except for putting on restraints, handcuffs, belly chains, black box, or leg chains. The first time in five years! And it impacted his life. He began to think about reading some books about my faith. The first book I sent him was on the life of St. Anthony (the Great) by St. Athanasius. He read that, and to make the long story short, I had the privilege of baptizing him in the faith as Anthony.

Soon after he was brought into the Orthodox faith, amazingly one day he said, “Father, I think that I would like to try iconography. Would it be ok with you if I tried something?” At this time, all they would allow this man to have was a little stubby pencil and a piece of white paper, because they said he could make a weapon, a bomb out of anything. And so that’s all they would allow him to have. So I said, “Go ahead.” He drew an icon. I looked at it and I said, “Wow, that’s incredible. Do some more!” And he started drawing these pencil icons that were incredible. Later he gained favor with the administration. In fact, the head of prison security came to me one day and they said, “What did you do with this man? He is gone from being an animal to an absolute angel.” And I said, “I didn’t do anything. The Lord did it.” And he laughed, “Yeah, right. Whatever you did to him,

go do it to the rest of these guys in here!” But they showed him favor and allowed him to have more than just the stubby pencil—they allowed him to have some chalk. He took the chalk and ground it up, added toothpaste, a drop of garlic oil and made his own paints. He plucked the hairs out of his head to make brushes with, and he began to paint icons. After a while they gave him more favor, and he was able to get paints, and he began to paint icons. We’ll talk more about that at the end.

That was the very first man who came to the faith in that prison.

Fr. Stephen Powley

The whole article is available here <http://orthochristian.com/107543.html>

Fr. Stephen also asks that our readers pray for Anthony, who has not been able to keep his faith under these dark and difficult prison conditions. May the Lord give him the strength to return to His fold.



LEARNING RUSSIAN

Canterbury in the mid to late 1960s was the home of a new university. I was a Research Fellow there and decided that it would be helpful if I knew a little Russian because I could use it in the translation of articles in scientific journals. The local technical college advertised an evening course and I signed up. At my first class we met our teacher and fellow students. There were about ten of us. Our teacher was a mature lady, Miss Agnes Mishkin who had been an English governess in pre-revolutionary St Petersburg. She was very jolly but also very strict. We had to do homework each week and she marked it with a firm hand and a red biro. I still have the many homeworks completed and also a hand written primer, individually written for each one of us, explaining the correct use of Russian compound verbs of motion.

She taught us grammar, speech and enough Russian to pass GCE "O level" after two years of study, one evening per week. She told us a few stories about her life and taught us Auld Lang Syne and also one nursery rhyme. In English this sounds ridiculous coming out as "Our food is cabbage soup and porridge". In Russian it sounds poetic "Shchi da kasha, pisha nasha". We were well-prepared for the examination with past papers completed to a strict time limit and



John and Stella Newbery
(Photo - Julia Pliauksta)

without dictionaries or other aids. Also we learned some Russian traditions. The focal point of a party at Pascha was Paskha and we were all given the recipe:-

2lbs cream cheese
Half a pound of fresh butter
1lb caster sugar
Small carton double cream
4 egg yolks
Vanilla, crushed, not essence
Sultanas, currants, almonds,
mixed peel
Melt the butter and mix it with the cream cheese, sugar and all other ingredients. Put it in a muslin bag inside a mould (with holes for excess moisture to drip through) and leave to stand for several hours. Then refrigerate for 24 hours.

Incredibly I have kept this recipe safely for almost 50 years and used it for the first time, Pascha 2016, for the Bring and Share meal after our Liturgy. Our Rector, Fr Michael, was surprised and started reminiscing about how his sister used to make Pashka and leave it dripping down the stairwell! The cake was a great success and a fitting conclusion to the whole proceedings.



(Photo - <https://gotovim-doma.ru/>)

John and Stella Newbery, Parish of St Peter and St Paul, Portsmouth



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