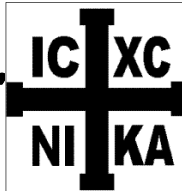


Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Antiochian Orthodox Deanery

NEWSLETTER 153

APRIL 2009



Weekdays at St Helen's

Wed 1 April	6.00 pm	Presanctified Liturgy
Fri 3 April	7.00 pm	Akathist and Talk
Wed 8 April	6.00 pm	Presanctified Liturgy
Fri 10 April	7.00 pm	Paracletis and Talk

Feast of St George the Great Martyr, Patron of England
++ Thu 23 April 9.30 am Holy Liturgy ++

"We all had smiles on our faces for the rest of the day..."

-Archbishop's visit brings a blessing for each, and for our Parish

The first visit to this Parish of its Archpastor certainly did bring joy to all those who attended and to the Parish as a whole. Mother of three SUE LINGI rang up next day and said of the visit: "It was lovely: we all had smiles on our faces for the rest of the day..." That really summed it up!

His Eminence had brought us peace, joy, and hope. He served the Holy Liturgy, which went very well, in spite of the complication of a Hierarchical Liturgy. He presented us with an icon of the Mother of God. We presented him with a copy of our new icon of St Helen and cds of the Radio 4 programmes St Helen's Chapel has featured in. Photos of the occasion are in church and on the Parish website.

We all had lunch in the Castlegate Centre. Then everybody present went up and sat beside him and spoke with him for a short while.

When it was all over he and his companions Fr ATHANASIOS and Fr Deacon ROMANOS came to the house. There Sayedna had a rest and I took the Fathers to see the Castle, the High Street, and St Martin's.

After a cup of tea the party returned to Cambridge by taxi.

For them, no doubt, it was exhausting, but for us it was life-giving, and we



are most are grateful. Many years, Master!

Father Alexander

- There were 72 present. Thank you to all who sang, served, provided food, cleaned, or did anything else to make it such a successful day.
- Fr Romanos, I discovered, is cousin to our former student DAREEN from Damascus, who recently married LAMBROS and now lives in Greece.

The 153rd issue of this Newsletter reminds me of Christ's Resurrection Meal beside the sea!

Do you remember the meal Christ has with the Holy Apostles beside the sea of Galilee after the Resurrection? First they obey his command and have the miraculous catch of fish. Counting out the fish they find there are exactly "one hundred and fifty and three" (John 21.11). Then they go and eat with him.

Now this Pascha our Newsletter reaches that mysterious and divinely attractive number, 153. What the significance really is I do not know, but I have been intrigued by that number ever since I studied St John's Gospel in Greek, at University over forty-five years ago. Later (1970, I think) I visited the very site on the seashore where it all happened, and have been back there since then. In Bath I was even able to choose a car with the number A153!

Christ - the Christ who died on the Cross and rose again from the dead, conquering death - always blesses us enormously, if we are faithful to him, if we obey his commands.

He invites us to sit down with him, to share a banquet he provides. He gives us joy in sorrow, hope in defeat, peace in the midst of strife.

Christ never keeps his new and risen life for himself. He always shares it with us, if we will take it.

Happy Pascha, dear people of God!

HOLY LITURGY

ST FURSEY'S
Sat 4 Apr 10.30 am
CLACTON
Sat 25 Apr 10.00 am

GREAT AND HOLY WEEK

All services in St Helen's Chapel

Lazarus Saturday, 11 April		
Holy Liturgy		9.30 am
Great Vespers		4.30 pm
Palm Sunday, Entry of Christ into Jerusalem, 12 April		
Mattins, with Blessing of Palms		9.45 am
Reception into the Church		10.30 am
Holy Liturgy		10.45 am
Holy Monday, 13 April		
Bridegroom Mattins		7.00 pm
Holy Tuesday, 14 April		
Bridegroom Mattins		7.00 pm
Holy Wednesday, 15 April		
Holy Anointing		7.00 pm
Holy Thursday, 16 April		
Vespers & Holy Liturgy of St Basil		9.30 am
Mattins of the Twelve Gospels		7.00 pm
Holy Friday, 17 April		
Royal Hours		9.00 am
Vespers & Deposition		3.00 pm
Mattins & Burial Procession		7.00 pm
Holy Saturday, 18 April		
Vespers & Holy Liturgy of St Basil		9.30 am
Reading of Acts		10.30 pm
Midnight Office		11.30 pm
HOLY PASCHA, 19 April		
Resurrection Procession & Mattins		12 midnight
Holy Liturgy		1.00 am (till 2.15 am)
<i>No late morning Liturgy</i>		
Parish Paschal Lunch "Bring & Share"		1.00 pm
Paschal Vespers		approx. 3.00 pm
CONFESSIONS BEFORE EASTER		
After any service or by arrangement		

A very happy Pascha to you all
Join us for THE PARISH PASCHAL LUNCH
Bring some food to share with others

St Helen's Chapel, Maidenburgh St, High St

St Helen's is 200m. down behind the George Hotel in the High Street, but accessible from there only on foot. By car: leave Middleborough Roundabout (between dual carriageways Westway and Balkeine Hill), to Northgate; go straight along St Peter Street to Castle Park; continue round, up into Maidenburgh Street. Nunns Road NCP is the nearest car park.

Saturday: Great Vespers usually 4.30 pm (check before coming)
Sunday: Mattins 9.45 am (or Hours 10.15 am), Divine Liturgy 10.30 am

Confessions: Saturday after Vespers, or by arrangement
Holy Marriage, Baptism, Funerals, Memorials etc: by arrangement

Parish Priest: **Father Alexander (Alistair) Haig**

17 Maidenburgh St, Colchester CO1 1UB

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Reader: **Stephen Weston**

St Fursey's House, 111 Neville Rd, Sutton, Stalham NR12 9RR Tel: 01-692-580-552

New Parish Website: <http://www.orthodoxcolchester.org.uk>

St Fursey's Chapel, 111 Neville Rd,
Sutton, near Stalham, Norfolk

Divine Liturgy: usually first Saturday 9.30 am

At St James Anglican Church,
Beatrice Rd, Clacton-on-sea

Divine Liturgy: usually third Saturday 10.00 am

At University of Essex Chaplaincy Centre: Divine Liturgy: one Saturday per term 10.00 am

The People Column

THANKS: Thank you to those who sent cards and wishes for my 70th birthday. My beloved children took pleasure in pointing out that I have entered my 'eighth decade'. But I have forgiven them, for - knowing that food will always get round me - they took me out to a really splendid dinner at The Anchor at Nayland before the Fast started!

ADULT BAPTISED: Congratulations to PELAGIA (Inci) EAMES of Frinton, whom I baptised in March. She joins her sister PARASCEVE (Oya) TODD and all the family in Holy Church. God-mother was ALEXIA LANSLEY of Lexden.

CHILD BAPTISED: Welcome to ALEXANDER, baby son of GEORGE and MANDY PRODRMOU of Greenstead, baptised in February. Godparents were KOULA and ANDREW IOANNOU of Clacton.

REUNITED: It is a pleasure to have back again from Ukraine the whole WELSH family: PAUL ANGELINA, GEORGE - and new baby ALEXANDER, whom we had not met before. They are presently living again at Lavenham.

CARPETS: You may have noticed that the church carpets look nice and clean. Our thanks to MARIA TOMOROGA who brought in her cleaning equipment from Lawford and slaved over them for several hours!

MONTENEGRO, now a separate nation, remains part of the Serbian Orthodox Church. It was a delight recently to receive a group of two Montenegrin Priests and a number of young adults (staying at the Monastery) who wished to make a pilgrimage to St Helen. They presented us with a lovely triptych of St Basil of Ostrog, the Montenegrin Saint.

HIEROMONK Fr SERGEY (ARMSTONE) of Clacton has been received into the Russian Church Outside Russia, and is therefore fully an Orthodox Priest. I gather he is assisting at the old Garrison church.

SAVING: The LAWRENCE family of Lexden recently presented Church funds with the contents of the 'odd-pennies' charity pot they keep on the sideboard. It contained the magnificent sum of £26.88 - plus one penny so odd the Bank counting machine wouldn't receive it! **This family are showing heavenly as well as earthly wisdom: they will all be received together into the Church by Holy Chrismation**



The icon of the Holy Resurrection is in fact the icon of the Descent into Hell. After his glorious Sufferings on the Cross Christ also went down into the bitter dregs of our human existence and shared even Death itself, though without the corruption we know.

As God and Man he rose again - stooping down to us he raised us up from death with him. The icon shows him taking hold of Adam (Mankind, us) and lifting Adam (us) from death and corruption.

His Resurrection therefore has an immediate effect on us. It gives us the promise that we are 'on the winning side' and shall ourselves be raised when Christ comes again. That's why he went through it all: **ALLELUIA, WHAT A SAVIOUR!**

EMAIL FROM HIS EMINENCE THE ARCHBISHOP following his visit to St Helen's:

Dear Fr Alexander, Certainly we enjoyed our visit very much. Thank you for all. God bless you and your mission. My love to your family. Yours, Metropolitan JOHN

A Word from the Fathers: On the Paschal Feast

Let us make a joyful noise with the Saints, and let us all take part as we should, forgetting the afflictions and difficulties that the party of Eusebius [= the Arians] is presently causing us. Even now they are plotting against us, hoping to cause our death...

Our Redeemer did not say that everybody in this world would have troubles - only those who live in reverence of him.

Therefore the more our enemies attack us, the more relieved we should be. When they abuse us, we should fight for the faith.

And the more they try to turn us away from godliness, the more we should preach it boldly, saying to the Lord, All those things have come upon us, but we

have not forgotten you....

Therefore, brothers and sisters, let us keep the Feast - and not as a time of grief and mourning. Nor should we let the difficulties we face because of the faith cause us to give up and mingle with the heretics.

Instead, let us pay attention to those things that promote gladness and joy, lest our hearts become sad like Cain's. Like good and faithful servants of the Lord, we want to hear him say, Enter into the joy of your Lord.

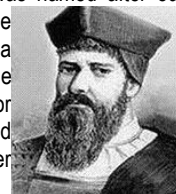
These days of Easter are not a time of sorrow and mourning, as some people may think. We come to the Feast full of joy and gladness.

St Athanasius the Great, Bishop of Alexandria (AD 298-373)

St Helena to St Helen's

The Governor of the South Atlantic island of St Helena, Andrew GURR, visited the Chapel with his lady on a recent visit to the town. He came as guest of Colchester MP Bob RUSSELL, who is chairman of the Parliamentary Group on the island, which has been under British control since 1651. His guide was Cllr Theresa HIGGINS. It was a pleasure to welcome him.

The reason the island was named after our Saint, according to all the history books, is that a Spanish or Portuguese navigator, Juan de Nova or Joao da Nova (pictured here), discovered it on her feast day, 21 May 1502.



A puzzle

21 May was of course her eastern feast, the day of St Constantine's repose. Her western feast was 18 August, the day of her own repose.

So why did the explorer come across this island in the middle of the ocean and immediately think on that day of St Helen? Why did he think of 21 May as the feast of St Helen?

I have long found this intriguing, but have never seen any discussion of the matter. I have formed a theory that, though Spanish in birth and sailing as a Portuguese citizen, he may actually have been a Greek and of course Orthodox.

He was born in Galicia, Spain, in 1460. Had his parents perhaps emigrated to Spain after the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453? - At that time many Greeks moved to Spain, and El Greco is a later example of a Greek movement westwards.

If anyone is able to investigate the subject of the Greek settlers in the West at that time and the Discoverer of the island dedicated to the memory of St Helena, I should be glad to be informed about it.

It would be nice to prove he was of Greek parentage, and Orthodox, wouldn't it!

Anyway, it was good to welcome the Governor of the famous island which shares our town's devotion to the Discoverer of the True Cross.

APRIL DAYS

Wed 1	S Agilbert Bishop of Dorchester and Paris
Sat 4	Saturday of the Akathist
Sun 5	Lent 5, S Mary of Egypt
Sat 11	Lazarus Saturday
Sun 12	Entry of Lord into Jerusalem, Palm Sun
Mon 13	Great and Holy Monday
Tue 14	Great and Holy Tuesday
Wed 15	Great and Holy Wednesday
Thu 16	Great and Holy Thursday
Fri 17	Great and Holy Friday
Sat 18	Great and Holy Saturday
Sun 19	HOLY PASCHA
Mon 20	Bright Monday
Tue 21	Bright Tuesday
Wed 22	Bright Wednesday
Thu 23	Bright Thursday, Great Martyr George, Patron of England
Fri 24	Bright Friday, The Life-giving Spring
Sat 25	Bright Saturday, Holy Apostle and Evangelist Mark
Sun 26	Pascha 2, S Thomas
Tue 28	Joyful Commemoration of the Dead
Wed 29	S Basil, Bishop of Ostrog
Thu 30	Holy Apostle James son of Zebedee

A full list of the month's Feasts and Fasts available on request