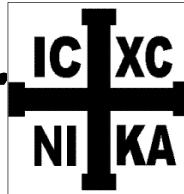


+ The Great Fast (Lent) - the time to get close to Christ again +

# Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Antiochian Orthodox Deanery of the UK & Ireland  
NEWSLETTER 162 FEBRUARY 2010



## Weekdays at St Helen's

TUESDAY 2 FEB MEETING OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE

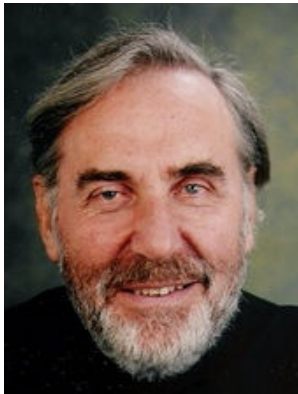
9.30 am Holy Liturgy

### OUR SERVICES FOR THE GREAT FAST (LENT)

WEDNESDAY 17 FEB	6.00 pm Vespers & Presanctified Liturgy
FRIDAY 19 FEB	7.00 pm Akathist to the Mother of God
WEDNESDAY 24 FEB	6.00 pm Vespers & Presanctified Liturgy
FRIDAY 26 FEB	7.00 pm Akathist to the Mother of God

## Father Michael Harper

Archpriest Michael died on the feast of Holy Theophany in Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge.



He had been living with cancer for some time. I visited him a couple of days before he died, but sadly was not able to get close to him to pray with him and ask his last blessing. He was however well ministered to by Fr Raphael Armour, of the Cambridge Sourozh Parish, and

our Archbishop came all the way from Paris.

He was 78, resigning only in December from his office as Dean of the British Antiochian Deanery, which he had held since its formation in 1995, appointed by His Beatitude Patriarch Ignatius himself.

In the early years he visited this parish on a number of occasions, and received our first converts, apart from the Haig family. A few years later he founded the Antiochian parish of St Botolph in the City of London.

As an Anglican he was an Evangelical ('low church', as they say), and prominent internationally in the charismatic movement. He had the steepest of learning curves of any of us clergy-converts from Anglicanism, and I admired him for what he achieved. Anyway, no one could have doubted his enthusiasm for Holy Orthodoxy.

The funeral at St George's Cathedral in London was attended by many of our clergy but sadly not by the Archbishop, who was ill.

Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia and Bishop Elisey of Sourozh attended. He was buried in Cambridge.

He leaves his devoted wife Khouria Jeanne. Memory eternal!

### PAN-ORTHODOX VESPERS

Sunday of Orthodoxy, 21 February (first Sunday in Lent)

All the various jurisdictions join together in one place on a Sunday evening in London for this impressive annual event. Let me know you would like to come and I will let you have details.

### HOLY LITURGY

ST FURSEY'S  
No Liturgy in February  
UNIVERSITY  
Saturday 13 February  
10.00 am  
CLACTON  
Saturday 20 February  
10.00 am

## St Theodore Icon £9.99 Calendar for 2010

Copies still available: please ask. It shows an icon a month, many of British Saints. Have a copy in your home. Treat a friend.

Collect it at church - or 75 p by post in UK

## Lent—the time to get in some spiritual training!

We really call it *the Great Fast* in the Orthodox Church, but it is often translated into English as 'Lent' (which means spring). It is the forty days before Great and Holy Week and Pascha (Easter).

It is time for deeper prayer, more church-going, more almsgiving and more self-discipline than we usually apply ourselves to.

**It is really saying that we ought, once a year, to spend some weeks at the spiritual gym, to trim up spiritually.**

The Muslims roughly copied it when they started their Ramadan.

The first day of Lent is always the Monday after Cheesefare Sunday which concludes the end of a week without meat. From Cheesefare we have no meat or dairy products until Easter, and hardly fish. Details are on *Feasts and Fasts* for the month.

The extra services we have are the **Liturgy of the Presanctified on Wednesday evening at 6.00 pm** and the **Akathist on Friday evening at 7.00 pm.**

The Presanctified is really Vespers before a Liturgy when the Holy Mysteries consecrated the previous Sunday are brought out to give Communion to the faithful. It is a very beautiful service of course. Antioch requires a five-hour fast beforehand; so nothing must be taken after an early and preferably light

lunch; have a meal when you get home.

The Akathist is a service of praise to the Theotokos, the Mother of God. It is sung in four weekly parts, and on the fifth Friday of Lent the full service is sung.

As far as general fasting itself goes, the first week of Lent and then Holy Week are thought of as the most important weeks.

You should also plan on making your confession before Holy Pascha.

May I invite you to come to as many of these services as possible, to help you deepen and strengthen your faith.

So many people have faith but complain, My faith is weak.

**How do you deal with a weak, sick person? - You build them up by giving them good food and drink and good and appropriate exercise.**

**How do you deal with your own weak faith? -You build it up by a diet of religious and faithful exercises, working out at a good gym, the Holy Orthodox Church.**

Have a good Lent!

Father Alexander

### FELLOWSHIP OF ST ALBAN & ST SERGIUS

St Helen's Chapel

Tuesday 23 Feb 7.30 pm

'CHANGE IN THE WEST'

A talk on the far-reaching rearrangement for the Orthodox Churches in the West, outside the traditional Orthodox countries - a very important proposal from the highest Orthodox authorities

## 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 Street, Colchester CO1 1UB

Tel: 01-206-530-530 Mob: 07-947-047-201 Eml: orthodox.colchester@ntlworld.com

Readers:

Stephen Weston, 111 Neville Rd, Sutton, Stalham NR12 9RR Tel: 01-692-580-552

Antony Bardsley, 22 Upper Olland St, Bungay NR35 1BH Tel: 01-986-895-760

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

ALEX HAIG has sent this **FAVOURITE SAYING**  
 Christ did not come to explain human suffering, or to eliminate it. Rather, He came to fill human suffering with His presence.  
*Fr George Galciu (1925-2006)*

## The People Column

**SUSANNA BRIGHTON-CROSS** was sadly struck down just a few days before Christmas. She had major neuro-surgery in Queen's Hospital, Romford, which seems to have been successful, praise God! but her mobility is going to need a lot of effort. She is fighting well, and may be assured of our prayers and good wishes, both for her and for her husband PAUL and LUCY. She is now in Southend Hospital, which is much easier for everyone. Of course there are major difficulties for their getting to church here from Southend.

**ANTONY BARDSLEY** and I were unable to get to Manchester for his interview about ordination, due to the snow, and he will now be interviewed by the so-called *Axios* Committee in February.

**ANDRI ANDREOU** was an MA student here some years ago, who has kept in touch. We have visited her before, and were delighted to be invited to her wedding in Apostolos Andreas Church in Platy Aglantzia, Nicosia on the Sunday after Christmas. So Khouria HILARY and I *upped and offed* on Boxing Day to a warmer country. We stayed in Pis-souri, where we had stayed before. Before the wedding I baptised my cousin's little grandson, **JOSHUA MAMMOUS**, in whose parents' wedding I had taken part two or three years ago. So on the one day we took part in a baptism and a wedding and in two great meals: quite a day, but a very happy one! - Another day we visited the famous Kykkos Monastery, in the Troodos mountains. One day we had a meal with our landlord and his wife and they picked us two great bunches of grapes straight off the vine, and oranges and lemons both straight off the trees. Then we returned to snowy Britain, wondering why we do not all live in Cyprus!

### A Word from the Fathers

Attachment to worldly things is a grave obstacle to those who are striving after holiness, and often brings ruin to both soul and body.

What destroyed Naboth the Israelite? Was not his vineyard the cause of his death, because it aroused the jealousy of his neighbour, Ahab (1 Kings 21.1-16)?

What made the two-and-a-half-tribes stay outside the promised land, but their huge herds and flocks (Numbers 34.15)?

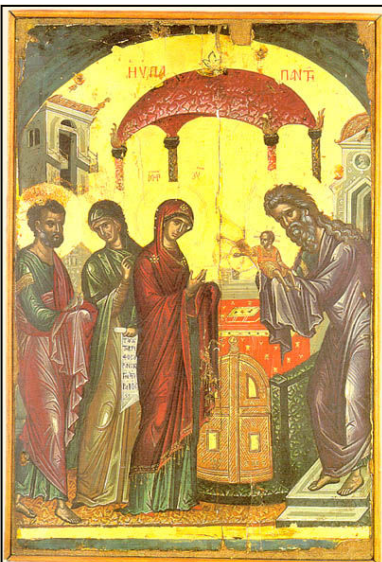
What divided Lot and Abraham? Was it not also their huge herds and flocks which cause continual quarrels among the herdsmen, and, in the end, forced them to part (Genesis 13.5-11)?

Possessions arouse feelings of jealousy against their owners, cut off their owners from men better than themselves, divide families, and make friends hate one another.

Possessions, moreover, have no place in the life to come, and even in this present life have no great use.

Why therefore do we abandon the service of God and devote ourselves entirely to empty trivialities?

*St Nilos the Ascetic (d about 430))*



#### THE MEETING OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE

This feast commemorates his being brought to Jerusalem when 40 days old by his Mother and Joseph to be presented to the High Priest in accordance with the Law.

In this icon you see St Simeon receiving him from Mary and Joseph. It was the Lord coming into his own Temple!

Old Simeon then said his famous and beautiful *Nunc Dimittis*, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace'.

Between Mary and Joseph is the old woman Righteous Anna who came along and welcomed the new Child. You can read the whole story in St Luke's Gospel, chapter 2.22-38.

It is appropriately held on Tuesday 2 February, 40 days after Christmas. The Holy Liturgy will be served at 9.30 am.

### Meet your local Saints

*A series on the Orthodox Saints of the Colchester area*

#### 4. St Mellitus

St Mellitus was the first Bishop to minister to the East Saxons early in the seventh century. Italian, and Abbot of St Andrew's Monastery in Rome, in 601 he was sent by Pope Gregory the Great, the Dialogist, Apostle of the English, to assist St Augustine.

An important letter from St Gregory to him still exists, giving fascinating instructions as to how the work of converting pagans was to be carried out. He was to destroy the idols, but show great respect for their temples, simply purifying them by holy water for Christian worship. The heathen were to be turned only gently to the Truth, and he was to 'baptise' and 'sanctify' all harmless customs.

Mellitus first worked in Kent, but in 604 he was made Bishop of London - not the first, for there had been many *British* Bishops before him, but his most recent predecessor had fled to Wales along with his people as the Saxons took over the city.

He converted Saebert, first Christian King of the East Saxons, baptising him and many of the people of Essex. He rebuilt St Paul's Cathedral. He would have known Colchester as a great ruin, for the Saxons did not settle in the Roman town until much later.

When Saebert died in 616, his three sons, never baptised, openly reverted to paganism. But they demanded of the Bishop 'the fine white bread' of the Eucharist, which St Mellitus of course refused, and he was banished to Gaul (France). Essex now largely reverted to paganism, and it remained for St Cedd to start again with converting the East Saxons in 653.

Soon however, he was recalled to Kent, and became third Archbishop of Canterbury in 619. When that city was on fire, his prayers from his sickbed are said to have stopped it.

He died on 24 April 624, and was buried in the Monastery of SS Peter and Paul (St Augustine's Abbey), and the site of his immediate burial there is still marked in the ruins.

**St Mellitus, pray to God for us!**

## Here and There

**BASILDON OUTREACH:** As you read in the last Newsletter, we have been planning to start services in Basildon, as there is no English-language congregation in the whole of south Essex, and only one Greek one. However, PAUL BRIGHTON-CROSS, who was to be the leader of the work, is now of course fully taken up with the care of his wife and daughter. The project has therefore been put 'on hold' for the present.

**HOLY THEOPHANY:** For the first time since we started the tradition we did not have a beautiful sunny day for the Procession to the Blessing of the River on the Sunday. There were few in church because of the snow and ice, and even fewer were brave enough to come down the hill to the water. But eight of us made it, and in the name of everyone, but especially of God, we blessed the source of our life, and the angels rejoiced.

### ORTHODOX PARISH PILGRIMAGE

IN HONOUR OF

#### THE ORTHODOX SAINTS OF BARKING

St Erkenwald, St Ethelburga, St Theogirth, St Hildeith, St Wulfhild, and the Holy Nuns of Barking martyred by the Danes

In preparation for Holy Pascha

Saturday 13 March

In the ruins of Barking Abbey in East London

*The programme will be something like this:*

12 noon Service to the Saints of Barking

1.00 pm Picnic Lunch (bring your own)

2.00 pm Talk on the Saints of Barking

3.00 pm Service

3.30 pm Tea break & Disperse

**We hope to be allowed to make use of St Margaret's Church if the weather demands it. We shall travel by car or train. Encourage Orthodox faithful & others to attend. Please sign the list in church or phone MARGARET HAIG (07-932-853-213) if you would like to attend**

### Snowflakes

The snow has got its hazards: the ice, slipping and sliding, and danger. I was looking out from our balcony into the dale. It was the most magnificent sight, that you would expect to see only in films.

I saw the beautiful handiwork of the Lord. It is a habit of mine to sing when the snow covers the world; not just a light covering which comes, and then disappears the next day. I have sung over the sound-deadening snow on four occasions. BBC and ITV have recorded and broadcast this, and the press have reported it.

Today when I sang the Press came, but the BBC couldn't make it. Friends and neighbours came to hear me. With the Lord's gift, my voice, I felt very humble to add to that unbelievable sight of such beauty. I sang only for Him.

How can the atheists believe that there is no God? And how is it that no two snowflakes are identical - and neither are any two human beings?

ALEXIA ZANGLI

### FEBRUARY DAYS

Mon	1	Martyr Tryphon, S Bridget (Bride) of Kildare
Tue	2	<b>MEETING OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE</b>
Wed	3	Righteous Simeon the God-receiver & Anna S Nicholas, Archbishop of Japan
Fri	5	Martyr Agatha of Palermo
Sat	6	S Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople
Sun	7	<b>Sunday of Meatfare, of the Last Judgment New Martyrs &amp; Confessors of Russia S Richard of the West Saxons</b>
Mon	8	Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates
Tue	9	S Peter of Damascus
Wed	10	Hieromartyr Charalambos, Bishop of Magnesia
Thu	11	S Caedmon of Whitby
Sat	13	Commemoration of All Monks & Nuns
Sun	14	<b>Sunday of Cheesefare</b>
Mon	15	<i>First day of the Great Fast (Lent)</i>
Wed	17	S Finan, Bishop of Lindisfame
Thu	18	S Leo the Great, Pope of Rome
Sat	20	Commemoration of S Theodore the Recruit
Sun	21	<b>Lent 1, Sunday of Orthodoxy</b>
Tue	23	Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna S Milburga, Abbess of Wenlock
Wed	24	First & Second Findings of the Head of S John
Sat	27	S Raphael, Bishop of Brooklyn
Sun	28	<b>Lent 2, S Gregory Palamas, S John Cassian the Roman, S Oswald, Archbishop of York</b>

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