

+ Before thy Cross we bow down and worship +

# Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Antiochian Orthodox Deanery of the UK & Ireland

NEWSLETTER 163

MARCH 2010



## The Holy Cross of Christ shows how our God loves us

There are many theories as to what the Crucifixion of Christ means. Some theories are in themselves rather barbarous, unworthy of the Christians who conceived or articulated them.

Others are far better, but somehow come at the question - why God allows his own Son to be murdered so brutally - from the wrong angle.

Surely, what the Cross does is to show the love of God for us. God himself, who has entered our world and our flesh in Jesus Christ, gives himself into our hands for us to do what we will - and what we do is crucify him.

It shows that God the All-seeing One, loves us completely and without reservation.

And if he loves all, collectively, it means that he loves us individually too.

"God loves me."

\* \* \* \* \*

Now that is something to get excited about! - The Creator of all, 'He Who is', the Almighty One, the One beyond understanding, beyond knowing, loves me, knows me, cares for me, dies for me - that is Good News indeed!

That is what the Cross certainly does show us - me personally, if I am willing to accept it.

Of course, Christ does not remain on the Cross. His lifeless body is taken down. The poor Man is buried in a rich man's grave.

And the third day he returns to life: the



Victory, this shows, is his! In the end, death and all that is inherently linked with death - sin, sickness, wickedness of all kinds, the demons, Satan himself - all are done away.

He tramples down (our) death by (his) death, as we say over and over again in the Orthodox Liturgy. He rises again in glory, a glory that already shines forth in the Cross for those who can see and believe.

How much he loves me, and those I love! Keep close to Christ. Come to all the services you possibly can in Lent and Holy Week. As the Way of Christ unfolds, you will learn just how much he does love you.

Father Alexander

### Weekdays at St Helen's

WEDNESDAY 3 MAR	6.00 pm Vespers & Presanctified Liturgy
FRIDAY 5 MAR	7.00 pm Akathist to the Mother of God
WEDNESDAY 10 MAR	6.00 pm Vespers & Presanctified Liturgy
FRIDAY 12 MAR	7.00 pm Akathist to the Mother of God
WEDNESDAY 17 MAR	6.00 pm Vespers & Presanctified Liturgy
FRIDAY 19 MAR	7.00 pm Akathist to the Mother of God

### THURSDAY 25 MAR ANNUNCIATION OF THE THEOTOKOS

6.00 pm Vespers & Liturgy of St John Chrysostom

No evening service on Wednesday 24 or Friday 26 March

### GREAT AND HOLY WEEK

#### Lazarus Saturday, 27 March

Holy Liturgy of St John	9.30 am
Great Vespers	4.30 pm

#### Palm Sunday, Entry of Christ into Jerusalem, 28 March

Mattins, with Blessing of Palms	9.45 am
Holy Liturgy of St John	10.30 am

#### Great & Holy Monday, 29 March

Bridegroom Mattins	7.00 pm
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#### Great & Holy Tuesday, 30 March

Bridegroom Mattins	7.00 pm
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#### Great & Holy Wednesday, 31 March

Holy Anointing	7.00 pm
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#### Great & Holy Thursday, 1 April

Vespers & Holy Liturgy of St Basil	9.30 am
Mattins of the Twelve Gospels	7.00 pm

#### Great & Holy Friday, 2 April

Royal Hours	9.00 am
Vespers & Deposition	3.00 pm
Mattins & Burial Procession	7.00 pm

#### Great & Holy Saturday, 3 April

Vespers & Holy Liturgy of St Basil	9.30 am
Reading of Acts	10.30 pm
Midnight Office	11.30 pm

#### HOLY PASCHA, 4 April

Resurrection Procession & Mattins	12 midnight
Holy Liturgy	1.00 am (till 2.15)

No late morning Liturgy

Parish Lunch ("Bring & Share")	1.00 pm
Paschal Vespers	approx. 3.00 pm

CONFESSIONS: after any service or by arrangement  
GIFTS FOR FLOWERS: may be handed to SANJA RADUNOVIC  
EPITAPHION FLOWERS: women & girls invited 9.30 am Holy Friday

A good way to prepare for Holy Pascha: pray on our...

### PILGRIMAGE TO THE ORTHODOX SAINTS OF BARKING

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

The Monastery of Barking was a 'hot-house of holiness' in its first Orthodox years in the seventh century. In post-Schism days it had great buildings: we shall worship in the remaining ruins.

Saturday 13 March at Barking Abbey in East London

or St Margaret's Church beside the ruins if wet

We shall travel by car or train

Encourage Orthodox faithful & others to attend

Please sign the list in church or email

MARGARET HAIG margarethaig@boltblue.com

if you would like to attend

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

A service in honour of these Saints has been specially composed for us for this occasion

### HOLY LITURGY

ST FURSEY'S  
Saturday 6 March  
11.00 am

CLACTON  
Saturday 20 March  
10.00 am

## St Theodore Icon Calendar 2010

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### St Helen's Chapel, Maidenburgh St, High St

St Helen's is 200m. down 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

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Readers:

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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

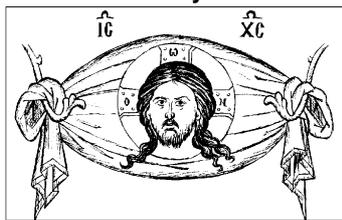
At University of Essex Chaplaincy Centre: Divine Liturgy: one Saturday per term 10.00 am

## The People Column

**BETTY CROWE** was a good friend to our church, living in the bungalow opposite St Helen's. Though pretty well confined to her home, especially in more recent years, she would keep an eye on the building and report anything untoward. Her great help was that when we received the wonderful gift of the Relic of St Helen from His Grace Bishop BASIL of Wichita. We did not immediately place it in the church, but took it to Betty's house overnight where she looked after it. Next day, in the presence of His Worship the Mayor, Councillor Dr CHRIS HALL, we went over to Betty's to collect it and then carried it in solemn procession to St Helen's. - Sadly, Betty died recently in hospital, after years of suffering and ill-health, from which she is well delivered. I have remembered her at the Holy Altar as a benefactor of this church.

**JULIA SEALEY** of Maidenburgh Street has also been a friend of St Helen's. She and her husband Dr PAUL presented us with an icon from Crete, which they loved to visit. She had cancer a few years ago and sadly it returned. She faced up to it bravely and openly, and died the day before Betty. Her funeral was a memorable one, with her horse-drawn hearse proceeding down the High Street. Paul is at the Museum Department and Julia also worked for the Council.

**We shall miss our two neighbours, Betty and Julia, and assure those who mourn them of our care and concern. Memory eternal!**



### A Word from the Fathers

**H**ow great the Cross! What blessings it holds! He who possesses it possesses a treasure. More noble, more precious than anything on earth, in fact and in name, it is indeed a treasure, for in it and through it and for it all the riches of our salvation were stored away and restored for us.

If there had been no Cross, Christ would not have been crucified. If there had been no Cross, Life would not have been nailed to the tree. If he had not been nailed, the streams of everlasting life would not have welled up from his side, blood and water, the cleansing of the world; the record of our sins would not have been cancelled, we would not have gained freedom, we would not have enjoyed the tree of life, paradise would not have been opened, If there had been no Cross, death would not have been trodden underfoot, the underworld would not have yielded up its spoils.

How great the Cross, through which we have received a multitude of blessings, because, against all reckoning, the miracles and sufferings of Christ have been victorious! How precious, the means of God's suffering, and his trophy of victory! On it of his own will he suffered death. On it he won his victory, wounding the devil, and conquering death, and shattering the bars of the underworld. The Cross has become the common salvation of the whole world.

*St Andrew of Crete (660-740)*



**THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE VIRGIN**  
The Angel Gabriel announces the Good News to Mary of God's Birth among men. Mary receives it with joy and humility, and by her 'Yes' joins heaven and earth.  
**Thursday 25 Mar 6.00 pm H Liturgy**

### This Parish is now Registered Charity 1134418!

It has taken a long, long time, but we have now become fully registered as a charity. In recent months the Church Council has worked hard on the matter, dealing with one draft after another. That, in fact, followed several goes at it over the years.

DAVID DAVIES has been the one dealing with the Charity Commission, and we should be very grateful to him. One thing to result from this will be that we shall be able to claim back tax from your gifts. Watch out for details.

### Meet your local Saints

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

#### 4. St Dunstan

St Dunstan was Bishop of London - and so our Bishop here - for only one year, 959-960. Then he was made Archbishop of Canterbury - and so 'our' Archbishop - and such he remained for 27 years. He was the greatest Archbishop of the ninth century, and wielded a great influence in the country, being chief adviser to the King, Edgar. He crowned him in Bath Abbey in 973, and was not afraid to rebuke him for his sins. He supported the next king, young Edward, who was treacherously killed and is venerated as a Martyr.

He came from a family close to royalty, born at Baltonsborough near Glastonbury in Somerset, at which Monastery he was educated and later became Abbot. At times he lived as a hermit.

There is little doubt that he would have visited at least some of his churches and Monasteries in Essex, being so near his Cathedral of St Paul.

He restored Holy Monasteries destroyed by the Danes, including Barking, and reformed others, introducing the Benedictine Rule widely. Having rebuked and reformed King Edgar, he reformed and tightened up the discipline of the whole Church in England.

He died in 988, and was buried in Canterbury cathedral. Feast-day: 19 May.

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

## Here and There

**WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER:** Women are invited to this annual ecumenical occasion, this year on Friday 5 March in St James' Church, East Hill at 10.15 am.

**MANNINGTREE CHURCHES** have invited me to speak to them, in their Lent series, on Wednesday 10 March about the Orthodox faith.

**CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING:** The first ordinary meeting of the new Council will be on Sunday 7 March at 1.00 pm.

**CHURCHES TOGETHER:** This body in Central Colchester brings together the clergy and lay representatives from the various churches. We are an 'Observer' member, and our lay rep is MARY MORRIS. There are now two other bodies which cover some of the same ground as CTCC: these are 'Seeking God's Blessing for Colchester' and 'Hope'. Most of the churches are represented on them, though not St Helen's. At its AGM recently the CTCC agreed that it was not at the moment really fulfilling much of a purpose and has decided not to meet for one year, until the AGM in 2011, and possibly then not again until the following year. This gives members of CTCC time to rethink its position and purpose. The clergy will continue to meet regularly in the Fraternal, so there will still be contact between the churches.

**IONA** is a most beautiful island on the west coast of Scotland where, for many, heaven comes down to earth. It has ever been so, at least since St Columba settled there in the sixth century and made it not only beautiful but holy. Reader IGNATIUS BACON, who lives in Fort William, and others, have the vision of (in time) an Orthodox Monastery there. In the meanwhile, with the blessing of Metropolitan KALLISTOS, he has arranged for *anybody* to stay in a cottage there for a life of Orthodox prayer any time this 31 March-28 April, repeating an experiment that he successfully tried last year. I have visited Iona on several occasions, and have actually stayed on the island for a few days a couple of times. It is well worth it, if you can make it.

More details from me, and look at the website:

[www.iona-orthodox-retreats.org.uk](http://www.iona-orthodox-retreats.org.uk)

The following is a prophecy attributed to St Columba, whom we honour as an Orthodox Saint:

**Iona of my heart, Iona of my love,  
Instead of monks' voices shall be the lowing of cattle;  
But ere the world shall come to an end,  
Iona shall be as it was.**

### MARCH DAYS

Mon	1	S David of Wales
Tue	2	S Nicholas Planas of Athens
Sat	6	Memorial Saturday, Discovery of Precious Cross & Nails by S Helen
Sun	7	<b>Lent 3, Veneration of the Cross</b>
Mon	8	S Felix, Enlightener of East Anglia
Tue	9	Forty Martyrs of Sebaste
Fri	12	S Gregory the Great, the Dialogist
Sat	13	Memorial Saturday
Sun	14	<b>Lent 4, S John Climacus</b>
Mon	15	Apostle Aristobulus of the 70, Apostle of Britain
Tue	16	S Christodoulos of Patmos
Wed	17	S Withburga, Solitary at Holkham & Dereham S Patrick, Apostle of Ireland
Thu	18	S Edward the Martyr, King of England
Sat	20	Saturday of the Akathist of the Theotokos
Sun	21	<b>Lent 5, S Mary of Egypt</b>
Thu	25	<b>ANNUNCIATION OF THE HOLY THEOTOKOS</b>
Fri	26	Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel
Sat	27	<b>LAZARUS SATURDAY</b>
Sun	29	<b>ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM</b>
Mon	29	<b>GREAT &amp; HOLY MONDAY</b>
Tue	30	<b>GREAT &amp; HOLY TUESDAY</b>
Wed	31	<b>GREAT &amp; HOLY WEDNESDAY</b>

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