

+ Orthodox Christians go on pilgrimages to the Saints, and meet Christ +

**Orthodox Parish of
St Helen of Colchester**
Antiochian Orthodox Deanery of the UK & Ireland
NEWSLETTER 199



WEEKDAY LITURGIES

Tuesday 4 June 9.30 am
SS Martha and Mary,
Sisters of St Lazarus

Thursday 13 June 9.30 am
ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

Thursday 20 June 9.30 am
S Nicholas Cabasilas

Tuesday 25 June 9.30 am
Third Day of the Trinity

SS Peter & Paul will be observed on Sunday 30 June

Our future holiness is revealed in the events we celebrate in the season of Holy Pascha

There is a magnificent *flow* in the season of Pascha, which leads after forty days to the Ascension, and after fifty to Pentecost. Then there is in a sense a grand finale to the whole procession of feasts - All Saints Day.

Ascension marks the last day of Christ's being *seen* alive after his Resurrection. But it has a rich meaning in that it is understood as the day when returns to his Father in triumph, when he promises the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the coming of the Kingdom, when he gives us the assurance that he will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead at the end of time, the *eschatos*, the last day of this world.

Pentecost follows swiftly, the fiftieth day. The power of God comes fully on the newborn Church, the world is turned upside down and inside out by the work of God.

In that Day of Pentecost (50th day) is revealed God as Three and God as One. The Third Person of the Holy Trinity has always been at work in the continuing work of Creation and more recently in the Person and Life of Christ. But the Holy Spirit has been unseen, hardly recognised until this point.

Now on Pentecost he is himself at last absolutely and wholly and clearly revealed. God shows us himself, One Holy God in Three Persons. We understand Pentecost not only as the feast of the Holy Spirit, but also as the feast of the Holy Trinity.



St Andrei Rublev's sublime icon is derived from the story of Abraham entertaining God unawares (Genesis 18). It is known as The Old Testament Trinity.

All Saints then comes along, a week after Pentecost. This day becomes in a real sense the climax of the whole cycle. It is the conclusion of the whole series of events.

On this day we celebrate our faith that the whole Revelation of God the Holy Trinity is for one purpose. The Revelation of the Christian faith is made to make Saints of you and me.

In other words, Christ has seen our wretched condition. He knows we can do nothing to become what we really are, his

own creation, made in his image. He has had pity on us, come down to us. He makes us Saints, makes us holy. He takes us to heaven with him.

Glory to God who makes of us what we cannot make of ourselves. He will yet make a Saint of you, my friend. There is even hope for me.

God bless you all.

Father Alexander

**Pilgrimage
in honour of
ST BOTOLPH
OF IKEN**



Saturday 29 June

Depart St Helen's 10.30 am
Molieben 12 noon
Bring packed lunch.
Sign the list in the Poreh

Iken is 40 miles away in Suffolk, beyond Woodbridge, towards Aldeburgh. It is the ancient place 'Icanho' mentioned by St Bede, and it was there that St Botolph settled in the 7th century and lived the angelic life on a lovely spur of land sticking out above the River Alde. His influence was wide over East Anglia and Lincolnshire. Lunch will be taken in the local churchwarden's extensive gardens. The Pilgrimage is organised by the Orthodox Parish at Mettingham.



GREAT AND HOLY WEEK was as lovely as ever. There were some 270 at Easter Night, a record number accounted for by the fact that it was term-time at the University of Essex. Our thanks to all those who cleaned the church before the feast, or did other jobs, including singing, serving on the altar, and flower-arranging.

**HOLY LITURGY
CLACTON
Saturday
15 June
10.00 am**

The Cross this year had a garland rather than a crown, and it and the Epitaphion were both beautiful.



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 Balcerne 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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Churchwardens: David Davies 01-473-745-167 Dusan Radunovic 01-206-710-073

The Parish of St Helen is Registered Charity No. 1134418

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

At St James Anglican Church, Beatrice Rd, Clacton-on-sea CO15 1LE
Divine Liturgy: usually third Saturday 10.00 am

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



St Alban, First Martyr of Britain

My earliest childhood was at an Anglican church dedicated to St Alban in Harrow, north-west London, 15 miles from the site of where he was martyred in Roman times, between the early-3rd and early-4th century.

So I have had a life-long devotion to him. I well remember as a choir-boy being present, about 1948, when a statue to the Saint was dedicated in my church.

St Alban is called *Protomartyr of Britain*, the first to give his life for Christ in this land - though Greek tradition is that the Holy Apostle Simon Zelotes of the Twelve had also died here in the first century.

He was a Roman citizen and pagan when he gave shelter to a Christian priest during a persecution, but the priest's holiness and teaching converted him.

Soldiers came to arrest the priest, and Alban donned the priest's clothes to allow him to escape.

He was taken before the governor in the nearby Roman city of Verulamium, the ruins of which you can still visit. Condemned to death, he was taken across the river and up the hill to be beheaded. Miracles occurred on the way. In iconography he is often shown as a soldier - though probably not one, except in the sense of being a soldier for Christ.

The British honoured him as a Martyr, and centuries later the Saxons, not long converted to Christ, founded a holy monastery on the site of his martyrdom, in the city we call St Albans in Hertfordshire, just outside the M25 round London, and today you can see a magnificent mediaeval church where his relics were enshrined. The relics were tragically removed at the Reformation, but in recent years a relic was given (by a Catholic church in Germany), so again it is possible to venerate him there. **Feast: 22 June.**

Here and There

THE FOURTH PILGRIMAGE TO BARKING was another very happy, fulfilling occasion. There were some 29 pilgrims, and we were greeted by the new Vicar of Barking, Bishop Trevor. MARGARET HAIG again organised the day, and brought a group by cable car and foot from the site of St Alphege's martyrdom in Greenwich. We started with a Molieben to the Saints and Sprinkling, and then picnicked in the hall. We visited the Holy Cross in its chapel, and had a talk (on the history of monasticism from the beginnings in Egypt past Barking in the mid-7th century). Vespers and Anointing concluded the proceedings, Tea rounded it all off. As usual, Fr ALEXANDER TEFFT and people from St Botolph's parish in London and All Saints in Basildon joined with us, and there were a few from other places. My disappointment was that only Khouria HILARY and I made it from Colchester.

'ROMAN' FUND: Thank you! - Amazingly, I received £528.00 to fund Roman Gavrilo's mother's flight here and the bringing of his body for burial in Colchester. I have £258.00 left, and hope to get something suitable for the church; when chosen I will inform you of it.

The People Column

ROULA WEBB from Greece was actually 'Argyro'. She had lived very many years in England, and sadly has now died, aged 84. I was very fond of her, and she liked to talk of her difficult childhood in occupied Athens in World War II. While not a frequent church-goer, she was deeply Orthodox, and received the Holy Gifts and was anointed a few days before she died. Her funeral was in St Helen's, with burial in Colchester Cemetery. Our deepest sympathy to her four children, eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. I shall miss her: memory eternal!

ALEXANDER MILJKOVIC, an Orthodox from Croatia, came all the way from Ealing, west London, for our English-language Easter-night service. He joined us for breakfast after the Liturgy, slept a few hours in our armchair, and slipped away quietly for the first train to Town. Such devotion!

TATYANA NARCHAYEVA, a Russian from Kazakstan, studied for her human rights MA here in 2008, and her auburn hair lit up our dark winters. Having gone off to settle in Canada, she returned to visit us for the first time recently. It was good to see her and catch up on her work, now in research.

US President Obama greets the Orthodox of USA and the world at Pascha

This message, dated May 4, 2013, is significant in that perhaps for the first time it shows a western leader acknowledging the plight of Orthodox Christians in Syria and the Middle East.

This weekend, Michelle and I extend our best wishes to members of the Orthodox Christian community here in America and around the world as they observe Holy Friday and the Feast of the Resurrection.

For millions of Orthodox Christians, this is a joyful time. But it's also a reminder of the sacrifice Christ made so that we might have eternal life. His decision to choose love in the face of hate; hope in the face of despair is an example we should always strive to follow.



At the time of going to press there is no reliable word of the beloved and kidnapped Archbishop Paul of Aleppo (left) or his companion. We in Colchester know him personally: for he served here in 2002.

But it's especially important to remember this year, as members of the Orthodox community have been confronted with persecution and violence, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa. For centuries, the region and the world has been enriched by the contributions of Orthodox communities in countries like Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq.

As a nation, we reaffirm our commitment to protecting universal human rights including the freedom of religion.

And in this season of hope and restoration, we celebrate the transformational power of sacrificial love.

JUNE DAYS

Sat 1	S Justin Martyr
Sun 2	Pascha 5, Fathers of Second Council, Holy Patriarchs of Constantinople, The Samaritan Woman
Tue 4	SS Martha & Mary, Sisters of Lazarus
Wed 5	Hieromartyr Boniface of Crediton, Abp of Mainz
Sun 9	Pascha 6, The Blind Man, S Columba of Iona, Enlightener of Scotland
Tue 11	H Apostles Bartholomew & Barnabas
Wed 12	Leave-taking of Pascha
Thu 13	ASCENSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
Fri 14	Holy Prophet Elisha, S Justin Popovich of Celije
Sat 15	H Prophet Amos, S Jerome, S Lazarus of Serbia
Sun 16	Pascha 7, Fathers of First Council
Mon 17	S Botolph of Iken, S Nectan of Hartland, Martyr
Wed 19	H Apostle Jude, Brother of the Lord
Thu 20	S Nicholas Cabasilas
Sat 22	S Alban, Protomartyr of Britain
Sun 23	HOLY PENTECOST, S Etheldreda of Ely, S Mark, Archbishop of Ephesus
Mon 24	Day of the Holy Spirit Nativity of S John, Forerunner & Baptist
Tue 25	Third Day of the Trinity
Thu 27	S Joanna the Myrrh-bearer, S Austell, Hermit of Cornwall
Sat 29	Holy Chiefs of the Apostles Peter & Paul
Sun 30	Pentecost 1, All Saints, Synaxis of the Twelve Apostles

A fuller list of the month's Feasts and Fasts is available in church

A Word from the Fathers: the Ascension of Christ our God

Today Jesus Christ our Lord went up to heaven: let our hearts go up with him....

Just as he ascended without leaving us, so too we are already with him in heaven, although his promises have not yet been fulfilled in our bodies.

Christ is now raised above the heavens; but he still experiences on earth whatever sufferings we his members feel. He showed that this is true when he called out from heaven, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' and, 'I was thirsty and you gave me no drink.'

Why then do we not exert ourselves on earth so as to be happy with him already in heaven through the faith, hope, and charity which unite

us with him?

Christ, while in heaven, is also with us, and we while on earth are also with him. He is with us in his godhead and his power and his love. And we - though we cannot be with him in godhead as he is with us - can be with him in our love, our love for him.

He did not leave heaven when he came down to us from heaven; and he did not leave us when he ascended to heaven again.

His own words show that he was in heaven while he was here: 'No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven.'

St Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (354-430)