

Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Antiochian Orthodox Deanery of the UK & Ireland
NEWSLETTER 202 OCTOBER 2013



OCTOBER WEEKDAYS AT ST HELEN'S
Holy Liturgy at 9.30 am

Thursday 3rd	ST DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE, SECOND BISHOP OF ATHENS
Wednesday 9th	HOLY APOSTLE JAMES, SON OF ALPHEUS
Friday 18th	HOLY APOSTLE & EVANGELIST LUKE

Church objects stolen - but found in shopping bags on the street



Colchester resident DAVID CONSTABLE, pictured here, called recently to receive my personal thanks on behalf of all our people for finding sacred items stolen from St Helen's, and handing them in at the Police Station.

They had been stolen on 11 September, the very day I had left for Serbia. Stelios Papakonstantinou had discovered the break into the Altar, and Khouria Hilary had to deal with the problem. She was much aided by Reader Andreas.

Chalices, patens, and other items were taken, and especially the Holy Relic of St Helen.

It was a traumatic moment, conveyed to me in Serbia via a text-message from our daughter Margaret in London.

Thanks to God, everything seems to have come back, and all undamaged.

All were found by David in a couple of plastic bags in a town centre street. I thanked him very sincerely and assured him we would remember him among our benefactors.

It was lovely to discover that years ago David was a choirboy and altar-server at St Paul's Church. That 19th century building near the railway station was where this parish first worshipped when we started in 1996 - sadly, it had to be demolished soon after that.

What is 'human nature' ? - Anglicans and Orthodox discuss basic questions

Our God values Man - human-kind, you and me - so much that he became one of us in Jesus Christ. Man must be of eternal value!

It is important that we have the right understanding of what Man is, of what human nature is, of how humanity is like or unlike God. Of how it differs from animals and the rest of creation.

These things are as important as ever in our times, for science is pushing knowledge of this world forward in an unprecedented way.

Questions of how mankind should treat and respect itself, of what we can and should do to our bodies and souls, of our duty to the world around us.

Mankind seems to have so much physical and moral power over its members in the 21st century, that we must try to come to an agreed assessment of ourselves.

It is questions like this that the *International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue* has been grappling with in its sessions since 2007.

We are guests alternately of the Anglican and Orthodox churches. This year we met in Novi Sad, Serbia 4-11 September, at the invitation of the Serbian Church.

We had a really warm welcome from them, organised by our Serbian representative Dr Bogdan Lubardic, Professor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Theology in Belgrade University.

The local Bishop of Backa, His Grace Irenej, met and addressed us several times. At one point he was asked to speak of Bishop St Nicolas Velimirovic (famous compiler of the Prologue of Ohrid) and of St Justin Popovic, who suffered under the communists. St Justin was spiritual father to Bishop Irenej.

We also met Their Graces Bishops David of Krushevac and (at Sremski Karlovic) Vasilije of Srem.

We stayed and conferred together in probably the best hotel in town, and were taken out to dinner twice in restaurants by the River Danube. At one of these we were treated to a Serbian band and dancers. We were glad to see the bridges restored after NATO bombed them in our name in 1999.

We attended Vespers in two Orthodox churches and the Orthodox Bishops and Priests concelebrated the Holy Liturgy in the ancient Monastery of Kovilij, along with the Bishop-Abbot Porfirije, who (so I discovered, when I got home) is spiritual father to our Churchwarden Dusan Radunovic.

His Holiness Patriarch Irenej was unable to greet us directly as he was addressing the United Nations in New York, but he sent a representative, His Grace Bishop Andrei.

As for our work itself, it continued relentlessly through five days of discussion, getting to grips with producing a *Report* in year or two's time.

Sadly therefore I had no chance of visiting Serbia more widely. How I should love to have seen Belgrade and especially the city of Nis - which disputes Colchester's claim to be the birth-place of St Constantine the Great, claiming that distinction for itself - and (I have to admit) probably winning the argument!

One day it would be good to return. But I already know of the kindness and open friendship of the Serbian people, and of their deep devotion to our Holy Orthodox Faith.

It was a good trip in every way, a blessing to me, but a long-term blessing also, I pray, to relations between Holy Orthodoxy and the Anglican tradition.

I do not suppose my Anglican friends will agree, but as far as I am concerned, the Anglican tradition needs, most of all, the regaining of its former closeness to Orthodoxy - increasingly close to it from the 16th century Reformation, but an inheritance sadly thrown away in the past thirty or forty years.

The present talks are not held in any expectation of the two bodies being united. But they do sometimes express a considerable unity of belief.

May God enlighten the eyes of all of us, and bring us to union with him in heaven.

Father Alexander

CLACTON
Saturday
26 October
10.00 am
HOLY LITURGY
NOTE DATE

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 Balkerne 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: parishpriest@orthodoxcolchester.org.uk
Rdr Andreas Moran, 6 Woodlands, Welshwood Park CO4 3JA Tel: 01-206-865-697

Rdr Alexander Haig Jnr, detached service in Winchester parish
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

Parish sends over £800 to help Syria

Last month we asked you to support the ANTIOCHIAN SOLIDARITY APPEAL issued by His Beatitude Patriarch John X and the Holy Synod of Antioch for humanitarian support in the war-stricken land of Syria.

Antiochian Solidarity Day was Sunday 15 September, and a few extra gifts came the following week.

In total you gave £811.30, including one or two larger donations. It has gone off to the Deanery who will send one cheque from all the parishes.

Since then one or two more gifts were made.

Thank you to all who gave, and congratulations.

The words of Christ:

Inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these by brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Crisis for Christians in Syria

ARCHBISHOP PAUL OF ALEPPO, is a real friend of this parish. He served the Holy Liturgy here in 2002. He brought a remarkable peace with him, and a loving quiet joy.

Sadly, he remains in captivity after some five or six months, along with the Archbishop JOHN. (In their own land they are called respectively Boulos and Yohunna.)

Archbishop Paul is of course Greek Orthodox, but Archbishop John is Syrian Orthodox - from them we have been separated since the fifth century, but the two sides are much more friendly and close today than in the past.

Please keep these two Bishops in your prayers. Yes, it is true: they may have been killed, but if alive our prayer for them, and our continual remembrance of them, will sustain them.

It seems that not a word has been heard of them since their kidnapping. No demand for a ransom. No suggestion of their being exchanged for rebel fighters.

Their captors are most likely blood-thirsty Islamists fighting to extend the power of militant Islam in the Middle East. This is sad because Muslims and Christians have lived side-by-side in those areas for centuries, largely at peace and accepting of each other.

'Islamists' want to force their interpretation of Islam (not accepted by any means by all Muslims) on whole populations throughout the region - Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Pakistan,

These fanatics are trying to drive out all Christians and all signs of Christianity in these countries. That is one of the prime purposes of their fighting.

The ancestors of probably most Muslims in Syria and Egypt were, at earlier periods, Christians. Muslim forces in the sixth and succeeding centuries compelled the populations they conquered to convert to Islam. If they would not convert, the conquerors punitively taxed the Christians and made them second-class citizens.

But though President Assad of Syria and his father may have been dictators,



yet they have kept the peace for Christians and other minorities, and secured their lives and rights in the midst of a much larger Muslim population.

We in the West should deeply respect the minority who do remain faithful to Christ, making the sign of the Holy Cross to this day.

Pray indeed for the many suffering for their Christian faith in a considerable number of countries in Asia and Africa, in the face of hostility and worse. They are our brothers in faith.

And keep on praying for our dear Archbishop Paul.

A Word from the Fathers

Happy the prison which your presence illuminates! Happy the prison which despatches the men of God to heaven! The darkness of this prison is brighter than the sun, it is more brilliant than this world's light. Here your bodies have now become temples of God, sanctified by your profession of faith. Let there be nothing in your hearts and minds now except God's words. It is by these that the Holy Spirit has all along strengthened you for suffering. Let no one think of death, but rather of immortality. Do not think of the passing pain, but of everlasting glory, as it is written, 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful.'

- St Cyprian of Carthage

Here and There

NATIONAL HERITAGE DAY: The number of visitors was: Saturday 152; Sunday afternoon 67. This gives a total of 219 adults and children coming into St Helen's. This number can only be claimed as *approximate*, but it shows the value of cooperating in this town-wide and indeed nation-wide event. For two days buildings all over the country are opened freely to their local residents and others who like to take advantage, giving real opportunity for citizens and their children to get to know their own heritage. In our case, it also gives us opportunity to spread awareness of the Holy Orthodox Faith.

FELLOWSHIP OF ST ALBAN & ST SERGIUS: The local branch will have *no meetings before Christmas*, but it is hoped to resume them in 2014. The Fellowship draws together Orthodox believers and Western Christians - Catholics, Anglicans, and Protestants. If you have suggestions for subjects of meetings or particular speakers, please let us know.

BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLORS: St Helena Hospice is looking for people willing to be trained for bereavement counselling. Details on our noticeboard.

FOOD-BANKS are increasing in number throughout the country. Though there are some criticisms that they encourage a sense of dependency, yet they are clearly serving a purpose for numerous hard-up families. You can leave bags of goods in the box in our porch. We take it along to the collection point. The organisers ask for non-perishable food.

IN SERBIA I was able to buy a whole box of icon prints for the central icon stand, substantially increasing our coverage, and also a new hat—a nice *Serbian* one of course, though not very different from the ones I already have, made for me by a marvellous 'hatter' who is unfortunately no longer able to make them.

SERVERS: I very much need some men to assist me on the Holy Altar. Could you volunteer?

BAKERS: Likewise Khouria Hilary much needs more bakers of Church bread. In both these matters of course, appropriate training is given.

SOMEBODY TO SEW - usually little jobs on vestments - is also needed, please.

OCTOBER DAYS

Tue 1	Protection of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos
Wed 2	Martyrs Cyprian, Justina, & Theoctistus of Nicomedia
Thu 3	Hieromartyr Dionysius the Areopagite
Sun 6	Pentecost 15, Holy Apostle Thomas
Mon 7	Martyr Osyth, Queen of Essex & Nun, Foundress of the Monastery at Chich (St Osyth) Virgin-Martyr Pelagia of Tarsus
Wed 9	Holy Apostle James, son of Alphaeus
Thu 10	St Paulinus, Bishop of York
Fri 11	Holy Apostle Philip of the Seventy S Ethelburga, Foundress of Barking Abbey
Sat 12	S Edwin, King & Martyr, S Wilfred, Bishop of York, S Simeon the New Theologian
Sun 13	Pentecost 16, Fathers of the Seventh Council
Mon 14	S Paraskeva the Younger whose relics lie at Iasi
Wed 16	Appearance of S Michael the Archangel at Mont S Michel
Thu 17	Relics of S Lazarus of the Four Days, Bp of Kition
Fri 18	Holy Apostle & Evangelist Luke
Sat 19	S Demetrius Commemoration of the Dead, S John of Kronstadt, S Frideswide of Oxford
Sun 20	Pentecost 17, S Gerasimus the New Ascetic of Cephalonia
Wed 23	Holy Apostle James, Lord's brother
Sat 26	Glorious Gt Martyr Demetrius the Myrrh-flowing
Sun 27	Pentecost 18
Mon 28	Great Martyr Parasceva of Iconium

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