

+ + Spend a Good Lent, make it a really GREAT LENT ! + +

**Orthodox Parish of  
St Helen of Colchester**  
*Antiochian Archdiocese of the BI & Ireland*  
**NEWSLETTER 207**      **MARCH 2014**



# Enjoy your Fast!

It may sound a little odd, *Enjoy your Fast*, but it is right! Lent is not meant to be miserable, with me making myself and everyone around me dreadfully uptight - and actually indulging not only in self-pity but also in self-righteousness.

Indeed those around us should be unaware, as far as we can make it, of our depriving ourselves of the delights of the flesh which are entirely appropriate at other times.

So Lent, the Great Fast, is meant to be *enjoyable* - it brings us closer to Christ, in preparation for the celebration of his holy Death and Resurrection at Easter. It becomes a Way to Christ, an opening up to his mercy and truth and joy.

As an Orthodox Christian during Lent I should perform the following spiritual, ascetic, practices:

- fast from food (and couples, if possible, by mutual agreement, from sexual activity) as directed by the Church (take a leaflet from church with the rules, and if necessary ask advice from the Priest),

- review my life and confess my sins to the Priest, and have them forgiven in Holy Absolution,
- pray more regularly, more fully, more deeply,
- receive the Holy Gifts, receiving Christ our God into the very fabric of my being, body and soul.

It is also a good thing to do some spiritual reading—the Holy Bible, the Fathers, Orthodox spiritual writers.

Saturdays and Sundays are a slight relaxation of the fast period every week.

**This holy season should become a real preparation for Holy Pascha. It is the fast before the feast, the Great Fast before the Queen of Feasts.**

**God bless you in your exercise in asceticism, your attempts to discipline yourself according to the mind of Christ.**

*Father Alexander*

## No more Mattins? - our need of a Reader or a team

Mattins, the Prayer of the Morning or Dawn (Greeks call it *Orthros*, Dawn) is a most beautiful and poignant service of prayer, full of wonderful teaching.

We only have it on Sundays, when it is full of the confident, strong teaching of the Church that the focus of our faith is Christ and his Resurrection.

At first my family kept it running, but when left alone it began to be too much for Khouria Hilary. Reader Andreas then joined us, so that for several years we have been able to do Mattins capably almost every Sunday again.

Now, however, for health reasons, Andreas has had to give up that part of his duties.

This means we have had to 'drop' Mattins and just have Hours. It is very sad, but of course, *We're all getting older!* and we have to be realistic as to what we can manage.

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

**Are there any men in the congregation who could train to become a Reader**

**like Andreas? For the moment Andreas is able to continue as Reader at Vespers and Liturgy, so we are looking for a man to take on Mattins.**

Or, possibly, could there be a group of men or women who commit themselves to attend at 9.45 am on a rota basis, to read the psalms and other parts of the service? They will have to be able to read fluently, and not too slowly, in English.

Please speak with me, if you feel a call to offer yourself.

It is so important for the life of the Parish and the proper offering of worship here.

**How about offering yourself to God the Lord? - You will receive in return the many blessings God wishes to pour out on those who serve him in his holy Temple.**

## + LENT SERVICES +

- SUNDAYS -

10.15 am Hours & Liturgy of St Basil

- WEDNESDAYS except 26 March -

9.30 am Liturgy of the Presanctified

- FRIDAYS -

6.00 pm Akathist of the Mother of God

**ANNUNCIATION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD**

Tuesday 25 March

9.30 am Holy Liturgy of St John

You should make your Confession before Pascha



The Annunciation is the occasion when the Angel Gabriel came to the Holy Virgin to say that God wanted her to bear God's own Son. Only by the agreement of Mary herself did that come about: *Be it unto me according to thy word.* God forces his will on no-one. We are free to reject God's will—and sadly we often do! But those who accept God's will and work with him (from Greek: *synergy*; from Latin: *co-operation*) receive all the many blessings he wishes to pour out on us. It brings joy to the individual and salvation to those around. That is why all generations call her blessed.

## 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: parishpriest@orthodoxcolchester.org.uk

Rdr Andreas Moran, 6 Woodlands, Welshwood Park CO4 3JA Tel: 01-206-865-697

Rdr Alexander Haig Jr, 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 EC15 1LE  
Divine Liturgy: usually third Saturday 10.00 am

## The People Column

**MARIA MIHAELA STEFANUT** has returned to Romania after several years here. She lived at first in Lawford at Manningtree, but in the past couple of years moved to Highwoods in Colchester. We are very grateful for her generous cleaning of the church carpets several times, and for her membership of the Choir. We shall miss her very much and hope she settles in her home country again. Many years!

### **COSTA & MARION GEORGIADIS,**

Formerly here in Colchester, with their family moved first to Rutland and then to Stamford, Lincs, but continued to regard this as their home parish. Now we are delighted to hear that they have joined the Lincoln parish, where Fr Philip and Fr George are the Priests. Costa runs an Orthodox website, containing a lot of teaching and spiritual help, which you may care to look at:

<http://www.oldenglishchurch.org.uk/>

**ROMAN GAVRILOV** fell asleep in the Lord on **15 March** last year, so his first anniversary falls this month. It is a Saturday and there will be a **Memorial at his grave in Colchester Cemetery at 3.00 pm**, to which all who cared for him are welcome, with tea in our house following.

**MIHAIL & ECATERINA PAVEL**, from Romania, have lived in retirement in Colchester for several years, with their daughter and son-in-law. Now, alas! with their family they have moved away to Greenwich in London. I sent them our good wishes and they have replied:

Thank You very much for your kind message.

We are also sorry to lose St. Helen Church from Colchester, but we hope to go there, when it will be possible. We want to express our gratitude for you, Father, because you were together with us and we received your blessing. We wish You and your family and also all Christians from St. Helen Church, much health and all the best !

## Here and There

**DIOCESAN CONFERENCE:** The first conference is at a lovely centre in beautiful Derbyshire **26-28 May**. Details are in the Porch. I will pay half the cost for each parishioner attending. It is necessary to decide quickly and to book your place. Please speak to me very shortly if you would care to come.

**BARKING PILGRIMAGE:** Please make a note of the date for this important Pilgrimage as always on the **second Saturday of May, 10 May**. This year we are honoured to have His Eminence Metropolitan KALLISTOS of



with the Patriarch of Jerusalem present, and I can recall clearly the Deacon reading the Gospel from the high pulpit and the identical twins who carried the candles in procession, and the feeling that I was sharing in the feast with the local Christians.

**How can I be there tomorrow?** In the Church of the Resurrection (often called the Church of the Holy Sepulchre), I was completely stunned: I had a sudden acknowledgement of all the centuries of faithful who have been there before me. In Gethsemane, in the quiet of the Tomb of the Virgin, I knew that many people will go there after me – have already gone since I was there – and yet my unworthy prayers will still be there.

Of course, we can have these feelings anywhere; the Kingdom of God is outside time and of course all things are possible with Him. But I wanted to share this with you because through all of my time in the Holy Land, I felt a strong connection to St Helen, that she was guiding me on many occasions, along with the Mother of God and the Saints.

After our first visit to the Church of the Resurrection, I knew something was missing. So I went back on another day and explored further and found the statue of St Helen and the spot where she found the True Cross. A weight was lifted from me.

And in Sebastia, where there is a ruined Church that she built commemorating the Beheading of St John the Baptist, I knew St Helen approved as we sang to St John the Baptist, guiding us safely back down the hill along a narrow path.

**St Helen kept me safe, so I bring back this story to you, and the knowledge that I prayed for the parish of St Helen of Colchester in the Holy Land, which I hope resonates there for St Helen and for generations of pilgrims to come.**

Diokleia presiding and giving the address. He is an Englishman, a theologian living in Oxford and highly respected throughout the Orthodox world. A group of younger adults will walk much of the way from the Tower of London, led by Fr PHILIP HALL, Parish Priest in Lincoln. The Pilgrimage begins at 12.30 pm, and finishes at 4.40 pm. We will arrange transport: watch out for details. Please support his if you possibly can.

## Time in the Holy Land

Time is a strange and elastic thing. If I had to say when I was in the Holy Land, last month, yesterday and tomorrow would all be true, in some sense. Last month, I went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in a group of 16 people from across the UK. We stayed close to Jerusalem in the Tantur Institute and visited the beautiful Judean Wilderness (Mar Saba monastery, pictured), the key sites in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, the windy hill tops of Samaria and the touristy Dead Sea.

But it feels like yesterday, too. We stood in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem on Old Calendar Christmas Eve for the Holy Liturgy, being jostled by the sheer number of pilgrims,



### MARCH DAYS

Sat 1	Commemoration of All Monks and Nuns, S David of Wales
Sun 2	Sunday of Cheesefare, Forgiveness Sunday
Mon 3	First Day of Lent, the Great Fast
Tue 4	S Gerasimus of the Jordan
Wed 5	S Mark the Ascetic
Thu 6	Discovery of the Precious Cross and Precious Nails by S Helen in Jerusalem
Sat 8	Commemoration of S Theodore the Recruit S Felix, Enlightener of East Anglia, Bp of Dunwich
Sun 9	Lent 1, Sunday of Orthodoxy, Forty Martyrs of Sebaste
Tue 11	S Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem
Wed 12	S Gregory the Dialogist, Pope of Rome
Thu 13	S Gerald of Mayo, Abbot
Fri 14	S Benedict of Nursia,
Sat 15	Memorial Saturday, Apostle Aristobulus of the Seventy, Bishop of Britain
Sun 16	Lent 2, S Gregory Palamas
Mon 17	S Patrick, Bishop of Armagh, Apostle of Ireland
Tue 18	S Edward the Martyr, King of England S Nicolai (Velimirovich), Bishop of Zhica
Thu 20	S Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, Bishop Fathers slain at the Monastery of Mar Sabbas
Sat 22	Memorial Saturday
Sun 23	Lent 3, Veneration of the Cross
Tue 25	ANNUNCIATION TO THE THEOTOKOS
Wed 26	Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel Hieromartyr Irenaeus, Bishop of Sirmium in Hungary
Sat 29	Memorial Saturday
Sun 30	Lent 4, S John Climacus of Sinai
Mon 31	S Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow, Apostle to the Americas

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

### A Word from the Fathers: St Clement of Rome (d. 100) to the Corinthians

All those ministers of the grace of God [the prophets] have spoken through the Holy Spirit of repentance. The very Lord of all himself has spoken of it....: Say to the children of my people, Though your sins may stretch from earth to heaven, and though they may be redder than scarlet and blacker than sackcloth, yet if you turn wholeheartedly to me and say 'Father, I will listen to you as I would to a people that was holy. Thus by his own almighty will he has confirmed his desire that repentance should be open to every one of his beloved. Let us bow, then, to that sovereign and glorious will. Let us entreat his mercy and goodness, casting ourselves upon his compassion and wasting no more energy in quarrels and a rivalry which only ends in death. My brothers, do let us have a little humility; let us forget our self-assertion and braggadocio and stupid quarrelling, and do what the Scriptures tell us instead.