

Christ is risen! Christos anesti! Christos voskrese! Hristos a inviat! Al Massiah qam!

**Orthodox Parish of
St Helen of Colchester**

Antiochian Archdiocese of the BI & Ireland
NEWSLETTER 208 APRIL 2014



**APRIL AT
ST
HELEN'S**

**“Christ is risen” the loudest
cry of the Orthodox Church!**

It certainly is a loud cry—so loud that every year before the midnight feast in advance I ask forgiveness of local residents for our noise—and to date they have been very forgiving!

It is natural that everybody joins in with such enthusiasm at Pascha, Easter night. The theme of the Resurrection of Christ dominates Orthodox teaching. Every Sunday its rhythm beats its way through the services of Vespers, Mattins and Liturgy.

Even on ordinary weekdays the theme is strong in our services—that Christ, God and Man, really entered not only into our *life*, but also into the *death* that we must suffer too....

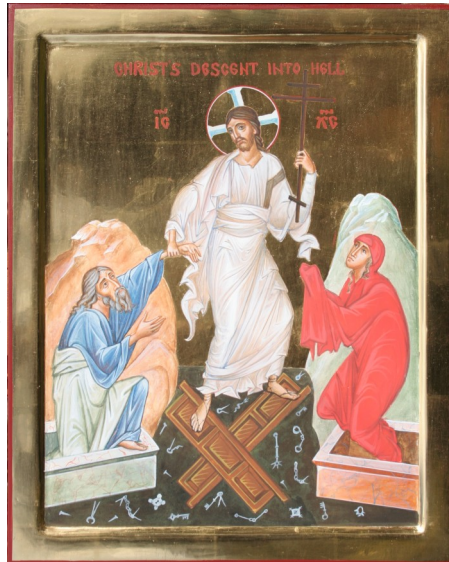
....And—because he has so entered our own personal experience—he can *redeem us* from the tragic tearing apart of soul and body that occurs in the moment of death and which we find so difficult to cope with as human beings.

This is similar to the redeeming that happens if we have to pawn something. The pawnbroker lets us have back what we have sold to him temporarily for money.

In the same way, from Satan who has gained power over us in death, our life is bought back, redeemed, not by our own power, but by the power of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ. He pays the price of our redemption.

This means that like Christ we can return from the grave. Our resurrection will not take place till the end of time, but it will be a real and powerful one *The dead shall arise*, we sing. So we sing and shout out that **Christ is risen**, and it affects every aspect of our Orthodox Christian life.

So often western Christianity seems



to emphasise the *Crucifixion* of Christ so much that His *Resurrection* seems something of an after-thought.

But for Orthodoxy, the Resurrection is at the very heart of our faith, and is projected and promoted at every turn.

So, when death comes to those we love and to us individually, we must look to Christ our God who has suffered death like us—and conquered it. *Death, where is thy sting?*

We are blessed in comparison with those who do not share our faith. We know that Christ has endured it all too, and has provided us with a true way of escape.

He has trampled down death by death, and on those in the tombs he has bestowed life. Our trust is in him.

This is our hope. This is our joy.

Father Alexander

Departed in the hope of the Resurrection

DESPINA JOANNOU: Sadly, GEORGIA JOHNSON has lost of her mother, Despina, grandmother to ANDREW. She has become well-known to us, since for several years she has lived some of her time in Colchester. Born in Cyprus and with not-too-good English, she yet endeared herself to us. She has in fact been in declining health for a long time, and finally died on 13 March, aged 83. In the last few months she had Holy Communion at home. The funeral was at Edmonton, but her 40th day Memorial will be in St Helen's on **Bright Monday 21 April** at noon. Memory eternal!

HOLY LITURGY
CLACTON
Saturday
26 April
(Note date)
10.00 am

METROPOLITAN PHILIP OF NORTH AMERICA died on 19 March after 45 years in post. He did an amazing amount for the Orthodox cause in USA and Canada—and he helped us in Great Britain in the 1990s by encouraging priests to visit us. Memory eternal!

Fifth Wednesday of Lent, 2 April	Holy Presanctified Liturgy	9.30 am
Fifth Friday of Lent, 4 April	Akathist of the Theotokos (full)	6.00 pm
Fifth Saturday of Lent, 5 April	Great Vespers	4.30 pm
Fifth Sunday of Lent, St Mary of Egypt, 6 April	Holy Liturgy of St Basil	10.30 am
Sixth Wednesday of Lent, 9 April	Holy Presanctified Liturgy	9.30 am

GREAT AND HOLY WEEK

Lazarus Saturday, 12 April	Great Vespers	4.30 pm
Palm Sunday, Entry into Jerusalem, 13 April	Hours, with Blessing of Palms	10.15 am
	Holy Liturgy of St John	10.30 am
Great & Holy Monday, 14 April	Bridegroom Mattins	6.00 pm
Great & Holy Tuesday, 15 April	Bridegroom Mattins	6.00 pm
Great & Holy Wednesday, 16 April	Holy Anointing	6.00 pm
Great & Holy Thursday, 17 April	Great Vespers & Holy Liturgy of St Basil	9.30 am
	Mattins of the Twelve Gospels	6.00 pm
Great & Holy Friday, 18 April	Royal Hours	9.00 am
	Great Vespers & Deposition	3.00 pm
	Mattins & Burial Procession	6.00 pm
Great & Holy Saturday, 19 April	Great Vespers & Holy Liturgy of St Basil	9.30 am
	Reading of Acts	10.30 pm
	Midnight Office	11.30 pm
HOLY PASCHA, 20 April	Resurrection Procession & Mattins	12 midnight
	Holy Liturgy of St John	1.00 am (till 2.15)
	<i>No late morning Liturgy, nor Lunch</i>	
	Paschal Vespers	3.00 pm
CONFESSIONS:	After any service or by arrangement	
GIFTS FOR FLOWERS:	To Khouria Hilary	
EPITAPHION FLOWERS:	Women & girls invited to prepare the Epitaphion Holy Friday 9.30 am	

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 Balkeme 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 pattern of Great and Holy Week:

understanding the most important week of the Church year

Great Week is at the heart of the Orthodox year. Everything revolves around it, and each of its days has its own significance.

Lazarus Saturday technically is neither Lent nor Holy Week, but really starts the week. It and Palm Sunday fall as feasts in between the two seasons. It commemorates the coming of Christ to raise Lazarus from death. It prefigures Christ's Resurrection - and ours at the end of time. It did not really take place on the day before Palm Sunday, but was indeed shortly before Christ's own suffering and death, and its celebration at this point reminds us that Christ's sufferings were not a moment of defeat for Christ, but the gateway to his Resurrection.

The Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem is commonly called *Palm Sunday*. It is a second feast-day to declare the *positive* nature of the sufferings of Christ, the events of the next few days. It shows the total humility of Christ our God, and reminds us that the people at that moment welcomed him even if their leaders did not—though they also turned against him within a few days. He goes into Jerusalem and into the Temple where more than anywhere he should have been recognised and welcomed, but was not.

Monday is the **Commemoration of Blessed Joseph the All-Righteous and of the unfruitful fig tree that was cursed by the Lord**. Joseph here is St Joseph of Arimathaea, who tells the Jewish Council that it should not condemn Christ. The cursed fig tree represents the Jewish People of God who should have recognised Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ of God but failed to do so, and so those who have recognised him from all the Gentiles have become God's People.

Tuesday is the **Commemoration of the Parable of the Ten Virgins** - these are the faithful Jews and Christians who have been waiting for the Christ to arrive as the Bridegroom and by the death and Resurrection of Christ enter the feast of union with Christ. The service for these days is called *Bridegroom Mattins*, but is served in the evening.

Wednesday is the **Commemoration of the Sinful Woman who anointed the Lord with myrrh**. She did this, we are told, in advance of his being anointed for burial after his death. The service on Wednesday evening is *Holy Anointing*, which demands penitence for our sins as a Mystery or sacrament of the Church and confers forgiveness. Only the Orthodox faithful may receive this anointing.

Thursday brings us to the central days, thoughts, and experiences of Great Week. It is the **Celebration of the Washing of the Feet, the Mystical Supper, the Prayer in Gethsemane, and the Betrayal**. It is observed with a Holy Liturgy, served in the morning, commemorating the Mystical Supper of Christ. In some churches the Priest washes the feet of the faithful - not just to remember Christ doing that but also to express the proper attitude of those in authority in the Church to their faithful members.

In the evening we have **Mattins of Friday, the Twelve Gospels**



Resurrection) and the Liturgy of St Basil.

Sunday of course celebrates the **Resurrection of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**. It begins at 10.30 pm on Saturday evening, with the Book of Acts of the Apostles read until 11.30, when in the darkness the Midnight Office is served. At 12 midnight, the traditional moment of the Resurrection, the Light returns and the Church and all Creation comes to a new and exuberant life. The Procession goes round the cemetery to seek the dead Body of Christ in the Tomb, but finds existence totally redrawn, the Body not dead but risen again. *Mattins* and the Holy Liturgy (concluding at 2.15 am) demonstrate that Christ is risen indeed, and you and I and all mankind are transformed.

There is no Morning Liturgy, but in the afternoon the faithful try to attend the beautiful and peaceful Paschal Vespers.

Here and There

BIRTHDAY: We had a cake after the Liturgy recently (chocolate, but for fast-periods!) for my 75th birthday. Most of my family were able to be present, which was lovely. Thanks to those of you who sent greetings,

BARKING PILGRIMAGE: This, in honour of the Saints of Barking, will be on **Saturday 10 May**, starting at 12.30 pm. Metropolitan KALLISTOS will give an address. I hope to arrange transport. Please set the day aside to

come and support this. Young people may like to walk some of the way with Fr PHILIP HALL and others, from the Tower of London.

READER PAUL BRIGHTON-CROSS from Basildon, formerly a member here, will be ordained Deacon in St George's Cathedral in London on **Sunday 1 June**. You are invited.

CHURCH BREAD: Bakers are still needed: volunteer if you can. Training will be given.

DIOCESAN CONFERENCE: You are invited to attend, **26-28 May** in Derbyshire. Help given if you want to come; please ask!

A Word from the Fathers: St Gregory Palamas

The temple in which we are now is a figure of the rock-hewn sepulchre. It is even better than a figure. It is, so to speak, a second tomb. It contains the place where the body of the Lord is laid, at the back of the veil here and in this place, the sacred table. He who runs with all his heart to this tomb, the real tomb of God, he

who clings to it and remains attached to it forever, in recollection and devotion, will understand there the words of the inspired Scriptures, which will instruct him after the manner of the angels on the divinity and humanity of the Word incarnate, and will also see without any possible doubt the Lord himself with the eyes of the mind....

service. It is demanding for all participating, but impressive in its simplicity and strength. We go through the whole Gospel account of the sufferings of Christ, right to the Cross itself, and on to the Burial - which naturally conveys the hope of the Resurrection.

Friday, 'Good' Friday, is the **Celebration of the Holy and Redeeming Passion of the Lord**. In the morning the 'Royal' Hours are served. The main services are: first, in the afternoon, **Vespers** of the Deposition of the Body of Christ and its laying in the Tomb, the Epitaphion, covered in flowers; then, in the evening, **Mattins** and the powerful Procession of the Epitaphion to the Tomb: we go round the cemetery outside, and return to church, where it is venerated by all the faithful.

Saturday is the beginning of the Resurrection Celebration, but in a quiet, restrained mood - Vespers with 15 readings from the Old Testament (revealing the meaning of Christ's death and

APRIL DAYS

Tue 1	S Agilbert, Bishop of Dorchester & Paris
Sat 5	Saturday of the Akathist
Sun 6	Lent 5, S Mary of Egypt
Wed 9	Hieromartyr Theodore, Abbot of Crowland
Fri 11	S Guthlac, Hermit of Crowland
Sat 12	Lazarus Saturday
Sun 13	Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem, Palm Sunday
Mon 14	Great & Holy Monday
Tue 15	Great & Holy Tuesday
Wed 16	Great & Holy Wednesday
Thu 17	Great & Holy Thursday
Fri 18	Great & Holy Friday
Sat 19	Great & Holy Saturday, Hieromartyr Alphege, Archbishop of Canterbury
Sun 20	HOLY PASCHA
Mon 21	Bright Monday
Tue 22	Bright Tuesday, Martyrs Raphael, Nicolas & Irene of Lesbos
Wed 23	Bright Wednesday, Gt Martyr George, Patron of England
Thu 24	Bright Thursday
Fri 25	Bright Friday, Life-giving Spring of the Theotokos, Holy Apostle & Evangelist Mark
Sat 26	Bright Saturday
Sun 27	Pascha 2, S Thomas
Tue 29	Joyful Commemoration of the Departed, S Basil, Bishop of Ostrog in Montenegro
Wed 30	Holy Apostle James the son of Zebedee, S Erkenwald, Bishop of London

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