

**Orthodox Parish of  
St Helen of Colchester**  
*Antiochian Archdiocese of the BI & Ireland*  
**NEWSLETTER 217      MARCH 2015**



**WEEKDAYS AT ST HELEN'S**  
WEDNESDAYS 4, 11, 18 MARCH  
9.30 am Vespers & Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified  
WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH  
ANNUNCIATION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD  
9.30 am Liturgy of St John Chrysostom  
FRIDAYS 6, 13, 20, 27 MARCH  
6.00 pm Akathist of the Mother of God

**Praying at English holy places**

**I**n January Khouria Hilary and I visited Oxford, partly for my spiritual well-being, partly to stay with old family friends, and partly to visit an exhibition at the famous Ashmolean Museum of the artistic work of William Blake, a celebrated 18/19th century English artist. We had a pleasant three-night break.

We stayed with our friends in a village near Oxford, and *en route* went to Binsey, within the city ring road but amazingly in remote countryside. Both the university and city of Oxford grew out of the women's monastery founded in the 7th century by **St Frideswide (icon 1)** on the site of the present Christ Church Cathedral and College. The Saint had a bolt-hole at Binsey and there is a holy well, from which Hilary was able to get down to get us a little drink.

While in Oxford we had lunch with our friends at the *Eagle and Child* pub in St Giles. This also was something of a pilgrimage, because of the writer CS Lewis. He was an Anglican, greatly respected by large numbers of Orthodox, not only as a children's writer (*The Lion, the Witch &c*) but also as a theologian and philosopher. He and JRR Tolkien (*The Hobbits &c*) and other friends met there, and nicknamed it *The Bird and the Baby*. It is certainly a place of literary and religious interest.

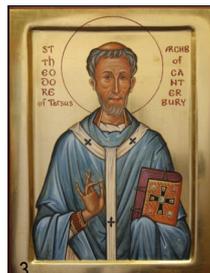
On our return journey we visited the city of St Albans, just outside the M25 round London. There of course we prayed at the tomb of **St Alban (3rd or 4th century)** the first British Martyr (**icon 4**). I have been there several times over the years, sometimes for the Orthodox Liturgy in the fine Abbey. But this time we also visited the ruined Roman city down the hill from the Abbey called Verulamium, which I last visited as a boy nearly 70 years ago.

Then, also just outside the M25 at Hertford we visited the sculpture of **St Theodore (icon 3)**, the Greek from Tarsus in the Church of Antioch who became Archbishop of Canterbury in the 7th century and put the then-Orthodox Church in England in order. The sculpture commemorates the Holy Synod he convened at Hertford. He is Patron of our Archdiocese.

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**I**n February, Hilary and I made a further foray, this time to Alex and Ela near Portsmouth. On the way there we visited Chertsey for the first time. This squeezes between the M25 and the M3. Here **St Erkenwald (icon 2)** established his men's monastery close to the River Thames in the mid-7th century. After that he founded Barking Abbey for his sister St Ethelburga, and later became Bishop of London.

There is very little to see at Chertsey in terms of the monastery except a few bits of wall, and sadly no statue or



shrine of any kind that we could see, but the area around it is a pleasant park, with notices about the monastery. In the 9th century a number of the Fathers were martyred during Danish invasions.

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**T**here are many holy places from Orthodox times around England. Thankfully some of them are becoming more widely known again, after centuries of neglect.

The Orthodox can cooperate with Catholics and Anglicans in making these places better known and loved and more centres of prayer. Many have a genuine Orthodox 'feel', and while they are normally and sadly without any relics since the 16th century, they still retain a holy atmosphere. It should be noted however that there are relics of St Frideswide in Christ Church, Oxford, though sadly desecrated by mixture with other remains. And in St Albans Abbey in the past few years there has again been a relic of St Alban, given by a church in Germany that had preserved some.

**What will greatly help to restore the prayerfulness of these places is Orthodox people precisely going to pray in them. Even without holy relics we can set up an icon and pray there, and find again the power of these holy men and women, which made them strong in the Lord, examples of the holy life for us, and our strong intercessors at the throne of God.**

**Father Alexander**

**The Barking Pilgrimage** has great potential to provide spiritual strength for the Orthodox people of London and the south-east of England. Please support this, and encourage Orthodox families and friends to attend. This year the date is **Saturday 16 May** - changed from the second to the third Saturday of the month. It has the blessing and active support of His Eminence Metropolitan KALLISTOS of Diokleia. MARGARET HAIG is Secretary of the Pilgrimage Association. The programme has not yet been announced, but there is likely to be a service or two in the ruins, and a lecture. We take a picnic.

**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: Hours 10.15 am, Divine Liturgy 10.30 am**

Confessions: Saturday 5 pm, after Vespers, or by arrangement  
Holy Marriage, Baptism, Funerals, Memorials etc: by arrangement

**Parish Priest: Father Alexander (Alistair) Haig**

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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

Why not borrow a spiritual book from our Church Library or from your own books, and read it through Lent? - it will be stimulating and spiritually relaxing.

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

**Parish Annual General Meeting Sunday 1 March**  
A short meeting immediately after the Holy Liturgy

## The People Column

**DEACON PAUL-JACOB BRIGHTON-CROSS**, was received into the Church here and started for us the mission at Basildon, now under Fr ALEXANDER TEFFT. He will be ordained Priest at St George's Cathedral near Regents Park in London on Sunday 10 May. HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN IGNATIUS OF FRANCE is coming to perform the ordination.

**READER ALEX HAIG** will be ordained Deacon at the same service. He will continue helping in the Winchester parish, which is technically Romanian. We hope to arrange transport from Colchester to the ordination. Please watch out for details.

**THOMAS-MARTIN GROB** is training, with the support of the Church Council, to be a Reader. He has now moved from Ipswich to Colchester and is working in the town. We hope he will settle quickly and happily into the town.

**MARIA ARISTODIMOU** is recovering in Clacton Hospital now, and making progress, we are glad to say. We pray she may soon be able to return home.

**ANNA VASILEVA** has moved to Swansea in Wales to be with her son and his family. She emailed recently, *Thank you for sending me one of your leaflets for so many years... They made me feel that God hadn't forgotten me.* We are glad to hear that appreciation, and send her good wishes in her new home. She will continue to receive the Newsletter by email.

The Annunciation (25 March) is one of the Great Feasts of the Church. It is when the Holy Archangel Gabriel came to Mary at Nazareth, and said that God wanted to become Man in and through her. She agreed, and her co-operation with God and his designs helped secure our salvation.

That is always true: God seldom works against what man wants. Why is there so much evil in this world? - Because Man will not co-operate with God, who gives us the precious gift of our freewill to do or refuse his will. If we work with him and not against him we find we receive not only our own salvation, but it spreads through us to others too.



HE METROPOLITAN IGNATIUS OF FRANCE & WESTERN EUROPE visited Maidenburgh Street in 2014. He prayed in St Helen's Chapel and had refreshment in the house. He will ordain Deacon JACOB and Reader ALEXANDER on 10 May - see left.



## Here and There

**FELLOWSHIP OF ST ALBAN & ST SERGIUS:** The meeting arranged for 3 March has been cancelled.

**CLACTON:** We continue to be grateful to the St James Anglican Church for their hospitality each month, and for their general goodwill. During Lent we shall be there on 21 March, and then on Bright Saturday, 18 April. Please note that, due to the change of date for the Barking Pilgrimage, the date for the Holy Liturgy in May has been changed to 23 May.

**OUR NEW BISHOP:** We are now pinning our hopes of receiving a new Metropolitan on the meeting of the Holy Synod due in June. We have not had a Bishop here since December 2012, when our Archbishop was taken from us and made Patriarch. It seems likely that we will have a Metropolitan from Lebanon or Syria - or there is an outside possibility it might be Englishman Fr PHILIP HALL from Lincoln Parish. For the present we are nominally under the direct pastoral care of HIS BEATITUDE PATRIARCH JOHN. Only when we do receive one or other sort of a Bishop for the Antiochian Diocese of the British Isles and Ireland can we in this country really become the Church that we are.

**THE LENT SERVICES,** Holy Pre-sanctified Liturgy and Akathist, are great helps towards extra prayerfulness during the Great Fast. Take advantage of them if you are free at those times. And you can also say extra prayers at home. These and other spiritual exercises help us prepare for Holy Week and Pascha.

### MARCH DAYS

Sun 1	Lent 1, Sunday of Orthodoxy, S David of Wales
Mon 2	S Chad, Bishop of Lichfield, S Nicolas Planas
Wed 4	S Gerasimus of the Jordan
Thu 5	S Nicolas, Bishop of Ohrid
Fri 6	Discovery of Precious Cross &c by S Helen
Sat 7	Memorial Saturday
Sun 8	Lent 2, S Gregory Palamas
Mon 9	Holy 40 Martyrs of Sebaste
Wed 11	S Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem
Thu 12	S Gregory the Dialogist, Pope of Rome
Sat 14	Memorial Saturday, S Benedict of Nursia
Sun 15	Lent 3, Veneration of the Cross S Aristobulus, First Bishop of Britain
Tue 17	S Patrick of Armagh, Apostle to the Irish S Withburga, Solitary at Holkham & E Dereham
Wed 18	S Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem S Edward the Martyr, King of England
Fri 20	S Cuthbert, Bishop & Abbot of Lindisfarne H Martyrs slain at S Saba Monastery
Sat 21	Memorial Saturday
Sun 22	Lent 4, S John of the Ladder, Sinai
Tue 24	S Hildelith, Abbess of Barking
Wed 25	ANNUNCIATION OF THE THEOTOKOS S Justin Popovich
Thu 26	Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel Hieromartyr Irenaeus, Bp of Sirmium, Hungary
Sat 28	Saturday of the Akathist of the Theotokos
Sun 29	Lent 5, S Mary of Egypt
Tue 31	S Innocent 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 Leo the Great, Pope of Rome (+461)

*It is certain that the poor more easily achieve the blessing of humility than the rich. Gentleness goes with poverty, pride more commonly with riches.*

*And yet, very many rich people do use their wealth for works of charity rather than as a means to puff their pride.*

*This spirit counts as among its greatest profits what it spends in relieving distress and hardship in others.*

*In this virtue all classes and conditions of men meet, for they can share a common purpose while differing in wealth.*

*It does not matter how unequal they are in earthly possessions when they are seen to be equal in spiritual blessings.*

*Poverty is blessed, then, when it is not beguiled by a longing for earthly goods and does not seek increase of the world's riches, but desires to be enriched with heavenly blessings.*