

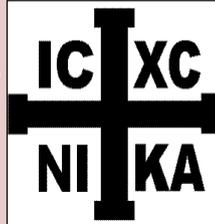
Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
of the British Isles and Ireland

Metropolitan: His Eminence Archbishop Silouan

NEWSLETTER 240

MARCH 2017



LENT WEEKDAYS

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WEDNESDAYS 9.30 AM

HOLY PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY

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FRIDAYS 6.00 PM

AKATHIST TO THE THEOTOKOS

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SATURDAY 25 MARCH 9.30 AM

ANNUNCIATION OF THEOTOKOS

The great feast in Lent

The feast of the Annunciation of the Holy Theotokos falls in Lent, 25 March. It is the day we recall the coming of the Holy Archangel to the Holy Virgin.

Gabriel comes as the messenger of God and tells young Mary that God wants her to do the impossible—to bear in her womb God himself in her human flesh.

And with God the impossible happens. God becomes flesh, becomes Man, so that we can say, stupid as it sounds to the unbeliever, *God walked in Palestine* (as Sir John Betjeman put it).

Read the story for yourself in St Luke's Gospel (chapter 1 verses 26-38).

But notice that verse 38. Mary says, *Be it unto me according to thy word.*

This shows that Mary co-operates with God for it to happen. She has to say, *Yes, thy will be done.*

This is true in the constant interplay of God and Man throughout history and in your own life. You have to co-operate with God for his will to be done.

Why is God's will so often seen to be *not* done in the world? - It is because we *do not work with him*. Why is the will of God frustrated in our own family life or in our own personal doings? - Because we do not work with him.

When we start to turn our will towards that of God, instead of to our own follies, we begin to find that his will does being to happen.

Holy Mary's obedience to God in the Annunciation is the great change of direction in the world's history.

My obedience to his holy will not have that effect (praise God!). But not only will it change the life of those near me; it will also bring peace, joy and contentment to my own soul.

Father Alexander



What happens in our church during the Great Fast?

There is a different pattern and feel to Lent from that of the rest of the Church year. As we do it in our parish it works out like this:

- On Wednesdays, after a shortened Vespers the Pre-sanctified Lamb (consecrated as an extra on the Sunday) is brought in solemnly to the Altar.
- On Fridays, the Akathist Hymn, a joyful meditation on Holy Mary's role in our salvation, is sung one part each week, with all of it on the fifth Friday.
- On Sundays, instead of the normal Liturgy of St John, the Liturgy of St Basil is offered, this slightly longer and fuller, though in practice it really affects only the Great Anaphora (the long, most important Eucharistic Prayer).
- The vestments and hangings in Lent are purple, which we here use as many do not see them on weekdays.
- The singing of the choir takes on a more solemn chant.
- On weekdays at the end of certain services the Prayer of St Ephraim is said twice, with three prostrations the first time and one the second. *Those who cannot manage them of course are spared the prostrations, and I fear I may have to join that group this year: forgive me.*

Your Lent devotions at home

Lent of course is the English word for *The Great Fast*, the forty-day fast which leads up to Lazarus Saturday, Palm Sunday and Holy Week. Here are some thoughts on how to spend the Fast:

- Every day is a fast day, when we abstain from certain foods, notably meat and dairy products (milk, cheese, yoghurt, etc). This is no condemnation of meat etc by the Church, but abstention (they say) to imitate the foods in Paradise (see Genesis 2), and so that we may enjoy them the more when we come out of the Fast, back into the Feast. In the first week of Lent you may be stricter but other weeks you can be easier in eating fuller-size meals.

- Abstain from wine (i.e. alcohol) and from (olive) oil for cooking. There are certain relaxation days when we can use oil and wine or

(rarely) fish. Sea-food is allowed at any time. See the leaflets in church for more detail. *In non-Orthodox situations you are called not to make an awful fuss about fasting!*

- Try to read extra prayers in private at home, especially the Prayer of St Ephraim (available in church) with its prostrations.
- Try to attend church every Sunday and on a weekday.
- Try to read some spiritual book—you can borrow from our Church Library.

**CLACTON
HOLY LITURGY
Saturday
18 March
Saturday of
Souls,
St Edward
the Martyr
10.00 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 Balkerne Hill), to Northgate; go straight along St Peter's Street to Castle Park; continue round the bend, up into Maidenburgh Street. The nearest car park is Nunn's Road NCP, off St Peter's Street.

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 5 pm, after Vespers, or by arrangement

Holy Marriage, Holy Baptism, Funerals, Memorials etc: by arrangement

Children of St Helen (Pre-school & Primary): 1st Saturday 11.00 am

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

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

Reader & Sacristan Martin Gröb, 21 Alexandra Road CO3 3DF Tel: 07-702-579-743

Churchwardens: David Davies 01-473-745-167 Dusan Radunovic 01-206-762-553

Children of St Helen: Sanja Radunovic 01-206-762-553 Silvia Lefley: 01-206-835-715

Orthodox Parish of St Helen Registered Charity No. 1134418

Bank Account: Sort Code 20-22-67 Account No. 50349364

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

At St James Anglican Church, Beatrice Rd, Clacton-on-sea CC15 1LE

Divine Liturgy: usually third Saturday of month 10.00 am

Sacristan appointed

For the first time in our 20-plus years as a parish, I think, we have a Sacristan. Reader MARTIN GROB has agreed to take on this responsibility.

He will be the one to consult about vestments, Church Bread, candles, icons, the Holy Altar, and all. Most of the duties are small in themselves, but overall the work has a huge impact, and it can be very satisfying for the worker.

The job is nothing less than *the provision for our worship*.

Thanks to Martin for taking this on, and God bless him in and for it.

PARISH ANNUAL MEETING Sunday 12 March at the end of the Holy Liturgy.

We keep it short, but it is a most necessary meeting according to the law.

- We have to approve the Accounts for 2016.
- We have to elect Church Councillors for three years' service.

Please therefore arrange to be present at the Liturgy and stay for the meeting.

If you are not on the CHURCH ROLL (list of electors) speak immediately to Theodora Harrison, the Electoral Roll Officer, and fill in a form now, so you can vote.

St Edward the Martyr

This was a young King of England, martyred they say at the instigation of his step-mother on 18 March 978/9. (He is to be distinguished from St Edward the Confessor, another Saint +1066.)

Enshrined in Shaftesbury Abbey, Dorset, many miracles were ascribed to his holy relics and he was widely venerated.

At the Reformation his relics were lost, but in the 20th century they were found and - after lengthy problems including lawsuits - were given to the ROCOR Orthodox Monastery at Brookwood Cemetery, in Woking, Surrey, near the M25.

The relics remain there. The Fathers have worthily enshrined them again.

Unfortunately the Monastery has more recently attached itself to an Old Calendarist Bishop, but you can still go and pray to St Edward and light candles there.

St Edward, pray to God for England!



The Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast (Lent) always commemorates St John of the Ladder or Climacus, Abbot of the Sinai Monastery in the 7th century. His book *The Ladder* is still read through during Lent in monasteries and is well worth reading for us all, having great spiritual teaching on our life in Christ.

The icon of the Ladder (Klimax) shows how we have to start our spiritual life as a battle between the Spirit of Christ and the Devil.

Monks and Nuns (and the rest of us even more perhaps) start on the ladder to heaven and can advance a little way. But even those well advanced on the way can fall from it - we are being tempted by the demons at all times, who want us to fall off into the mouth of hell.

At the top of the ladder is Christ himself awaiting us. Only by the power of the Spirit, by the succour of the holy Angels, and by our sincere and continual repentance, can we reach the goal of life in heaven.

Lent recalls us year by year to renew our repentance, our sorrow for sin, and turn back to Christ.



Evangelie Baker

Called Beba by everyone, Evangelie was born in Alexandria, one of the Greek community that existed until the 1950s, when they were put out of the country, to Egypt's loss.

She married a British soldier Danny and they settled here in Clacton, raising two boys, who added grandchildren and great-grandchildren to the family of Bakers: they are still nearby.

She remained actively working into her eighties, and was involved with our Clacton mission from its early days. Unable to go out she received the Holy Gifts at home for some years.

Always welcoming and interested in what was going on, she will be much missed, not only by her family and friends, but also by me and by the whole Greek and Orthodox community.

Her funeral took place in Clacton Cemetery Chapel, and she was buried there, near her husband, who died some thirty years ago.

Her faith was deep and strong, and we prayed for her rest and a place in the Resurrection of the Just.

We pray also for all who have been bereaved and especially for her family, for Danny and Chris and their families.

Memory eternal!

Mothering Sunday

Mothering Sunday in Britain is always the fourth Sunday in western Lent, so it varies in its date and Sunday for us. This year it will be on 26 March. On that day everybody coming into church places their mother's name in either the Living or Departed list and we remember them all together.

MARCH DAYS

Wed	1	S David of Wales, Bishop
Thu	2	S Chad, Bishop of Lichfield, S Nicolas Planas, Parish Priest in Athens
Sat	4	Commemoration of S Theodore the Recruit, S Gerasimus of the Jordan
Sun	5	Lent 1, Sunday of Orthodoxy
Wed	8	S Felix, Bishop of Dunwich, Enlightener of Suffolk
Thu	9	Forty Martyrs of Sebaste
Sat	11	Saturday of Souls, S Sophronius of Jerusalem
Sun	12	Lent 2, S Gregory Palamas
Tue	14	S Benedict of Nursia, Father of Monks in the West
Fri	17	S Patrick, Bishop of Armagh, Apostle of Ireland
Sat	18	S Edward the Martyr, King of England, S Nicolas (Velimirovich), Bishop of Zhica
Sun	19	Lent 3, Veneration of the Cross
Mon	20	S Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, Bishop, Fathers slain at Monastery of S Saba
Sat	25	ANNUNCIATION OF THE HOLY THEOTOKOS
Sun	26	Lent 4, S John Climacus, Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel
Fri	31	S Innocent of Moscow, Apostle to the Americas New Martyr Nun Maria (Skobtsova) of Paris

A FULLER LIST OF THE MONTH'S FEASTS AND FASTS IS AVAILABLE

A Word from the Fathers: St Jerome quotes the Prophet Joel and comments.

Return to me with all your heart - and prove that your repentance is genuine by fasting and weeping and lamentation.

Fast now and you will feast hereafter; weep now and you will laugh hereafter. Present mourning brings future joy.

.... Well, I say that it is not your garments that you must

rend but your sinful hearts, which like the wine-skin will burst unless you tear them.

When you have done this you can return to the Lord your God from whom you have been estranged by your former sins.

Do not let the greatness of your sin make you despair of pardon. The greater the sin, the more striking is the power of God's mercy.