

# Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

*Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese  
of the British Isles and Ireland*  
*Metropolitan: His Eminence Archbishop Silouan*

**NEWSLETTER 271**

**FEBRUARY 2020**



## February Weekdays

**9.30 am Holy Liturgy**

Thursday 6 Feb	St Photios of Constantinople
Tuesday 11 Feb	St Blaise, Bishop of Sebaste
Wednesday 19 Feb	St Philothei of Athens
Thursday 27 Feb	St Raphael, Bp of Brooklyn

## Meeting of Christ in the Temple

**F**orty day after the Nativity or Birth of Christ, we celebrate on 2 February his being taken into the Temple in accordance with the Law. We still do that in the Orthodox Church, at forty days presenting our mothers and their new babies to God for his blessing and purifying. It is always a happy occasion.

Christ is different of course. In his case, he who is true Man but also true God is brought into the Temple actually built to his honour, though only the old Priest Simeon and the faithful old woman Anna recognise the facts.

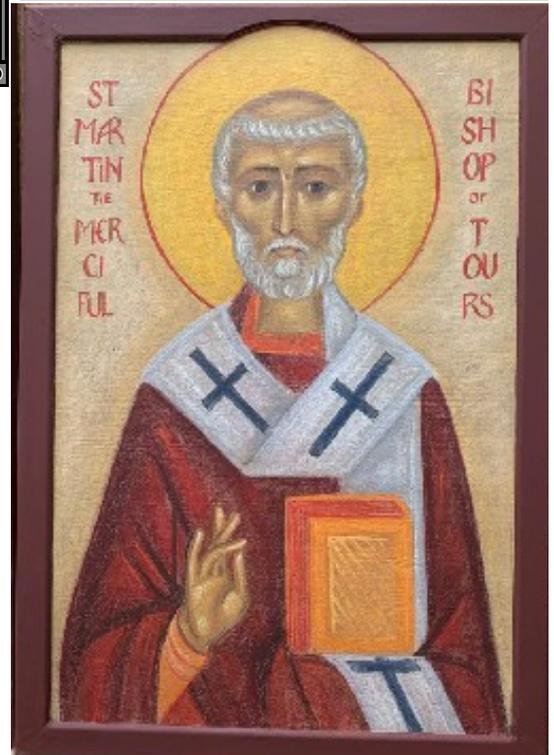
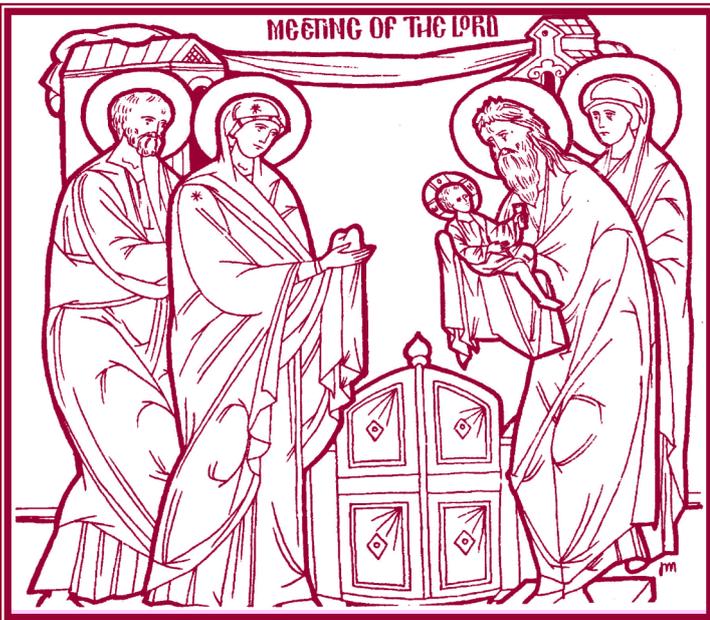
Simeon takes the Holy Child and becomes the God-bearer, and recites the wonderful words known to all Christians, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.....* recited at Vespers and known to us in English by the Latin words *Nunc Dimittis*.

The Meeting is a lovely feast, with, as so often, the theme of light—a *light to lighten the gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel*.

May Christ bring light, his own light, into your home and heart. If there is darkness in your soul for any reason—sin is the likeliest—ask that Christ may shine in your innermost experience and bring not only light but also cleansing.

**And pray that we may soon meet Christ our Light in our new Temple, St Martin's Church in Colchester.**

*Father Alexander*



## Little news yet on St Martin's....

Alas, there is still little to report on progress to take over the building. It is all agreed, and we have the money sitting in the bank, but we still have to get permissions for the various alterations we plan and that process is taking time—too much time—and the owners will not let us have it until these are agreed.

The biggest problem is the heating, though it is not likely that it will be installed immediately, for we do not have the money for that yet.

*I can report however that the Council has now removed the mass of autumn leaves! The churchyard does look much more respectable and cared for: we must be grateful even for little things in life!*

## St Helen's Chapel, Maidenburgh St, High St CO1 1UB

*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's Street to Castle Park; continue round the bend, up into Maidenburgh Street.*

*Nearest car-park NCP Nunns Rd. Very little street parking available.*

**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): normally first Saturday 3.15 pm*

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

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**Orthodox Parish of St Helen: Registered Charity No: 1134418**

**IBAN: GB05BUKB20226780219819 Bank Account Sort Code: 20-22-67**

**Bank Account No: 50349364 Appeal Account No: 80219819**

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

**Appeal Website:** <http://orthodoxcolchesterappeal.org.uk>

## ST HELEN'S APPEAL FOR ST MARTIN'S

17 Maidenburgh Street, Colchester CO1 1UB, UK

**Raised so far: £157,196 (towards the £200,000)**

*The Appeal remains open, but is somewhat on hold, until various costings are agreed. Please consult:*

**APPEAL WEBSITE: [orthodoxcolchesterappeal.org.uk](http://orthodoxcolchesterappeal.org.uk)**

**FACEBOOK: St Martin's Appeal**

## Here and There

**CHILDREN OF ST HELEN:** Saturday 1 February, 3.15 pm.

**STUDY WEEKEND** 21-22 February at St Dunstan's, Poole, organised by the Orthodox Fellowship of St John the Baptist, and led by Bishop Irenei of London and Western Europe (ROCOR). *Truth in the Face of Heresy: Spiritual Life in the Witness of St Irenaeus of Lyons.* The cost is £50, but bursaries are available. Details on the poster in the church porch.—MARGARET HAIG, by the way, is now Chairman of the Fellowship.

**PARISH ANNUAL MEETING:** Sunday 8 March, following the Holy Liturgy.

## Four Sundays prepare for Lent

Lent, more properly called *the Great Fast*, is a preparation for Holy Week and Pascha. But Lent itself has a 'Pre-Lent' of four Sundays' preparation.

The first, called the *Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee*, is this year on 9 Feb. On this 'first day of the Triodion' (the service-book for Lent) I look to Christ and to my own sins, not to those of others, to judge 'me', not other people. This week we do not fast even on Wednesday and Friday.

Then comes the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, where we learn that, as long as I repent of my sins, God never fails to welcome me home.

The 3rd Sunday, Meatfare, is the last Sunday we eat meat until Pascha. It is the Sunday of the Last Judgment when we consider that God will judge the whole world.

The 4th Sunday is Cheesefare, our last taking of dairy products. It is Forgiveness Sunday, when we say prayers of forgiveness for all around us.

Thus prepared, we come to the First Day of the Great Fast on 2 March, a time for rejoicing in following more closely our Lord and Master.

## One of our families prays for us in the Holy City Jerusalem

In 2019 we wanted to do something different as a winter holiday, to spend New Year's Eve somewhere special, so we planned a family holiday in the Holy Land!

As a family with a small child we knew that it will be difficult to do a proper Pilgrimage and visit the numerous Holy sites, but my wife and I were very happy to at least make a day trip to Jerusalem and have our daughter Petra venerate with us at the Holy Sepulchre.

We arrived in Tel Aviv just after Christmas, we spent a few rainy days there and we started early on the 29th of December to make the train journey to Jerusalem.

We were blessed with a lovely sunny day, we entered the Old City via the New Gate, and to our surprise, it was very quiet and not at all busy. We found our way to Holy Sepulchre where pilgrims were indeed queuing, but not really as many when Mariana and I visited in the past.

After entering the church we visited the Stone of Anointing, it was so special to see our 3 year old Petra following our and everyone else's example in venerating the Holy Stone.

We then admired the exterior of the Kouvouklion, it's beautiful carved and adorned entrance and how the light shines down from the dome of the Anastasis. While queuing to enter the Holy Tomb one gets the chance to fully absorb the holiness, the beauty of this wonderful place, how people of all races and nationalities come together in peace and prayer.

While queuing to enter the Holy Tomb, restless Petra took me around and we explored all the chapels, finding interesting things to see and make time pass faster. I found some places that I did not necessarily remember from my previous visit: the Holy Prison with the stone used to bound His feet, the chapel of St Helen or the beautiful Katholicon with its wonderful Christ Pantocrator mosaic.

We finally entered the Kouvouklion, in the first room with the Angel's Stone and then the Holy Tomb; we gathered in prayer



Petra venerates the Stone of the Anointing of Christ's Body

on the Holy marble for the health and peace of all our family and friends and gave thanks to the Lord for all the blessings and gifts He bestowed on us (the most wonderful being our little girl, and second I would mention the church of St Martin as a perfect 2019 gift; God willing we will officially have it in our possession as soon as possible). Photographs are not really allowed but I could not stop myself from having a snapshot of the Holy Tomb, I will cherish this image for the rest of my life!

We could not miss visiting Golgotha and the Altar of Crucifixion, while queuing again I found the mosaics on the walls of the chapel as being very beautiful indeed.

We finished our day visit by walking the Via Dolorosa through the maze of the old market and exited the Old City via the impressive Damascus Gate. Such a blessed day! What I wish now is for Petra to grow a bit more and have her experience the many other Holy sites. Glory to God!



Catalin, Marianna & Petra prayed here in the Holy Tomb of Christ

## A Word from the Fathers: St Sophronius of Jerusalem (+638)

*Let us all run to meet him, we who honour and venerate the mystery of the Lord with pious devotion. Let us all go to meet him with eager minds. Let there be no one who does not share in this meeting, let no one refuse to carry a light... meet him who is truly light, enlightened by the beams of his brightness and bearing in our hands the light which shines for all men.*

*The most chaste Virgin Mother of God bore in her arms the true light and came to the help of those who were lying in darkness. In the same way we must hurry out to Indeed this is the mystery which we celebrate, that the light has come into the world and has given it light when it was shrouded in darkness, and that the dayspring has visited us from on high and has given light to those who were sitting in darkness.*

## FEBRUARY DAYS

Sat	1	Martyr Tryphon, S Brigit of Kildare
Sun	2	Meeting of the Lord in the Temple
Mon	3	Righteous Simeon & Anna
Wed	5	Martyr Agatha of Palermon
Thu	6	S Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople
Sat	8	Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates
Sun	9	Sunday of the Publican & Pharisee, New Martyrs & Confessors of Russia
Mon	10	Hieromartyr Charalambos of Magnesia
Tue	11	Hieromartyr Blaise, Bishop of Sebaste
Sun	16	Sunday of the Prodigal Son
Mon	17	Great Martyr Theodore the Recruit
Tue	18	S Leo the Great, Pope of Rome
Wed	19	New Martyr Philothei of Athens
Sun	23	Sunday of Meatfare, of the Last Judgment
Mon	24	1st & 2nd Findings of the Head of S John
Thu	27	S Raphael, Bishop of Brooklyn
Fri	28	S Kyrana the Virgin-Martyr
Sat	29	Commemoration of All Monks & Nuns, S John Cassian the Roman