

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

DIOCESE OF SOUROZH

CATHEDRAL OF THE DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

67 ENNISMORE GARDENS, LONDON SW7 1NH



# *Souroz h Messenger*

No 10

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£2

## *3rd Sunday of Pascha The Myrrh-Bearing Women*



*Troparion,  
Tone 2*

*When Thou didst stoop to death, O  
Life immortal, and by the lightning  
flash of Thy divinity didst harrow  
hell; when from the nethermost  
parts Thou didst raise up the dead  
all the powers of heaven cried:  
Giver of Life, O Christ our God,  
glory be to Thee!*

*Kontakion,  
Tone 2*

*Thou hast risen from the tomb, O  
All-powerful Saviour, and at this  
wondrous sight, hell was struck  
with fear and the dead rose. The  
creation also rejoiceth in Thee,  
and Adam is exceeding glad; and  
theworld, O my Saviour, sings Thy  
praises forever.*

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*Dear Readers,*

*We are happy to inform you that the Media and Publishing Department of the Diocese of Sourozh now has an online store, Sourozh Publications, where you can obtain the publications of the diocese. You can subscribe to the English or Russian editions of Cathedral Newsletter, and purchase the diocesan journal ‘Sourozh’ and the Diocesan Calendar and Lectionary. For prices and full information please visit the store at <https://sourozh.myshopify.com>.*

*Sourozh Messenger was prepared by:*

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**PASCHAL MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS KIRILL, PATRIARCH  
OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA TO THE ARCHPASTORS,  
PASTORS, DEACONS, MONASTICS AND ALL THE FAITHFUL  
CHILDREN OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

*Beloved in the Lord archpastors, all-honourable presbyters and deacons, God-loving monks and nuns, dear brothers and sisters!*

**CHRIST IS RISEN!**

*From a heart filled with radiant joy in the Saviour who has risen from the tomb I greet you all with these life-affirming words and **congratulate you on the “feast of feasts” – the Lord’s Passover.***

*Today we are called to a great banquet of faith, to a great triumph of the spirit. The Only-begotten Son of God, who has come into the world, endured suffering and death on the Cross, and at the word of the heavenly Father rose victoriously from the tomb! Jesus has risen and **“death is swallowed up in victory”** (1 Cor 15:54)! He has risen and the whole universe rejoices! The Lord has vanquished Hades and crushed the power of the devil. And all of this has been accomplished by the God who loves humankind, **“who has predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself ... in whom we have redemption through his blood and the forgiveness of sins”** (1 Eph 1:4-5, 7).*



*Christ’s victory over death is not only a spiritual, but also a physical reality. The Lord Jesus truly rose bodily for the salvation of all people. With his resurrection death has lost its irreversible nature, and for those who believe in Christ it has become the rebirth into life everlasting, the door which opens up the way to heaven and the kingdom of God.*

*It is not fortuitous that the martyrs too welcomed all sorts of sufferings for Christ’s sake. And if before even great righteous men mourned the dead as having perished forever, then after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus death no longer held any terror for them. In the remarkable words of St. Athanasius the Great, henceforth **“all who believe in Christ trample down death as nothing. For they truly know that when they die they are not destroyed, but actually live, and become incorruptible through the resurrection”** (Homily on the Incarnation of God the Word and his coming to us in the Flesh). The New Martyrs of the Church of Russia have shown to us a clear example*

*in fearlessly accepting the crowns of martyrs during the time of persecution for the faith in the 20th century.*

*Today, when the world ever more resembles the foolish rich man in the Gospel parable (see: Lk 12:16-21), when comfort, success and a long life are proclaimed as practically the main values in human existence, we, the disciples and followers of the Saviour, along with the apostle Paul boldly testify: **“For me to live is Christ”** (Phil 1:21), and death is no longer the end of our existence. We speak and believe thus, for we know that God created the human soul for eternity.*

*How often do we, who are engulfed in the vanity and anxieties of everyday life, lack the spiritual insight to see the transforming power of the presence of God in our lives! Yet the time of Pascha is a completely special time. In these days the air itself is replete with incomparable Paschal joy, while God’s love and mercy are poured out in abundance upon every human being.*

*As we enter into the festivities of this wondrous and radiant holy day, we are called upon, not only in word but also in deed, to bear convincing witness to the great gift that people have received through the risen Lord Jesus. So let us then share with those around us the joyous news of the Gospel, let us bestow our love, care and attention upon our neighbours, let us do good to those who need our help and comfort. Only thus, with lips and hearts full of thanksgiving as we glorify the Saviour who has risen from the tomb, do we become heirs of the Paschal miracle that has now been accomplished and with boldness call ourselves the sons and daughters of the Most High God who has manifested to all of us his boundless love.*

*In sending you my heartfelt congratulations on the bright feast day of Holy Pascha, I again and again address you with the joyous greeting:*

**CHRIST IS RISEN!**

**+KIRILL**

**PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA**

**Moscow, Pascha 2018**



## ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH TO CURRENT EVENTS

In connection with the current crisis in diplomatic relations between the UK and the Russian Federation, we have received many requests for comment. In order to clarify certain evident misunderstandings, we wish to state the following:

1. The Russian Orthodox Church is not a State Church, but is completely independent of the various States in which she exercises her ministry. Our bishops are not nominated by the Prime Minister or any other politician, but by the other bishops.
2. Just as you do not have to be Roman in order to be Roman Catholic, so you do not have to be Russian in order to be Russian Orthodox and to belong to a Church which includes over 70 nationalities worldwide! Here in Britain both our clergy and our parishioners are diverse with respect to their ethnic and national origins. Many people who came from the territories of the former Soviet Union have settled here, married local people and acquired British citizenship.
3. As regards the present political crisis, we shall continue to pray ardently for Her Majesty the Queen, the civil authorities and the armed forces, just as we have done over the last 300 years of our presence here.
4. Likewise we pray for the recovery of those injured in the evil and criminal attack in Salisbury, and for the peace of the whole world.

*Media Service of the Diocese of Sourozh  
Russian Orthodox Church in Great Britain and Ireland  
16 March 2018*



## THE DIOCESE OF SOUROZH ORGANISED THE TRANSPORT OF THE MIRACULOUS HOLY FIRE FROM JERUSALEM TO THE BRITISH ISLES



Photo - <http://tass.ru/obschestvo/5103806>

On the occasion of the joyful feast of the Resurrection of Christ, with the assistance of the philanthropist Timothy Musatov, a chartered flight from Jerusalem delivered the Holy Fire to London. The solemn delivering of the Holy Fire to London took place on Saturday, April 7 2018 at 23:00 hrs at the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Dormition and All Saints.

The Holy Fire was also delivered to the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Dormition of the Mother of God and the Holy Royal Martyrs (Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia) in Chiswick. Beforehand the Sourozh Diocesan Administration noted: “We believe and hope that the bringing of the Holy Fire from Jerusalem to London will serve as yet another

confirmation that in the real historical relations between our peoples there is no place for any confrontation stirred up solely for political purposes”.

“It is known that representatives of several local Churches, the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem, the Patriarchate of the Armenian Apostolic Church of Jerusalem, the Coptic and Syrian Churches, participate in the ceremony of the descent of the Holy Fire. This occurrence once again testifies to the unity and the strength of the Christian world”, said the philanthropist Timofey Musatov.

***The RT TV channel and social networks broadcasted the bringing of the Holy Fire from Jerusalem to London. Подробнее на ТАСС: <http://tass.ru/obschestvo/5105077>***

## Diocesan News

### ARCHPASTORAL VISIT TO OXFORD



On 25 March, during the fifth week of Great Lent, His Grace Bishop Mathew of Sourozh paid an arch-pastoral visit to the Saint Nicholas parish, Oxford. Concelebrating the Liturgy with Bishop Mathew were; Archpriest Stephen Platt, Rector of the parish, Hieromonk Tikhon (Vasiliev) of the Holy-Assumption Vasilyevsky monastery (Donetsk diocese), acting Secretary of the diocese of Sourozh, Priest Dmitry Nedostupenko, Priest Stephen Fretwell (ROCOR), Archdeacon Vadim Santsevich who serves in the London Cathedral, Deacon Sergei Sokolovsky who serves in the parish of All saints of Britain and Ireland, Birmingham, and Deacon Alexei Kostyanovsky who serves at the Oxford church. His Grace Bishop Mathew gave a sermon remarking on the moral achievement of Saint Mary of Egypt, who is commemorated by the Church on the fifth

Sunday of Lent. Father Stephen Platt, Rector of the church, made a speech where he warmly welcomed Bishop Mathew on his first official visit to the parish and presented him with an icon of the Mother of God. March 24 marked 55 years since the death of Archimandrite Nikolai (Gibbs), who had been the tutor of the holy Passion-bearer Tsarevich Alexei. Following the meal which had been arranged by the parishioners, Bishop Matthew visited the Oxford cemetery of Headington, where he served a short memorial service (litya?) at the grave of the ever-memorable Father Nicholas.



### MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP FOR THE PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESAN JOURNAL 'SOUROZH' ON 27 MARCH

His Grace Bishop Mathew of Sourozh, chaired a meeting of the working group charged with preparing the next edition of the diocesan



Liturgy with Bishop Mathew were, Abbot Anthony (Kadyshev) from the dioceses of Krasnodar, Priest Dmitry Nedostupenko, acting Secretary of the diocese of Sourozh, and Archdeacon Vadim Santsevich from the London cathedral.

After the service, Vladyko Matthew gave a sermon for the congregation and pilgrims, about the significance of the Saviour’s resurrection of Lazarus as a symbol of hope in eternal life for every Christian. Vladyko warmly congratulated Nun Martha (Persiyaninov) on the eighth anniversary of her monastic vows (tonsure), and he remarked on the great contribution to the development of the Metochion and the maintenance of spiritual life there in the past ten years.

journal, ‘Sourozh’. The meeting was attended by the Archpriest Mikhail Dudko, Rector of the parish of Saint Innokenty, Metropolitan of Moscow, (Beskydnikovo, Moscow), Archpriest Joseph Skinner from the London Cathedral, acting Secretary of the Diocese of Sourozh, Priest Dmitry Nedostupenko, Alexander Krasovitsky and Yulia Pliakuksta. Items discussed at the meeting included, issues and difficulties faced by the editorial staff and future publishing activities.

**ARCHPASTORAL VISIT TO THE DIOCESAN BISHOP’S METOCHION, BODIAM**

On 31 March, Lazarus Saturday, His Grace Bishop Mathew of Sourozh visited the diocesan metochion of Holy Martyr saint Elizabeth, at Rock’s farm near Bodiam. Concelebrating the divine





## *Cathedral News*

### **EASTER SERVICE AT THE LONDON CATHEDRAL**

On the feast of the Bright Resurrection of Christ, His Grace Bishop Mathew of Sourozh led the Paschal Matins and Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, at the Dormition Cathedral in London. Concelebrating with His Grace were cathedral clergy: Archpriest Maxim Nikolsky, Archpriest Anthony Ilyin, Archpriest Vitaly Polishchuk (from the Diocese of Kiev), acting Secretary of the diocese of Sourozh, Priest Dmitry Nedostupenko, Priest Sergei Fedorenko, Priest Alexander Menshikov, Archdeacon Vadim Santsevich, and Deacon Vladimir Kastravet. Thanks to the efforts of philanthropist Timothy Musatov, the Holy Fire arrived from Jerusalem

in time for the beginning of the midnight service. On Easter night, representatives from Orthodox and churches including the Antiochan, Georgian, Serbian, Bulgarian churches, as well as representatives from the Coptic, Syrio-Jacobite, and catholic churches, came to the Cathedral to receive the Holy Fire. The service was attended by a congregation of over a thousand people. During the service, Bishop Mathew delivered St John Chrysostom's Easter homily. The Easter message from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia was read to the congregation by acting Secretary of the Sourozh diocese, Priest Dmitry Nedostupenko. His Grace, Bishop Mathew, then performed the blessing of the Artos.



## VOLUNTEERS DISTRIBUTE HUNDREDS OF MISSIONARY LEAFLETS ON PASCHA

The publishing department of Sourozh Diocese printed two thousand copies of missionary leaflets dealing with historic facts about death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the meaning of the feast of Pascha. The content of the booklets included: facts proving the authenticity of the Gospels archaeological evidence supporting Biblical sources and even a psychological analysis of the apostles' behaviour. These A5 booklets were very popular - people were taking them with great pleasure literally. Remarkably, many would take a dozen or two of the booklets for their friends and relatives, amongst those were people



Мироносицы у Гроба

развалинах Кесарии Палестинской был обнаружен «камень Пилата», на котором сохранилась надпись:

[...IS TIBERIEVM  
[PRO]NTIVS PILATVS  
[PRAE]FECTVS IVDA[E]IA]

То есть «...Тибериум.[По]житий Пилат.[Пре]фект Иуде[е]и».

В 90-х годах XX века в ходе раскопок в Иерусалиме было обнаружено захоронение первосвященника Каиафы — одного из действующих лиц евангельских событий.

Скептики оспаривали евангельский рассказ, говоря, что римляне

*Подготовлено Комиссией по миссионерству и катехизации при Епархиальном совете г. Москвы при поддержке проекта «Гражданский вестник»*  
Сайтального отдела по взаимодействию Церкви с обществом и СМИ

привязывали осужденных к крестам, а не привязали гвоздями. Однако в 1968 году в пригороде Иерусалима было найдено погребение Иехоханана — иудея, казненного римлянами. В костьях ног застрял огромный гвоздь, так попушавший (вероятно, из-за सूшка в дереве креста), что его не смогли вытащить. Эта находка показала: распятие было именно таким, как описано в Евангелии.

### Действия апостолов — доказательство истинности Воскресения

Уже первое поколение христиан утверждало, что Христос умер и воскрес. Они были убеждены в истинности этого настолько, что безротно претерпевали жестокие гонения, пытки и смерть. У нас же очень много вариаций, чтобы объяснить такое поведение.

### Они сознательно заглади?

Эта версия опровергается их мученичеством, люди могут идти на смерть ради чего-то, но что они верят, но едва ли станут умирать за то, что, как им точно известно, является выдумкой.



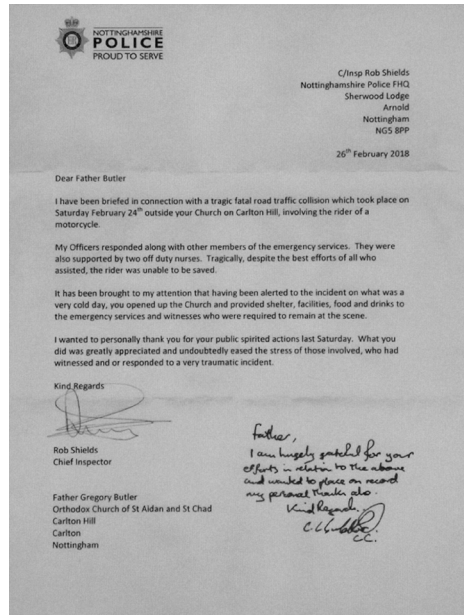
belonging to other confessions. Based on their feedback, they also enjoyed learning about the facts mentioned in the booklets. Altogether about 1,500 copies were distributed. These missionary booklets were prepared by the Missionary commission and catechesis at the Diocesan Council of Moscow and supported by the Orthodox Herald of the Synodal Department on the Church Public Relations. The booklets were also available for downloading from the official websites of the Patriarchate.



**RUSSIAN ORTHODOX  
CHURCH IN NOTTINGHAM  
WAS THANKED BY THE  
POLICE**

‘24th February. Dreadful fatal accident outside of church just before vespers this evening. We provided hospitality with hot drinks and biscuits for the emergency services and these involved, and the church facilities used for comfort breaks. Most never knew that there was an Orthodox Church here, and some had the opportunity to see the church. Thank you to these wonderful women and men who do such a great job in their service to the people. I was surprised by a thank you from a paramedic who basically said that this type of service we provided to them was a rare occurrence.’

Fr Gregory Butler, Rector of the Parish of Sts Aidan and Chad in Nottingham, posted the above on Facebook on the day of the tragedy. One month later Fr Gregory received a letter of appreciation from the local police:



*Letter from Chief Inspector Rob Shields to Fr Gregory Butler*

*For reflection*

***Do not forsake prayer, for just as the body becomes weak when it is deprived of food, so also the soul when it is deprived of prayer draws nigh to weakness and noetic death.***

*(St. Gennadius of Constantinople, The Golden Chain, 44)*

## AFTER LENT – HOW WE SHOULD SPEND THIS TIME

### *Christ is risen, dear Christians!*

The joyful days have arrived – the Bright Resurrection of the Lord. And a question emerges: how should we spend this time? During Great Lent, people can be quite ‘buttoned-up’ and make an effort to control themselves, but then, when joy arrives, they don’t know what to do with themselves. So then what? What now? Let’s talk a little bit about what happens next.

You know that we have a rule for preparation for Communion: read, fast, attend Vespers and confess. But we don’t have a rule for how to behave after Communion. And this is very significant. You have had Communion – then what? Then – preserve Christ within yourself. Don’t gossip, keep control over your eyes and your appetites, give alms and be charitable, be quiet,



Archpriest Andrei Tkachev  
(Source - <https://tsargrad.tv/heroes/52>)

be contemplative, open the Scriptures; because through the doors of your mouth Christ has entered the house of your soul.

During Lent, we became a little bit like saints ourselves: we watched less television, or maybe we stopped watching TV altogether, we opened the Psalter, meat wasn’t on the menu – everything was fine. And then what? Now the meat-eating days have begun, now we can drink and eat, celebrate, go visiting friends. There are many ways we can waste these days and quickly lose all that we have achieved during those 40 days, no, even longer - 49 days (seven weeks plus Passion Week). Orthodox Christians in general have some kind of historical weakness: they accumulate Grace over a long time but quickly lose it, they can pray for years, and then poof! – one day, and that’s it. We need to preserve the Grace of Pascha.

Church rules specify how those who have celebrated Pascha should behave, how we should attend the Liturgy dai-



Source - Facebook

ly. Now we all have some days off, and by the way, quite a few: you can visit the graves of your nearest and dearest, you can go visiting friends, you can go for a picnic or barbeque in the countryside, and you can even go on a longer trip somewhere. But please, don't let this time just disappear, don't lose sight of the fact that Bright Week should be dedicated to going to church. Everywhere there will be services, the royal doors are open – this in itself symbolises that Heaven has come closer. The royal doors are open – soul, please enter paradise. And the Liturgy is quick – literally 40 minutes – an hour at most. Easter hymns, the Cherubic hymn, the Creed, the Eucharistic canon, Communion - you won't have to be standing there for a long time. But you need to be in the church continuously. During Bright Week, you need to train yourself to be at church each morning for Liturgy, and if you want at Vespers in the evening. But this is a must, a necessity!

*Archpriest Andrei Tkachev*

*Source <https://www.facebook.com/divnoedivevol>*

## **PASCHA IN THE PARISHES OF THE SOUROZH DIOCESE**

### **CHRIST IS RISEN!**

The parishes of the Diocese of Sourozh are scattered throughout Great Britain and Ireland. Many parishioners are friendly with each

other, although they do not have the opportunity to communicate often. But in this they are helped by social networks. In the first hours after the festive liturgies, the Facebook feed was filled with vivid pictures of the reports from different parishes of the diocese. We selected the best photos from different parishes so that you could share the joy of Easter services with our brothers and sisters!



*Fr Stephen Platt, Church of St Nicholas,  
Oxford  
(Photo - Facebook )*



*Fr Michail Gogolev at the Church of Holy Trinity in Bristol  
(All photographs are taken from Facebook)*



*Fr Georgiy Zavershinski at the Parish of St Kentigern in Glazgo*



*Blessing of Paschal food by Fr. Nikolay Nasonov at the Cathedral of St Paul and St Peter in Dublin*



*Breakfast after Paschal Liturgy at the Church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker in Oxford*

## LENTEN AND EASTER TRADITIONS IN ENGLAND

*1. By Archpriest Andrew Phillips (an extract from the book, Orthodox Christianity and the English Tradition).*

A great many traditions were and are connected with the Lenten cycle and Easter. The Saturday before Lent began, was and is called 'Egg Saturday', for then people started to use up their eggs, having already given up meat. The proverb 'Marry in Lent, live to repent', reminds us of the Church's prohibition of weddings during fasts. 'After every Christmas comes Lent', reminds us that the Church's Year was set by a rhythm of feasts and fasts, and also induces in us a sense of sobriety. The daffodil is still sometimes called 'the Lenten lily'. A common, meatless

dish was Lenten pie. Lent was also the marble season. People put a piece of marble into a pot and kept it there until Good Friday. This was so until a few years ago. The marble season finished at noon on Good Friday. The marbles were symbols of the stone that was rolled away from the tomb at the Resurrection of Christ.

(What we call Pussy-Willow Sunday in Russia is called Palm Sunday in England as they use palm twigs on that day). Palm Sunday was also called 'Fig Sunday', for on this day figs, the fruit of the palm, would be eaten in pies and puddings. Donkeys were treated with special kindness on this day. Incidentally, the cross-shaped mark on the backs of donkeys is said to come from the fact that the Lord rode upon a donkey. Holy Thursday was kept with great piety, just as Good Friday. Even in my childhood all shops were closed on Good Friday - except the baker's for hot cross buns (see below). It was called 'Good' from the old meaning of the word 'good', signifying holy or spiritual, as is still the case when we call the Bible 'the Good Book'. The elder was a tree never used by carpenters because it was said to be the tree from which Judas hanged himself and was called 'the Judas tree'. On the other hand if the aspen tree is popularly called 'the shiver tree' it is because Christ was crucified on one. So to this day it shivers with shame and horror. On the English borderlands the Skirrid was said to be a holy mountain and the



*Pancake run depicted on the  
Olney town sign  
(Source - <https://www.miltonkeynes.co.uk/news/>)*

great cleft in its side is said to have been made by the earthquake at Christ's Crucifixion. Churches in the English Marches were often built on earth brought from it. It was also sprinkled on coffins within living memory as a token of the Resurrection. Another Good Friday custom in the south of England was skipping; the skipping rope was said to symbolise that with which Judas had hanged himself.

As at Christmas, Good Friday and Easter were marked by cosmic events. All Creation participated. Thus it is said that the hawthorn groans

on Good Friday, because it was used to weave the crown of thorns. If the violet droops its head, it is because the shadow of the cross fell upon it at the Crucifixion. The robin has a red breast because he pulled thorns from Christ's brow, thus staining himself with blood. (According to another tradition, it was a goldfinch or a bullfinch). The expression 'touchwood' comes of course from the custom of touching the Cross (wood) to protect oneself from the Evil One. To this day hot cross buns are eaten in England. (These are yeast buns with spices, currants, and sometimes candied peel, marked with a cross and by tradition eaten on Good Friday. Warmed up before eating). Traditionally they have a healing power and are still eaten in some parts in much the same way as Orthodox eat prosphora or blessed bread from the Vigil. A few years ago a Herefordshire baker was recorded

as saying: 'Bakers are important men - the Birth of our Lord and his Death - we're at them both. We make mincepies for His Birthday and hot cross buns for His Deathday.' Good Friday was also considered a day of blessing for certain activities. Thus if seeds are sown at noon on the day, flowers will come up double (a token of new life and resurrection). Also bread baked on Good Friday will keep fresh all the year. On the other hand it was said that any sewing done on this day would come undone.

Just as the Russians have eggs blessed at Easter, so in England 'pace-eggs' (paschal eggs) were blessed in church before they were eaten. In some places the tradition of 'pace-egg rolling' still continues - consisting of rolling paschal eggs down slopes of hills in play. These eggs represented the stone that was rolled away from Christ's Tomb. On Easter Sunday, often called 'God's Sunday' or 'Holy Sunday', one always wore something new (the 'Easter



*A pie in a shape of a rabbit*  
(Source - <http://www.historicfood.com/Pie%20recipe2.htm>)





bonnet'), as a token of new life. After the Easter-service, Easter breakfast (i.e. the breaking of the fast; it took place at about midday) would be eaten. Here the eggs (always dyed red and only red - the colour of blood) would be eaten with the main Easter dish, lamb - the finest Canterbury lamb. This was garnished with mint sauce, an allusion to the bitter suffering through which the Lamb of God, the Risen Son, had passed. (Lamb is the traditional Greek dish on this day.) There was a custom of getting up before sunrise to see the sun dance for joy at the Resurrection - a custom that existed in Russia too. Some said that a lamb could be seen silhouetted against the disc of the rising sun. Sceptics were told that if they had not seen the sun dance, it was because the Devil was so cunning that he always put a hill in the way to hide it. In some parts it was held that one had to look at the sun reflected in a pool, in order 'to see the sun dance and play in the water, and the angels who were at the Resurrection playing backwards and forwards before the sun'.

Much weather-lore also concerns Easter. Thus: 'Whatever the weather

on Easter Day will also prevail at harvest', or, 'If the sun shines on Easter Day, it will also shine on Whitsunday', or again, 'If it rains on Easter Sunday, it will rain on every Sunday till Whitsunday', or even, 'A white Easter brings a green Christmas'. The linking of one feast with another through the weather shows the popular liturgical sense and how it was interwoven with the working year. As for tree-lore, the yew was and is used to decorate churches at Easter, since the yew lives for a thousand years and more, and is thus a symbol of the Eternal One, Christ. Graveyards were also decked at this time of year: the departed were not forgotten. Even today many put flowers on graves at Easter.

In 1991 the Orthodox Church celebrated 'Kyriopascha', that is to say the conjunction of Easter and the Annunciation. An old proverb about this is: 'When Easter falls in Our Lady's lap, then let England beware of a sad mishap'. Let us hope that this will not be so.

Easter celebrations went on throughout Easter (Bright) Week and on to 'Hocktide', the Monday and Tuesday of the following week, which corresponds to the Russian 'Radonitsa'. A custom still observed at Hocktide is that of 'heaving'. Local people literally lift one another off the ground (especially ones of the opposite sex though it can be any village resident), singing 'Jesus Christ is risen again'. This unusual custom is said to celebrate the resurrection of the departed, the rising from the ground

of the saints. We should not forget that the word 'Easter', from 'East', itself refers to rising, although in the sense of the rising sap of the Spring and the rising of the sun.

**2. High Days and Holidays**  
(From the book, *British Customs and Traditions*, by Maggie O'Hanlon, Pitkin Unichrome Ltd 2000, pp. 22-25).

Shrovetide and Easter, which mark the beginning and end of Lent, are traditionally seasons for a variety of lively and energetic games, perhaps to compensate for the austerity of the Lenten fast. Of the various ball-games played at these times, the anarchic street football is probably the most widespread. Not surprisingly, pancakes - which were a convenient way of using up butter and fats before the fast - and Easter eggs - ancient symbol of renewal of life - feature in other games.



### **Pancake racing**

Tossing pancakes, especially while running, makes for great sport and the Shrove Tuesday pancake race at Olney is nationally famous. The women of Olney and nearby Warmington put

on aprons and headscarves for the occasion and, armed with pancakes and frying pans, assemble in the village square. From here they race for some 400 metres to the parish church, tossing their pancakes three times in the way. The winner receives a prayer-book, after which all the frying pans are laid around the church and a service of blessing is held.

### **Skipping**

In Scarborough, at the ringing of the Pancake Bell on Shrove Tuesday, everyone assembles on the promenade to skip. Long ropes are stretched across the road and there may be ten or more people skipping on one rope. The origins of this custom are obscure but skipping was once a magical game, associated with the sowing and sprouting of seeds, which may well have been played on barrows (burial mounds) during the Middle Ages.

### **Street Football**

Because it has no precise rules and, more importantly, no precise number of players, street football is a game in which anyone brave enough can join. Most games are between two teams hailing from either different parts of the town or neighbouring parishes; the Eastertide football at Workington, for example, is between the "Downies" from the harbour area and the "Uppies" from the castle a mile or so away. The goals, if there are any, may be miles apart and, in some cases, it is sufficient to get the ball back onto home ground to score.



*Cheese - rolling  
(From open sources of the Internet)*

### **Easter-Egg Customs**

The original Easter eggs were hard-boiled eggs, stained with vegetable dyes, and often elaborately decorated. The custom of rolling Easter eggs downhill is observed every Easter Monday at Avenham Park, Preston, in Lancashire, although chocolate eggs, or even oranges, tend to be used nowadays. Somewhat reminiscent of “conkers” is the northern game of “jauping” (Scottish for “splattering”), in which each player holds an egg and strikes in turn at the other’s egg until one breaks.

### **Hare-Pie scramble and Bottle-Kicking**

This two-part custom takes place each Easter Monday at Hallaton, Leicestershire. The hare-pie is all that remains of a form of rent exacted from the incumbent clergyman in medieval times. The pie was once cut up and scattered over Hare-Pie Bank, to be scrambled for by the villagers, but is nowadays more likely to be distributed

at the church-gate by the rector. The bottle-kicking, between villages of Hallaton and Medbourne, takes place at the Bank, although the bottles are small wooden barrels - two full of ale and one dummy - and there is no actual kicking. The object is to wrest each bottle away from the Bank and over the home boundary.

### **Cheese-Rolling**

Rolling cheeses is infinitely more dangerous than rolling eggs, especially when the cheeses are 7 lb (3.5 kg) Double Gloucesters tumbling down Cooper’s Hill. This hair-raising affair, which formerly took place on Whit Monday, is presided over by a Master of Ceremonies, resplendent in white coat and beribboned hat. In each of four races, a cheese is sent rolling down the hill and the contestants rush after it, the first to the bottom being winner. This custom is probably a relic of a 500-year-old ceremony associated with grazing rights in the village of Brockworth.

*Prepared by Dmitry Lapa*

## PASCHAL CELEBRATION AT THE PARISH OF ST SILOUAN OF MT ATHOS, SOUTHAMPTON

As the people began to assemble for the vigil and Liturgy of Easter for the first time in its eight-year life, there was a palpable atmosphere of expectation. Everywhere were the signs of preparation and forethought during the weeks before. The blank rectangle of the church hall had been made into a holy temple with the icons and iconostasis lavishly decorated with flowers. A special area outside sheltered by a canopy had been prepared, with lights and candles, to accommodate the food being brought, as by custom, to be blessed - and Father Joseph time and

again gave the blessing. The Acts of the Apostles was being read and people were queuing for confession. The gentle half-light was illuminated by the golden aura of the candles at the icons of the Saints. Solemnly and slowly the Vigil began, and, in the darkened temple, as the chanting quickened, the procession began and 'Christ is risen' was joyfully proclaimed in Russian, Greek, Romanian and Georgian, for the first of innumerable times. The homily of St John Chrysostom welcomed all to the feast, whatever their state of soul, and Pascha, the

Feast of Feasts, had begun: light left no space for darkness, death was trampled down, life was offered to all, the Devil, enemy of mankind, was defeated and bound, sin was blasted at its root, the wall of alienation between God and Man was shattered, the gates of hell were broken and the dead raised up, the prophets met openly the One whom they had foreshadowed, the veil being lifted from their sight, the righteous found their reward and the thief found paradise, despair was destroyed and Death taken prisoner. The



*Fr. Joseph Skinner at the parish of St Silouan of Mt Athos  
(Photo - Anastasija Jana Bikova)*



*Above and below - Parish of St Silouan of Mt Athos in Southampton  
(Photo - Anastasija Jana Bikova)*

procession returned to the temple, the Divine Liturgy began: as many as 50 people persisted through the night until early morning. Afterwards a modest and quiet collation had been prepared. On Sunday, Vespers was celebrated at 1.00 pm, followed by a festal meal

for the 40 or so people present. The experience confirmed our belief that Pascha is central to our lives and an indispensable gift re-enacting and making real Christ's victory over death.

*Stephen Thomas*



## *Notes on the Church calendar*

### **22 APRIL – SUNDAY OF THE MYRRHBEARING WOMEN**

#### **HOLY MOTHERS OF ORTHODOXY. WOMEN BEARING MYRRH**

*Who were the women bearing myrrh to the tomb of Jesus? Why do Byzantine icons of Easter show white-clad women standing in front of the Holy Sepulchre? And why do hundreds of Byzantine hymns praise the Myrophoroi as “holy” women or “godly-minded,” “wise,” “God-loving” and “God-bearing?”*

The answer lies in the four Gospel accounts of the Resurrection. The

evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke and John transmit in their pages the unanimous tradition of the apostolic church that these women are the first authoritative witnesses and proclaimers of Christ Risen from the dead. Christian belief in the Resurrection of Jesus thus rests ultimately on their word.

When Christ was crucified and buried all his male disciples had fled and hidden. Earlier one of the twelve had betrayed him for a few pieces of silver and another had denied him three times. Not so, however, the female disciples. They followed Christ to the end, faithful and strong as a rock. They stood close by, watching and sharing the pain and death of their beloved teacher and friend. At dawn, three days later, carrying myrrh, they went to the tomb where He was buried and found it empty. Their grief soon changed to joy. And their loyalty and love were rewarded. The Risen Lord appeared and spoke to them, entrusting these women to announce the evangelion, the good news of His triumph over death. The first Christos Anesti - “Christ is Risen” - fell from their lips. The male disciples learned of the Resurrection from the women disciples. The male disciples, moreover, did not believe the women, causing Christ to rebuke them for the hardness of their hearts and their lack of faith (Mark 16:14).

The Orthodox Church, in turn,



Source - <http://www.pravmir.ru/pravoslavnyj-zhenskij-den/>



*Myrrbearing women*

(Source - <http://www.pravmir.ru/zheny-mironosicy-neudobnye-svidetelnicy/>)

preserves this tradition inherited from the apostolic church. It recognizes as Myrophoroi Mary Magdalene, Salome, Joanna, Martha and Mary of Bethany, Mary of Kleopas, Susanna, Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the disciples James and John, the sons of Zebedee. It acknowledges them to be true authentic disciples (*mathetria*) of Christ, “the first who saw the Resurrection,” “the first evangelists.” Clearly then these remarkable women followers of Christ are the first mothers of the church, and indeed its true founders. Without the witness of the women bearing myrrh there would not have been a Christian *kerygma* of the

Resurrection. It is striking how often Byzantine theologians, preachers and hymnographers apply the word first (*protai*) to the Myrophoroi.

It is manifestly not enough once a year to say on the second Sunday after Easter that we “honor” the Myrophoroi. (Words come all too easy whenever we ignore their meaning.) The primacy of the Myrophoroi in the Easter story related in the four Gospels, their position as recognized in the apostolic church of the first century, have implications for our church today as it reconsiders the role of Orthodox women in the *ekklesia*.

Archbishop Iakovos announced that a meeting would be held which will review the status of women within the body of Christ. Orthodox tradition indicates that any such discussion should begin with the Myrophoroi, the women whom Christ called to discipleship, to be the first witnesses of his Resurrection and the first to proclaim it. The women bearing myrrh provide appropriate models and theology for expanding women’s participation in the rich life of Orthodoxy, for restoring to women a wider *diakonia*. Christ’s truest disciples, the Myrophoroi challenge the church today to recognize the calling of Orthodox women to unrestricted service to God and humanity.

***Eva Catafygiotu Topping***

***Source: [http://www.christianholymothers.com/WomenMyrrh\\_0.html](http://www.christianholymothers.com/WomenMyrrh_0.html)***

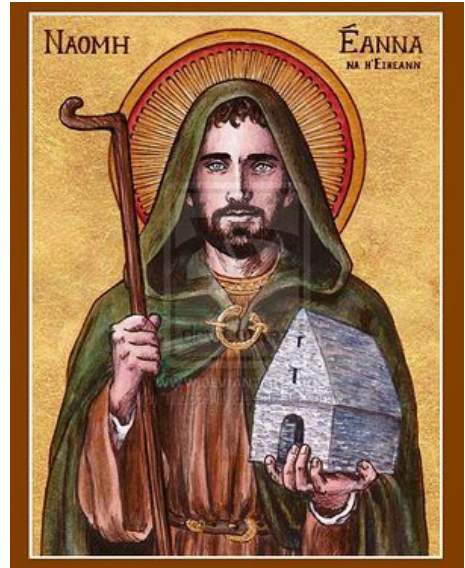
## *British and Irish Saints*

### **VENERABLE ENDA, ABBOT OF INISHMORE**

**Commemorated:  
21st March/3rd April**

Venerable Enda was born in the mid-fifth century in the present-day County Meath in Ireland and was the son of a minor ruler in Ulster. In his youth he was under the influence of his sister, St Fanchea. As a young man he was a soldier but later gave up a military career, deciding to dedicate all his energies to the service of the Lord. He went to the west of Scotland and obtained an education at the monastery and school called Candida Casa, founded by St Ninian at Whithorn. There he was tonsured monk and ordained priest. The experience of the monastic tradition, closely linked to monasticism in the East, which he gained at Candida Casa, contributed to the future achievements of Enda.

So, Enda came back to Ireland and founded several churches at Drogheda in the Louth region and built his first monasteries in the valley of the River Boyne. By 484 the saint had moved far to the west and established his principal monastery on the island of Inishmore - the largest of three islands which make up the group called the Aran Islands, situated in the Atlantic off the Galway coast of Ireland. The land for this monastery was granted



*St Enda of Inishmore*  
(source - [Rosaryradio.blogspot.ru](http://Rosaryradio.blogspot.ru))

him by his relative, the King of Cashel.

In fact, Enda was the founder of the first well-organised monasteries in Ireland and prepared the ground for the great St Finian of Clonard. The greatest monastery of Enda was on Inishmore; this little holy island always had about ten monasteries, and has been revered by Christians as 'an Irish Athos'. Inishmore grew into a celebrated centre of holiness and learning. St Enda, its first abbot, initially had 150 disciples, and in time trained and instructed a host of future saints on this island. Such great saints as Ciaran of Clonmacnoise and Brendan the Navigator were among



Enda's disciples. Enda made Inishmore a monastic island, setting up a network of ten monasteries there, the chief of which was called Killeany ('church of Enda'). His disciples founded monasteries on the Irish mainland.

The holy Abbot Enda and his brethren led an austere ascetic life, imitating the Desert Fathers of Egypt. Each monastic community comprised a church or chapel with monastic cells. On Inishmore monks practised manual labour and devoted most of their time to fasting, prayer and studying the Scriptures. Apart from tiny stone ascetic cells, the monks lived in separate caves or isolated sketes. Under St Enda it was not allowed to

kindle fire in the cells of Inishmore even in very cold weather, the monks' clothing was very humble, and they refrained from conversations during their meal in the refectory. The diet of the Inishmore monks was simple and consisted of bread, cereals, and water. Fish and milk were a rarity, while wine and meat were a luxury and allowed only in extreme cases. Enda and his close disciples did not taste meat at all. The climate of Inishmore was too cold to grow fruit.

The brethren slept on the bare ground of their cells or laid down a bundle of straw. They had a flock of sheep which provided them with wool to weave their clothes. They toiled on the land, grew barley and oats, baked bread and did many other things with their own hands. In spite of these austere customs, hundreds of ascetics settled on this holy island, and Inishmore became a shining light of holiness in Western Europe for centuries. A cloud of future missionaries, who studied in this monastic city, absorbed its spirit of love, community, sanctity and prayer, disseminating this light to foreign lands that had before been pagan.

The fame of Enda spread far and wide. The loving care of the holy abbot was directed not only toward monks, but also to the poor, the oppressed and suffering. He ordered the monks to build eight places for refuge on the island, where all who had nowhere else to go could find shelter and care.



*Stained glass image of Sts Enda of Inishmore and Colman of Kilmacduagh (source - Panoramio.com, author - bhgalway)*

St Columba, who visited Inishmore, was so impressed by its atmosphere that he described it as ‘the second Rome for pilgrims’, ‘the Sun of the West’ and witnessed that the glory of Inishmore was so bright that ‘the angels of God descended from heaven and worshipped in its churches.’ For many, Inishmore was like an image of Paradise. Many dreamed of being buried on Inishmore.

For some time Enda laboured on the island of Arranmore, also called ‘Aran Island’, off the west coast of Donegal. Enda, who had gathered countless disciples around him, reposed on his beloved Inishmore in about 530, reaching the age of eighty. St Enda is one of the most venerated sixth-century Irish saints and, together with Finnian of Clonard, is credited with establishing monasticism in the

Emerald Island. The influence of these two saints spread to England and mainland Europe.

During ‘the Age of the Saints’ Inishmore was nicknamed ‘the Aran of the Saints’. It was a popular pilgrimage destination in the Middle Ages. In 1081 these islands were attacked by the Vikings and again in the fourteenth century. In the fifteenth century a Franciscan monastery was built on Inishmore which existed for over a century. Under Cromwell in the seventeenth century, many of the Inishmore shrines were destroyed.

Despite all this, the memory of St Enda lives on in Inishmore, where numerous ruins and parts of his early monasteries and churches survive. Some buildings can be traced back to the time of the saint. Among the shrines are sections of monastic walls, remains of towers



*Monastic ruins 'Teaghlach Einne' in Inishmore  
(photo by J. Demetrescu from 'Saints and Stones')*



*Aran Islands*  
(source - From-ireland.net)

and even ‘beehive-cells’. Notable are the remains of ‘the seven churches’ in the west of the island; the site of Killeany Monastery in the eastern corner; and Teaghlach cinne - a fine

ruined ninth-century church with parts of several high crosses, an altar and other elements, where Enda is believed to be buried with his 120 disciples.

A holy well of St Enda exists and has healing properties. It is in Inisheer, another of the three Aran Islands. Another St Enda’s ancient well can be found at the entrance to the Barna Woods on the mainland coast of Galway. It has been known for curative powers, against ear and eye complaints. St Enda is the patron saint of the Aran Islands.

***By Dmitry Lapa***

***Source: <http://orthochristian.com/102423.html>***



*St Enda’s well on Inisheer*

## *Legacy of Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh*

### **MEETING A NON-ORTHODOX SOCIETY**

#### **Part 4**

#### **Tradition as Living Memory**

I would now like to say a word about the meaning of tradition. Whenever someone dares to suggest the slightest change in the ways of the Church he is accused of breaking with tradition. And here it is important for us to treasure tradition, but also to understand it rightly and not to become prisoners and slaves of false tradition. Tradition is something that is handed down to us from the very beginning, from one generation to the other. But what is handed down to us is the substance and the meaning and not the form.

A Russian bishop in the early years of the emigration wrote that it was not permissible to celebrate in a western language because most heresies were born in the West, forgetting that there were enough heretics in Byzantium and elsewhere! If tradition is understood in that sense you become its prisoner. Tradition is the living memory of the Church. We all have a memory but more often than not, too often, we forget our past. The Church does not. The Church has an eternal, unshakeable memory. But memory does not mean that nothing new can enter into our experience. This memory does not force us backward at



every step. It is an experience that has gradually grown into new and further experience rooted in God and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

What the Church does is to look at every step of its development and its life for what St. Paul calls “the mind of Christ” and to listen to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is always young, always new, always modern. It does not tell us to live as we lived in the twelfth century. In a discussion with a group of Russian bishops on the ordination of women, the senior bishop articulated the following conclusion: “I have no answer on this matter, but it has not happened in the past and therefore it should never happen in the future.” Whether it should happen or not is another matter. But that is not a reason.

Tradition is the living memory of almost two thousand years of Christianity, living and kept alive by the

action and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and made solid, unshakeable by the word and the person of Christ. Traditionalism is what a Roman Catholic theologian in America has described as the dead memory which is kept by the living. [Editor's note: here Metropolitan Anthony is probably referring to a quote attributed to the Lutheran scholar, Jaroslav Pelikan.] It consist of memories of things which do not exist anymore in reality but which are kept, totally useless, but nonetheless treasured. This is heresy. This denies the fact that the Church is alive.

St. Hermas speaks in his first vision of meeting a woman of extreme beauty with the face of a virgin and with white hair. He says to her, "Who are you?" and she answers, "I am the Church." "How is it that you are so young? You have existed for so long." She replies, "I have the youth of eternity." "But why then have you got white hair?" And the answer came: "Because I have the hair of wisdom." And this is what the Church should be -- the Church is not a vague, amorphous concept. You, I, we - that is the Church. And we should have the youth of the newly born into eternity and possess the wisdom of the centuries before us and even more the wisdom of God that stretches into eternity.

### **Leadership and Service**

A few words on the structure of the Church. The structure of the Church has resulted from copying the structures of the imperial state,

which is strictly hierarchical. But according to Fr Sophrony, the state is a pyramid standing on its base, whereas the Church is a pyramid standing on its point. And this point is not a man, not a hierarchy, not a council of bishops. That point is the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone can be the head, the supreme point of the Church, and then, layer after layer of the people who exercise Christ's own diakonia, carry on their shoulders all the weight of the pyramid. If we speak of hierarchy, we must remember Christ's words, "I am in your midst like the servant", and those of us who wish to be in Christ must learn to be servants and nothing else. But historically a hierarchy of power has developed: a hierarchy that can command not because what is said is convincing, but because what is said can be enforced. If in the Church we are simply a hierarchy of power because we have different titles and ranks, that is a negation of the very substance and life of the Church. We know how often saints "of no account" were guides for people who were far above them hierarchically or socially. In the Church power must be replaced by service, by diakonia, and as long as we continue to believe in the power of the hierarchy and not in the diakonia of the hierarchy, we are not a Church according to the Gospel.

That means that we have to reconsider completely the situation of the laity, the clergy and episcopate. First of all, deacons appeared some time after Christ's Ascension. They were

not ordained by Christ. They were appointed by the disciples, by the Apostles, for a specific function. They do not belong to the original Gospel which we read. Then came the presbyters who took over from the Apostles, then came a seniority of grace and of function. So, it is not out of the Gospel that the hierarchy of the Church sprang. The Church knew only one thing - to be the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, the continuation throughout history of the Incarnation and of the voice of the Spirit teaching us to proclaim what Christ has taught us. It is the people of God, as we find in the Epistle, “a royal priesthood”, who must make sacred everything they touch, who can sanctify all things by sanctifying themselves first, and then bring into sanctity everything they touch and do, until God can become “all in all.”

St Basil reminds us that “anyone can

rule, but only a king can give his life for his subjects”, and each of us in that respect is endowed with the kingship of Christ, that is with His command to die for our neighbour and for the salvation of the world. So, this is the laity, the total body of Christ and within it there are ministries, but within it. It is very important to remember that we are all lay people and bishops are laymen with episcopal grace. We claim to be members of the Body of Christ, and if we are members of it in a singular way, is to the extent to which we give our lives to others.

### ***Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom)***

*This article was originally presented by Metropolitan Anthony at “Our Orthodox Presence in Great Britain,” a Conference of the Diocese of Sourozh held in Headington, England (1995) and published subsequently by The Russian Orthodox Diocese of Sourozh, 1996.*

## ***For reflection***

***If a person wants to get an idea about the pyramids of Egypt, he must either trust those who have been in immediate proximity to the pyramids, or he must get next to them himself. There is no third option. In the same way a person can get an impression of God: He must either trust those who have stood and stand in immediate proximity to God, or he must take pains to come into such proximity himself.***

*(St. Nicholas of Serbia, Thoughts on Good and Evil)*

## EPISTLE OF PATRIARCH TIKHON TO THE SOVIET OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS

*We present this bold letter written by Patriarch Tikhon to the new rulers of Russia a year after the revolution. It is invaluable as a spiritual lesson for us also, and a primary source of history, describing the results of the revolution as the Russian people experienced them first hand, telling things as they were for them, and as they will always be for nations that turn against God and His Church and turn to lawlessness.*

We address this prophecy of the Saviour to you, the current makers of our Fatherland's fate, who call yourself "the people's" commissars.

For an entire year, you have been gripping the power of the government in your hands, and you are already preparing to celebrate the anniversary of the October revolution; but the rivers of the blood of our brothers, pitilessly murdered at your rallying, cry out to heaven and force us to tell you the bitter truth.

You have traded the Fatherland for soulless internationalism, although you yourselves know perfectly well that when it comes to defending the Fatherland, the proletarians of all countries are those countries' faithful sons, and not their betrayers.

Having seized power and called the



people to entrust themselves to you, what promises have you given them, and how have you kept these promises?

Truly you have given them a stone instead of bread, and a serpent instead of a fish (cf. Matt. 7:9-10). To a people worn out by a bloody war you promised to give peace "without annexation or contribution".

What victory could you have turned down, you who have led Russia to a shameful truce, with humiliating conditions that even you did not resolve to make fully public? Instead of "annexations and contributions" the great Motherland is conquered, diminished, dismembered; and as pay for the tribute placed on it you secretly transport to Germany gold that you yourself did not amass.



*One of the first photographs  
of Patriarch Tikhon  
(Photo - ng-religion.ru)*

You have taken away from the soldiers everything for which they had valorously fought. You have taught them, only recently brave and invincible, to leave off protecting the Motherland and to run from the field of battle. You have extinguished in their hearts the inspiring consciousness that there is no greater love than should one lay down his life for his friends (Jn. 15:13). You have traded the Fatherland for soulless internationalism, although you yourselves know perfectly well that when it comes to defending the Fatherland, the proletarians of all

countries are those countries' faithful sons, and not their betrayers.

And although you have refused to protect the Motherland from external enemies, you are ceaselessly gathering armies.

Against whom will you lead them?

You have divided the entire nation into warring camps and cast it into a fratricide unprecedented for its cruelty. You have openly exchanged love of Christ for hatred, and instead of peace you have artificially fomented enmity between the classes. And there is no end in sight to the war you've generated, since you aim to deliver triumph to the phantom of world revolution with the hands of Russian worker and peasants.

It was not Russia who needed the disgraceful peace with its external enemy but you yourselves, who have plotted to irreparably destroy Russia's internal peace. No one feels safe; everyone lives in constant fear of searches, robbery, eviction, arrest, and execution. Hundreds of defenseless people are seized, then languish for whole months in prisons, are often executed without investigation or trial, even without going to the court you have simplified. Not only those who are somehow guilty before you, but even those who are in no way guilty, but were taken only as "captives" - these unfortunate people are killed to answer for crimes committed by persons who not only are not of one mind with them, but very often your



own followers or those with convictions similar to yours.

Bishops, priests, monks and nuns who are guilty of nothing are executed simply because of some wild accusations of vague and indeterminate “counter-revolution”. This inhuman execution is made even more onerous for the Orthodox because they are deprived of the final consolation before their deaths—the Sacraments—and the bodies of the slain are not given to their families for a Christian burial.

Isn't this the height of aimless cruelty on the part of those who pretend to be the benefactors of mankind and who themselves supposedly suffered from cruel rulers?

But it's not enough for you that you have reddened the hands of the Russian people with their brother's blood; hiding behind various names

- contributions, requisitions, and nationalization - you have pushed them into the most barefaced and wanton thievery. At your hinting were plundered or seized lands, mansions, factories, houses, farm animals, money, personal things, furniture, clothing. First the wealthy, whom you've called “bourgeois”, were robbed; then under the epithet of “kulaks” were the more well-off and industrious peasants also plundered, thus increasing the number of paupers—although you cannot but recognize that with the impoverishment of a great multitude of individual citizens the wealth of the nation as a whole is lost, and the country is impoverished.

Tempting uneducated and ignorant people with the opportunity for easy and unpunished gain, you have fogged their consciences and muffled in them



*Patriarch Tikhon*

*(Photo - <http://www.pravmir.ru/svyatoj-patriarx-tixon-zapozdalaya-kanonizaciya/>)*

the awareness of sin; but no matter what names you hide this evil-doing behind, murder, violence, and robbery will ever remain serious sins and crimes that cry out to heaven.

You promised freedom.

Freedom is a great good, if it is properly understood - like freedom from evil, not oppressing others, not turning into lawlessness and willfulness. But you have not given that freedom; the freedom you have given consists in all manner of indulgence to the lowest crowd instincts, in murder and theft with impunity. All manifestations of both truly the civilian and higher spiritual freedom of mankind have you mercilessly crushed. Is it freedom when no one can bring home food or rent an apartment without special permission, when families, and sometimes all the inhabitants of whole buildings are evicted and their possessions are thrown into the street, and when citizens are artificially divided into ranks, certain of which are consigned to hunger and being plundered? Is it freedom when no one can speak his opinion openly without fear of being accused of counterrevolution? Where is freedom of speech and press, where is freedom for preaching in church? Many bold preachers have already paid with their martyrs' blood; the voice of social and governmental discussion and criticism is being stifled; all press, other than the narrow Bolshevik press, has been completely strangled.

Especially painful and cruel is the



*Patriarch Tikhon during Moleben outside Nikolskie gates. Moscow, 1918  
(Photo - oldmos.ru)*

violation of freedom in matters of faith. Not a day goes by when the most monstrous slanders against Christ's Church and her servants are not published in the agencies of your press, along with malicious blasphemy and mockery. You deride the servants of the altar, force bishops to dig trenches, and send priests to do dirty work. You have raised your hand against the Church's inheritance gathered through many generations of the faithful, and have given no thought to violating their posthumous will. You have closed a large number of monasteries and churches without any excuse or reason. You have blocked access to the Moscow Kremlin—that sacred inheritance

of the faithful people. You are destroying the ancient form of church community—the parish; you destroy brotherhoods and other charitable and educational Church institutions, close and rout diocesan meetings, and interfere with the Orthodox Church's internal government. By banishing sacred images from schools and forbidding the teaching of faith to children there, you deprive them of the spiritual food necessary for an Orthodox upbringing.

What else can I say? The time fails me (Heb. 11:32) to describe all the catastrophes that have stricken our Motherland. I will not speak of the collapse of a once great and mighty Russia, of the total fracturing of our railroad, of unprecedented agricultural devastation, of hunger and cold that threatens death in the cities, and of the lack of everything needed for maintaining a household in the villages. This everyone can see. Yes, we are experiencing terrible times in our reign, and it will not be erased from the peoples' soul for a long time, having darkened the image of God in it and stamping in it the image of the beast. The words of the prophet have been fulfilled: Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths (Is. 59:7).

We know that our rebukes will evoke only anger and indignation in you and that you will look for an excuse

in them for accusing us of opposition to the authorities, but the higher your “column of wrath” rises, the more proven will be the testimony to the truth of our rebukes.

It is not our business to judge earthly authorities; all authority, allowed by God, would attract our blessing if it were truly “God's servant” for the good of its subjects, and not a terror to good works, but to the evil (Rom. 13:3). Now to you, who are using your authority to persecute your neighbours and decimate the innocent, we extend our word of instruction: celebrate the anniversary of your coming to power by freeing the prisoners, putting a stop to the bloodshed, violence, devastation, and persecution of faith; turn not to destruction but to the establishment of law and order, give the people their desired and deserved rest from civil war. Otherwise all the righteous blood you have spilled will be required of you (cf. Lk. 11:50), and you who took sword in hand will yourselves die of the sword (cf. Matt. 26:52).

**Source:** <http://orthochristian.com/108201.html>

**Translated by Nun Cornelia (Rees) from the source article in the magazine Pokrov:**  
<http://pokrov.pro/нослание-совету-народных-комиссаров/>



## EXPLANATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY – PART 5

*Continued from Issue no. 7,  
January 2018.*

### THE PREPARATION FOR COMMUNION (CONT.)

Then follows the giving of peace and the bowing of our heads during which the priest asks the Lord to sanctify the faithful and to enable them to partake without condemnation of the Holy Mysteries. At this time the deacon, while standing on the ambo, takes the oration from his shoulder and girds himself with it in a cruciform pattern. This allows him to serve the priest unencumbered during Communion and expresses his reverence for the Holy Gifts by representing the Seraphim who, as they surround the Throne of God, cover their faces with their wings (Is. 6:2-3).

During the exclamation of the deacon, “Let us attend,” the curtain is closed and the priest lifts the Holy Lamb above the diskos and loudly proclaims, “Holy things are for the holy.” This means that the Holy Gifts may be given only to the “holy,” that is, the faithful who have sanctified themselves with prayer, fasting, and the Mystery of Repentance. In recognition of their unworthiness, the chanters, in the name of the faithful, exclaim, “One is Holy, One is Lord, Jesus Christ ...”

The faithful who intend to come to Holy Communion should have attended Vigil the preceding evening



if possible; and they should have repented their sins and read the prayers of preparation for Holy Communion at home.

#### Communion

Now the communion of the serving clergy takes place in the altar. The priest divides the Holy Lamb into four parts, communes himself and then gives the Holy Mysteries to the deacon. After the communion of the clergy, the portions intended for the communion of the laity are put into the chalice. During the communion of the clergy various verses of the Psalms called “Communion verses” are chanted, followed by various hymns relating to the feast; or the prayers before Communion are read. The Royal Doors are opened in preparation of the communion of the faithful laity. The deacon, with the sacred chalice in his hands, then calls out: ‘In the fear of God, with faith and love, draw near.’

The opened Royal Doors are symbolic of the open tomb of the Saviour, and the bringing forth of the Holy Gifts symbolizes the appearance of Jesus Christ after His resurrection. The faithful bow to the holy chalice as before the very risen Saviour Himself, while the choir, representing them, chants: “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord”. Those of the faithful who are to commune make a bow to the Holy Chalice and then listen quietly to the prayer before Communion, “I believe, O Lord, and I confess...,” in which they confess their faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, and their faith in the Mystery of Communion by which, in the visible form of bread and wine, they receive the true Body and Blood of Christ as a pledge of eternal life and the Mystery of Communion with Him.

The faithful step forward and go up to the ambo. To keep good order and to show reverence, you should not impede or embarrass others with a desire to be first. Likewise, you should not be overly cautious and fearful but should step forward with gratitude and serenity of faith. Each person should remember that he is the first among sinners but that the mercy of the Lord is infinite. With your hands crossed over your chest, you should step forward toward the Royal Doors for Communion and, without making a sign of the Cross while near the chalice, receive Communion from the spoon held by the priest. After receiving the Holy

Gifts, you should kiss the base of the chalice, again without making any sign of the Cross, so that the chalice will not be accidentally hit. Then follows the giving of peace and the bowing of our heads during which the priest asks the Lord to sanctify the faithful and to enable them to partake without condemnation of the Holy Mysteries. At this time the deacon, while standing on the ambo, takes the orarion from his shoulder and girds himself with it in a cruciform pattern. This allows him to serve the priest un-encumbered during Communion and expresses his reverence for the Holy Gifts by representing the Seraphim who, as they surround the Throne of God, cover their faces with their wings (Is. 6:2-3).

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## *For and about Children*

**CHRIST IS RISEN!**

### **THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST HOLY EASTER**

**Christ is risen from the dead,  
trampling down death by  
death, and on those in the  
tombs bestowing life!**



*Illustration from a prerevolutionary  
children magazine 'Svetlyachok'*



*Фото - протоиерея Андрея Ткачева*

The Myrrh-bearing Women, Mary Magdalene, Mary of Cleopa, Salome, Joanna, Martha and Maria, Susanna and others came on the third day after the Crucifixion in order to anoint the body of Christ with fragrant myrrh (a special oil). They came to the tomb of Christ early in the morning and found it empty. 'And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side;



*Myrrbearing women, inconvenient witnesses*

(Source - <http://www.pravmir.ru/zheny-mironosicy-neudobnye-svidetelnicy/>)

and they were alarmed.’ But he said to them, ‘Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where laid Him. But go, tell His disciples – and Peter – that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see him, as He said to you’ (Mark 16:5 -7).

**The Myrrh-bearing Women** were very kind, faithful, courageous and unwavering in their love to Christ – each Orthodox woman should try to follow their brave example.

**The 3rd Sunday of Easter, the Sunday of Myrrh-bearing Women** is considered a holiday for all Orthodox women. Please congratulate your

mothers, grandmothers, sisters, teachers on this glorious day. In all four Gospels, we read that women are the first to come to the tomb on Sunday morning, they are the first to see the risen Christ and are commanded to carry the good news to the disciples -St Matthew: 28; St Mark 16:1; St Luke 24:10, St John 20:1.

But one name is constant in all four gospels: Mary Magdalene. She is the first to come to the tomb on Sunday morning and the first person to whom Christ reveals himself after the resurrection. ‘But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been

lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, *‘Woman, why are you weeping?’* She said to them, *‘They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.’* When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, *‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?’* Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, *‘Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.’* Jesus said to her,

*‘Mary!’* She turned and said to him in Hebrew, *‘Rabbouni!’* (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, *‘Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’* Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, *‘I have seen the Lord’; and she told them that he had said these things to her’* (St John 20:11-18).



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