

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

DIOCESE OF SOUROZH

CATHEDRAL OF THE DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

67 ENNISMORE GARDENS, LONDON SW7 1NH



Souroz h Messenger

Issue No 7

January 2018

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*Archbishop Elisey of
The Hague and the Netherlands and
Bishop Matthew of Souroz h*



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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>.

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Diocesan News

DECISIONS OF THE HOLY SYNOD CONCERNING THE DIOCESE OF SOUROZH



The last meeting of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church for 2017 took place on December 28, in the meeting room of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchal and Synodal residence in the Danilov Monastery, Moscow, under the chairmanship of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

Minute 116:

Considered:

The communication of His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia on the appointment of bishops abroad.

Resolved:

To appoint Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh as Archbishop of The Hague and the Netherlands, relieving him of the administration of the Diocese of Sourozh, and expressing gratitude

for the work that has been done. To appoint as Bishop of Sourozh, Bishop Matthew of Bogorodsk, releasing him from the management of the parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate in Italy.

(Extract from the Decree of the Holy Synod of December 28, 2017)

CELEBRATION OF THE 55TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DIOCESE OF SOUROZH

On December 19, 2017, the feast of St Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Lycia, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Dormition Cathedral, London, led by His Eminence Innokenty, Metropolitan of Vilnius and Lithuania.



That day also saw celebrations marking the 55th anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Sourozh.

Archbishop Simon of Brussels and

Belgium, Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh, Bishop Nestor of Korsun, Bishop Anthony of Zvenigorod, Bishop Matthew of Bogorodsk, clergy of the Diocese of Sourozh, guests and many parishioners also took part in the Liturgy.



The Liturgy was sung by the choir of the Dormition Cathedral, under the leadership of Subdeacon Kirill Kraushkin.

During the service, prayers were offered for the repose of the ever-memorable Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, the first Diocesan Bishop.

After the Great Entrance, Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh ordained Deacon Anatoly Vikhrov to the priesthood, to serve the parishes in the north of England.

Subdeacon Ivan Kazadoyev, a graduate of Saint Tikhon Orthodox Humanitarian University, was ordained a deacon to continue to serve the parishes of Ireland.

The sermon was delivered by Archpriest Mikhail Nasonov, rector of the patriarchal Metochion of the Holy

Apostles Peter and Paul in Dublin, and Dean of the parishes of Ireland.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, a magnification was sung before the icon of St Nicholas which contains a part of his relics, after which Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh warmly greeted the most reverend Bishops and all the participants in the festive divine service. Archbishop Elisey noted that it is important for all the children of the Diocese of Sourozh to preserve the memory of the first Diocesan Bishop, the ever-memorable Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, who laid the foundation for the development of church life within the newly formed diocese.

Metropolitan Innokenty of Vilnius and Lithuania spoke of his heartfelt joy at being able to serve in the Cathedral church of the Diocese of Sourozh on the day when the diocese was celebrating the 55th anniversary of its foundation.

Later that day, the Royal Geographical Society hosted a reception and concert celebrating the 55th anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Sourozh.

Guests included Archbishop Gregorios, head of the Archdiocese of Thyateira of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, clergy of the local Orthodox Churches, Bishop Angaelos, head of the Coptic diocese in Britain, representatives of the Church of England, public figures, and numerous members of the Diocese of Sourozh.



CHRISTMAS BAZAAR IN BRISTOL

Parishioners of the church of the Holy Trinity, Bristol, began preparations for their annual Christmas Bazaar well in advance. It was everyone's wish to build on two successful bazaars held previously in 2015 and 2016, and so this year on 2 December, everything was done to ensure that the event went well. In a word, we did a good job!

His Grace Bishop Anthony of Zvenigorod, Head of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for Foreign Institutions, warmly congratulated the guests and attendees. Vladyka Anthony spoke on behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, who keeps in his heart the memory of his visit to the Diocese of Sourozh in 2016, on the occasion of the celebration of the 300th anniversary of Russian Orthodoxy in Britain.

The festivities concluded with the premiere of a film dedicated to the 55th anniversary of the establishment of the Diocese of Sourozh.

As usual, the kitchen was very busy and working to full capacity! There was something to treat those keeping the fast and those who weren't. Borsch, dumplings, various salads and desserts, an abundance of baked goods - from rolls and pies to cakes and a magnificent loaf - everything pleased the eye and sold out quickly.

As is customary, there were stalls selling traditional goods - souvenirs, handicrafts, household trivia and art products. New for us this year were honey of various varieties and products made from natural beeswax, and handmade greeting cards featuring designs and drawings of our parish children. DVDs and books in Russian



and English were also on sale.

We were very pleased also to be able to offer Orthodox icons for sale which were brought from Ukraine by our parishioner Natalia Berestyuk. There was a lot of choice and they proved very popular with our guests. Many visitors who had attended our bazaars in previous years were there, and of course, our friends and acquaintances also came. We posted fliers in houses of streets nearby, which meant that we were also joined by many first-time visitors. No one was in a hurry to leave, and many guests lingered at the tables enjoying their purchases in the café area. We understood that they felt at home with us and that made us very happy!

Elena Coward



MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL

The Diocesan Council, chaired by Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh, met at the Dormition Cathedral on 15 December 2017.

Members of the Diocesan Council taking part in the meeting were:

Archpriest Dmitry Karpenko - Secretary

Archpriest Stephen Platt

Archpriest Raphael Armour

Archpriest Joseph Skinner

Priest Dmitry Nedostupenko

Members of the Diocesan Council considered and approved the minutes of the meeting of October 5, 2017. Then the Council discussed the agenda for the forthcoming diocesan clergy meeting to be held on December 18, 2017, on the eve of the celebrations marking the 55th anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Sourozh.

The agenda of the meeting also included questions about the ordination of candidates for priestly and diaconal ministry. Applications were considered and meetings were held with the following candidates:

Deacon Anatoly Vkhrov

Subdeacon Kirill Krayushkin

Reader Alexander Golev

Ivan Kazadoyev

Daniil Aktumanis

Alexander Menshikov

According to the results of the interviews, it was decided to recommend these candidates for

ordination to holy orders. The basis for a positive recommendation was the acquisition of theological education and the experience of church ministry.

The Diocesan Council also considered the petition of Priest Dmitry Nedostupenko, regarding the status of the parish communities in Bradford and Kingston-upon-Hull.

FR STEPHEN PLATT GAVE A TALK IN MOSCOW

This November at the Moscow Branch of the Fellowship the audience was greatly honoured to welcome Archpriest Stephen Platt, the General Secretary of the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius in Great Britain, who gave a remarkable talk “Life and Heritage of Fr Nicholas Gibbes - Tutor of the Russian Royal Family”.



DIOCESAN CLERGY MEETING

On December 18, 2017 a meeting of the clergy of the Diocese of Sourozh, dedicated to the 55th anniversary of the founding of the diocese, took place in the Dormition Cathedral.

The meeting was attended by Metropolitan Innokenty of Vilnius and Lithuania, Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh, Bishop Antony of Zvenigorod, Head of the Department of the Moscow Patriarchate for Foreign Institutions, as well as the following clergymen of the Diocese of Sourozh:

Archpriest Maxim Nikolsky
Archpriest Mikhail Gogoleff
Archpriest Dmitry Karpenko
Archpriest Stephen Platt
Archpriest Joseph Skinner
Archpriest Michael Nasonov
Archpriest George Zavershinsky
Archpriest Andrew Louth
Archpriest Nikolae Prescura
Priest Nikolai Evseev
Priest Dmitry Nedostupenko
Hieromonk Innokenty (Kolesnikov)
Protodeacon Vadim Santsevich
Deacon Paul Wood
Deacon Sergei Sokolovsky
Deacon Grigory Oborochanu
Deacon Anatoly Vikhrov
Deacon Vladimir Castravet
Deacon Alexey Kostyanovsky

Metropolitan Innokenty of Vilnius and Lithuania, who temporarily managed the Sourozh diocese from 2006 to 2007, shared his impressions of the Bishops’



Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, noting its importance for pan-Orthodox unity.

Bishop Anthony of Zvenigorod also noted the importance of the Bishops' Council for the fullness of the Russian Orthodox Church, stressing that its decisions rely, among other things, on the practice of the Moscow Patriarchate's parishes abroad.

Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh elaborated on the significance of

the conciliar document, 'On the Canonical Aspects of Church Marriage', according to which it is possible to perform a Church wedding between Orthodox and Christians of non-Orthodox confessions, provided the couple is ready to raise children in the Orthodox faith.

The congratulatory address on the occasion of the 55th anniversary of the Diocese of Sourozh of Bishop Irenei of Sacramento, Administrator of the British and Irish Diocese of the Russian Church Abroad, was read by Archpriest Paul Elliot, Secretary of the British Diocese of the ROCOR.

Archpriest Stephen Platt, Rector of the St Nicholas parish in Oxford, made a presentation on the theme of developing parish life in local conditions. The participants of the meeting had a discussion on this subject based on the conclusions of the presentation.



AN APPRECIATION OF ARCHBISHOP ELISEY

There is a particular difficulty in paying tribute to Archbishop Elisey's 11 years of episcopal ministry among us, and that is because his greatest achievement is one that we now take totally for granted – the normality of this diocese.

I remember being moved by a speech that Archbishop Elisey's father made at the banquet that followed his consecration. As I listened to the proper pride and joy in his father's speech, I thought of the fearful task that his son had been called to. For our diocese was in crisis. It was a comparatively new diocese. Its founder, Metropolitan Anthony, said many times that it would take twice the time he had given to it for it to come fully into being. It had largely been held together by the extraordinary personality of that one man, but, as his strength failed him, all sorts of tensions sent disparate groups of clergy and people in all sorts of directions.



Archbishop Elisey

Over the next few years Archbishop Elisey, with calm strength and real benevolence, brought about a remarkable healing. As that healing took effect, he rebuilt the diocese so as to bring its organisation and its statutes in line with the norms of the mother Church. It is good that we can now take this achievement for granted, but we should not forget to be very grateful.

In a brief note, I must obviously confine myself to a few topics, and the next, and most obvious one, is the restoration of the Cathedral. People will take for granted that I am referring to the physical restoration of the building – a major achievement which was crowned a few months ago with its solemn re-consecration by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill. That restoration will of course live on as a memorial to Archbishop Elisey's achievements. But there is another restoration, of which it is a fitting symbol that, once again, we can so easily take for granted.

For most of my ministry, our Cathedral was a place that came to life only at

weekends and on feastdays. Archbishop Elisey made it a living place on every day of the week, establishing daily worship, daily ministration of the Sacraments. It became a place to which people in need – and there were so many of those, because another of the huge tasks that faced this Bishop was the attempt to cope with a quite sudden, very large immigration of people from the former Soviet Union. As we thank him for the outward



(Photo by - Deacon Vladimir Castravet)

achievement of the building, let us all the more remember that inner work which made the building a place of daily ministry.

Of course, Archbishop Elisey was faced with ministering to much more than a Cathedral and the very small group of parishes that had grown around the ministry of Metropolitan Anthony. There was now a large Slavic population throughout Great Britain and Ireland. Over the years Archbishop Elisey, with the remarkable and devoted service of a small number of priests, began to reach out to those populations in the north of England, in Scotland, and in Ireland. It has to be said that this work is still at a beginning. But what has been achieved so far is remarkable. All the more so in view of the very limited resources both in men and money. We must thank Archbishop Elisey for what has been achieved so far, and we can note with great satisfaction that his successor is someone who has been intimately involved with this laying of vital foundations.

Finally, I would like to pay a more personal tribute. I have never forgotten Archbishop Elisey's first visit to my Community of St. Antony and St. Elias in Totnes. Our chapel there is at the centre of rehabilitative work with sufferers from severe mental illness. Visits by Bishops were difficult because not every Bishop could cope with our work. For all his immense gifts, the late Metropolitan Anthony could not begin to do so. We had worked out a plan so that visiting Bishops and other dignitaries tended to meet a few selected, easy to cope with characters engaged in some activity. But on the day, our plan for Archbishop Elisey fell through. The skies opened and it poured with rain. There was no help for it, we just had to send him to one of the houses.

He was utterly unabashed. He met people where they were. He was warm, affirming and so natural. One of the residents invited him to see his room.

When he returned from the house and met me, he enthused about the way this particular young man had been able to take possession of the room and use it as an expression of himself and of his own life. He showed me a ‘healing stone’ which this particular young man, who believed that he had a gift of healing, had given him. He was obviously very impressed by what we were trying to do, and I may say that I found that particularly encouraging. He told me that he had wondered exactly who were the staff and who were the residents “but” he said, “I couldn’t tell. I looked at their eyes, and they were all shining”.

I was amazed at the impression he had made on everyone in the house. I was even more amazed when, the next time he visited the Community, several of them, including the young man with the “healing gift”, asked if they could come to the Liturgy. At the end of it, Archbishop Elisey spoke to them. He took the healing stone from his pocket and told them that he kept it there, and when he felt it, he remembered to pray for them. They were all moved, and so was I; I shall not forget it.

Thank you, Vladyka Elisey, may God grant you many years.

Archpriest Benedict Ramsden



Cathedral News

MEETING OF THE PARISH ASSEMBLY OF THE DORMITION CATHEDRAL

A regular meeting of the Parish Assembly of the Dormition Cathedral was held on December 14, 2017 under the chairmanship of Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh.

Archbishop Elisey, the Dean of the Cathedral, presented his report on the main events of 2017.

In addition, the Treasurer of the Cathedral, A.V. Motlokhov, and the Churchwarden, N.V. Tkachuk, presented their reports.

The members of the Parish Assembly made the following decisions:

1. The financial report for 2016 and the budget for 2018 were approved.

2. A.V. Motlokhov was reelected as Treasurer of the Cathedral.

3. The Parish Council of the Cathedral was expanded to include Archpriest Dmitry Karpenko, Kluchar of the Cathedral and I. Gordienko, its legal consultant.

ARCHBISHOP ELISEY BIDS FAREWELL TO THE FAITHFUL OF THE DIOCESE OF SOUROZH

On December 31, 2017, the Sunday before the Nativity, of the Holy Ancestors, the Divine Liturgy at the Dormition Cathedral, London was led jointly by Archbishop Elisey of The Hague and the Netherlands and Bishop Matthew of Sourozh. The





most reverend Bishops were assisted by the clergy of the Cathedral. After the Gospel reading, the sermon was delivered by Archpriest Maxim Nikolsky.

Archbishop Elisey of The Hague and the Netherlands expressed his gratitude to all the clergy and laity of the Diocese of Sourozh, and to the parishioners of the Cathedral for the years of joint prayer and the work performed to the glory of God.

Although he is going to serve in the Netherlands, Archbishop Elisey assured the congregation that in his heart there will always be a good prayerful memory of his years in the Diocese of Sourozh, where he served for 11 years from 2006.

Archbishop Elisey also warmly greeted His Grace Matthew, Bishop of Sourozh, noting particularly that Bishop Matthew was called to the episcopal ministry from the clergy of the Diocese of Sourozh and now, by God's providence, he had returned to the British Isles as the diocesan bishop.

Bishop Mathew of Sourozh thanked Archbishop Elisey for his good wishes and appealed to the many parishioners of the Cathedral for their prayerful support as he takes up this new role in Britain.

On behalf of the clergy, Archpriest Maxim Nikolsky, the oldest of the clergy of the Dormition Cathedral, addressed the bishops, thanking Archbishop Elisey for his archpastoral care during the years of joint service and congratulating Bishop Matthew on assuming the office of the Ruling Bishop of Diocese of Sourozh.



Notes on the Church calendar

THE MAGI AND CHRISTMAS: THE MEETING OF TWO WORLDS

The three Christmas Magi - Balthasar, Caspar, and Melchior – have been glorified as saints for a long time. It's true that their veneration is much more common in the West, than for example, in Russia, but in the Diocese of Berlin and Germany of the Russian Orthodox Church, they are also loved and many come to Cologne cathedral to pray to them. Why did they acquire such respect?

In the Gospel, nothing is said about the names of the Magi - their names come to us from Tradition. Their worship of the new-born God, Christ, is found only in the Gospel written by the apostle Matthew. Why? Because Matthew wrote his Gospel for the people of Israel, and his text contains a lot of information, fundamentally important for the Jews. For example, the earthly genealogy of Christ, with which the Gospel of Matthew begins, countless references to ancient prophecies, quotations from psalms - all this is a kind of code by which Israel could identify its Messiah. And we also find here the Magi...

An important fact is that the Magi, apparently, were from Mesopotamia, and the history of the Old Testament prophet Daniel was connected with

this land. He lived in Babylon and predicted, in particular, such details as the time of the coming of the Messiah. The knowledge of this prophecy was preserved in Babylon. Therefore for the Jews, who knew the Old Testament very well, the testimony that wise men from the East, from Mesopotamia, came to worship the new-born God, was entirely reasonable.

Christians honour the Magi precisely because they were the first among the 'gentiles' or non-Jews to worship Christ and recognize Him as the Messiah. They brought the Saviour very symbolic gifts: gold - as King of kings, incense as High Priest and myrrh, funeral incense - as He who will have to die for people. The gifts of the Wise Men turned out to be prophetic... It is no less symbolic that the Magi were driven by the desire to find God. This search brought them to Jerusalem. Of course, they naturally thought that the King of kings should be sought in the palace of the ruler, and this mistake led them to King Herod, rather than the manger. The tragic consequences of this error are known - the mad king ordered all children under the age of two in Bethlehem to be killed. They are now revered as the first martyrs for Christ.

The Magi continued following the Star and found themselves in Bethlehem



and met their God there. Their further fate is not known for certain. Tradition says that they preached Christ and were martyred in Mesopotamia. The Christian community preserved their remains. By the fifth century their remains were in Mediolano (present-day Milan). In the twelfth century, Friedrich Barbarossa transported the relics of the three Wise Men from Mediolano to the German city of Cologne. There they decided to build a completely unique “ark” to house the relics.

In the Middle Ages there was a good tradition – to build a great cathedral, more beautiful than any that previously existed in a city, in order to house a great relic. For the sake of the “Three Kings”, as the Christmas Magi were nicknamed in Germany, the greatest masterpiece of Gothic art, Cologne Cathedral was built. At its very centre - in the altar, in the reliquary made by the skilful master Nicholas of Verdun - the relics of the three Wise Men rest to this day.

Popular love for the “Three Kings” is manifested in Germany in a very special way. In memory of their journey following the Star in the streets of Cologne and many other cities on their feast day, January 6th, you can see the most interesting processions. Children, wearing shiny trains, crowns, and carrying staffs, walk around their neighbourhoods and knock at the door of their neighbours. These joyfully open the door, of course! After all, the Christmas Magi have come to visit them, sages from the East, who followed the star of Bethlehem and worshipped Christ!

Just a couple of hours before, these “wise men”, together with their parents were waiting in the cathedral for the start of the divine service, after which the shrine was opened and one by one they passed under the high altar, on which the shrine is installed. Having thus “greeted” the Magi, the children dressed in specially prepared costumes call on their neighbours, singing Christmas songs and poems. In return they receive a treat or small change.

The neighbour will also receive a gift - a blessing. On the doorway will appear the inscription: “B + C + M”, and the current year, for example, 2017. This means that Balthazar, Caspar and Melchior visited the house and blessed it. And today, not only in Cologne, but also in Bavaria and other religious parts of Germany, it is difficult to find a door that is not decorated with the cherished letters.



Obituary

On the night of the Nativity of Christ, Archpriest Sergei Ovsiannikov, rector of the St Nicholas Church in Amsterdam (the Netherlands), reposed in the Lord. Father Sergei was well known in the Diocese of Sourozh, as he was ordained to the priesthood by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, and was a frequent visitor to the UK. In 2015, Father Sergei was a speaker at the diocesan conference.



In 1989, Fr Sergei, while studying at a Biblical and Theological College in London served as a deacon under Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, from whom he learned important spiritual lessons. The theme of freedom was one of the most important for Fr Sergei. It was the subject of his last book, ‘A Book of Freedom: Leave Behind Legalism – Attain to Love’. The book was published by Nicea Press at the beginning of 2018, just a few days before his death. One may dare to describe it as the spiritual legacy of Fr Sergei.

Eternal memory to Archpriest Sergei!

Legacy of Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

MEETING A NON-ORTHODOX SOCIETY

Part 1

Twelve Apostles in the power of the Holy Spirit went out into the world. They were accompanied or surrounded by a small group of disciples, in all seventy men and women. And they converted the world, not immediately, but they started a wave of understanding, of knowledge, of newness of life, that made the whole world different from what it had been for thousands of years before. There are now millions of Christians of different denominations and yet, because of us Christians, Christianity seems to become increasingly irrelevant.

There is a vast society which lives, acts, thinks, creates in a world that has nothing seemingly to do with the Gospel. I said seemingly, because it is not totally true. The principles on which even godless societies are built very often have Christian roots. Christianity has brought into the world a notion that did not exist in antiquity - the absolute, final value of the person, of every single being. In the past there were masters and slaves; now there are human beings, men, women, children, unique - and each of us, even though we may not always know it, has an absolute value and significance in the eyes of God, and even through that in the eyes of society. And yet, somehow

we have become irrelevant. I am not challenging you, I am not criticizing the Church, but I think there are a certain number of things which we should consider, reflect on and see where we stand with regard to them.

Missionaries and Pilgrims

The first generation of Christians, the Apostles, the disciples and those who were converted by them, were on a pilgrimage. It was not a sedentary society; the first Christians were people who moved from place to place to bring to others the unutterable joy of a new life in Christ and in the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, those who settled in one place were not an introverted society, a society locked in upon itself, but a society of people who looked outward for the lost sheep of the kingdom of God. This is something which we have lost. All the Churches, in one way or another, have had missions. But what is striking is that far too often the missionaries went out into the world with a sense of offensive, insulting, arrogant superiority. They went into the world in order to give what they possessed without realising that they possessed nothing, that all they could do was to follow St Paul who, seeing the vastness, the incredible difficulty of his mission, turned to God for strength, and the Lord said to him: 'my grace suffices unto thee; my strength deploys itself in thy weakness' (2 Cor.



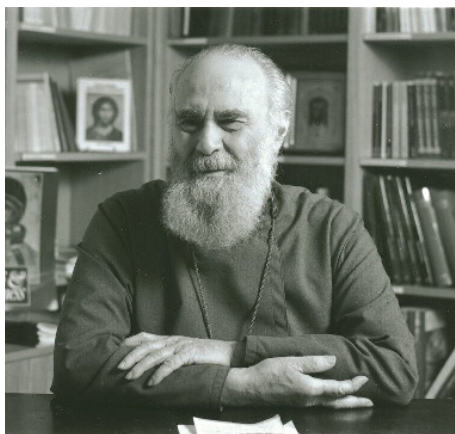
12:9). The minute group of believers, of Christians, who went into the world following Christ's command 'go, and bring the Gospel to all nations'(Mt. 28:19), knew that they were frail, defenceless, and that they could not count on any strength except that of God. St Paul said that he would glory in nothing but his weakness, so that everything that happened should be an act of God. This very often was not the attitude of Christian missionaries. The missionary movement in Christianity is not a movement of people who so love their neighbour with the love of God that they go out to the world ready to die that others may live, who go out into the world, with all the frailty that is theirs, knowing that they can do nothing, but God can do everything.

There is an episode in the life of St Stephen of Perm, one of the early Russian missionaries. He discovered in the region of Perm pagan people with

a language different from the language spoken by the Slavs, and therefore out of reach of the Gospel. He learned their language, and went out to the region of Perm, where he began to pray in their midst. The local shamans wanted to destroy him and they sent a group of armed men to kill him. They came back and the shaman said, 'Is he dead?' 'No', they said, 'we could not kill him; when we met him face to face, there was such love and openness in him that we knelt down and begged for his blessing.' That is mission.

On the other hand, by way of contrast, let me remind you of a Western missionary who went to India and wrote to his superior in Spain, 'send us priests, it doesn't matter how bad they are; anything will do for these savages.' He had seen nothing of the depth, of the richness, of the beauty that was there. Any priest would do! That is something that we do not find in the Gospel. What some missionaries brought was not the Gospel, not the joy of a new life, not a meeting with the living God. But what is remarkable, even unique in the preaching of the early missionaries, the Apostles, is what St John says: 'we speak of what our eyes have seen, our hands have touched, our ears have heard' (1 Jn 1:1). They speak of their experience. One may say, 'they had been with Christ, they could speak of what they saw in Him', but this is not the whole truth, because thousands of people met Christ on the roads of the Holy Land, but very few saw Him. Their eyes were blind.

They saw an outer form, they heard strange, puzzling, challenging words, but not words that touched their inner core and made them into new beings. When Christ spoke of giving bread as His body, those around Him left Him and he turned to His disciples and said, 'Do you want to leave me also?' and Peter said to Him, 'Where should we go? Thou hast the word of eternal life.' And if you read the Gospel you will see that there is not one passage in the Gospel in which the Lord describes eternal life. He indicates, here and there, by a word, this is the life of eternity, but He does not give the kind of imagery which we find in mystical literature. What the words of Peter mean is that whenever you speak, your words must hit at the very core of our being, like two stones struck together and bringing out a spark. When the core of our being is so affected, eternal life which is dormant in us blossoms out, flares up. This is what the Apostles did, what the early Christians did, because their experience had been a personal experience of meeting the living God face to face. I do not mean meeting Christ in the flesh, I mean that in their experience they knew God through Christ and through the illumined Apostles. When Paul spoke of God he was transfigured and there is an ancient manuscript which says that when St Paul was in repose, as it were simply himself, he was as ugly as a devil, but when he spoke of God, he shone with light like an angel of Heaven.



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

God loves us more than a father, mother, friend, or any else could love, and even more than we are able to love ourselves.

(St John Chrysostom)

Holy Places of London

CHURCH OF ST GILES- WITHOUT-CRIPPLEGATE

This large, spacious, beautiful, bright, ancient church is one of the few churches of the City of London to preserve its medieval atmosphere and appearance. Its patron is St Giles (+ c. 710-721; feast: 1/14 September).

The saint was born in the mid-seventh century in Provence in the south of Gaul. He lived most of his life as a hermit. At first he had a hermitage in the thick of a forest near the Rivers Rhone and Gard in the historic Septimania region and later moved to the surroundings of Nimes where spent all his time in prayer. The only companion of Giles was a hind, which gave him milk. Many years passed. Once royal hunters found the hermit while pursuing the hind. Soon Giles founded a monastery, which afterwards was called Saint-Gilles-du-Gard, where he became abbot and later reposed, venerated by many for his holy life and miracles. A whole city grew round this great pilgrimage centre. In the middle ages the veneration of St Giles spread all over Europe: churches, monasteries, hospitals were named after him in France, Germany, Spain, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, England and Scotland (where Edinburgh Cathedral is dedicated to him). Today, portions of his relics are kept in Toulouse, Saint-Gilles and many other French

and other European cities. Since time immemorial Giles has been venerated as the protector of cripples, beggars, blacksmiths, the sick (especially those with cancer), the disabled, lepers, the insane and epileptics. His name was invoked against plague. Three historic London churches bear the name of this much-loved saint.

The Church of St Giles-Without-Cripplegate (after the ancient gate to the City of London near which it once stood just outside the city wall) (1) stands in Fore Street in Barbican where formerly a watch tower used to stand and now residential developments and the Barbican Arts Centre are located. The first Saxon church existed here in the eleventh century, but after the



St. Giles-without-Cripplegate Church
(Source - Wikipedia)



*Icon of St. Giles
(icon painter Aidan Hart)*

Norman Conquest it was rebuilt in 1090. The present structure in the Perpendicular style dates back to 1394. Though this unique church was not affected by the fire of 1666, it was damaged by two other fires – those of 1545 and 1897 – and also during the German bombing in 1940. Despite everything its main construction survived.

St Giles' Church retains its medieval feel and open layout; it has many pillars, a chancel, a nave, the north and south transepts. There is a wealth of notable features inside, including the Great East window, the Great West window, numerous statues, busts and memorials to famous people closely connected with this parish. The church acquired some of its present furnishings (the altar, the font, the pews)

from its neighbour – St Luke's Church, which was closed in the 1960s. Among the ancient surviving treasures of St Giles' Church are some Roman tiles; sedilia (ornate stone seats for priests); a brass lectern; a piscina (a stone basin for draining water used in the Mass) etc. The stained glass windows depict Christ in Majesty; the Mother of God with lilies; the Apostles Paul, John and Bartholomew; St George the patron-saint of England; St Alphege (who was martyred in Greenwich and to whom a neighbouring parish was once dedicated). St Giles is depicted on the left side of the East Window and on the top of the West Window. Besides, a stone statue of Giles can be seen over the north door outside the church.

Let us mention some of the celebrities who historically had ties with St Giles' parish. The author of *The Book of Martyrs*, John Foxe, is buried here; the wonderful preacher, translator of the Bible and hierarch Lancelot Andrewes



*Interior of St. Giles-without-Cripplegate
Church
(Source - Wikimedia Commons)*

was vicar of St Giles' in 1588-1605; the prominent explorer and captain Martin Frobisher who discovered Frobisher Bay in Canada and fought against the Spanish Armada is buried here and commemorated with a plaque; Oliver Cromwell married his wife Elizabeth here in 1620 and is commemorated with a bust; John Milton, the author of the epic poem, *Paradise Lost*, and a parishioner of St Giles' is buried here and immortalised with a symbolical gravestone, two busts and a metal statue; the preacher and author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan, was a parishioner here and is immortalised with a bust; the author of the novel *Robinson Crusoe*, Daniel Defoe, died on the territory of the parish and is commemorated with a bust; the renowned historian and map-maker John Speed lived within the parish and was interred at St Giles' with his spouse and his ancient bust survives; William Shakespeare's brother named Edmund lived nearby and had two his sons baptised at St Giles' (some suggest William himself attended services here!); in 1474 John and Agnes –the parents of Thomas More – married at St Giles'; the composer-madrigalist Thomas Morley was an organist at St Giles' for some time.

Many of them are depicted on stained glass. There is a display-cabinet in the church showing some of its precious artefacts.



Statue of John Milton in St. Giles-without-Cripplegate Church (Source - Wikimedia Commons)

The Cripplegate Charitable Foundation which was established in 1891 and helps local organisations is connected with this place too. In fact all began centuries ago and the Foundation's activities, such as care for the needy and the oppressed, are so close to the spirit of St Giles!

The church has three organs and holds regular concerts. Its full name is the parish of St Giles Cripplegate and St Luke Old Street. Both saints are commemorated by the church round about St Luke's Day (18th October).

Dmitry Lapa

(1) The name 'Cripplegate' is derived from the early English word meaning

‘tunnel’, ‘covered walk’. You can see sections of the ancient wall near the church to this day.

Address: St Giles’ Cripplegate Church, Fore Street, London EC2Y 8DA

Directions: the nearest Tube stations are Barbican and Moorgate; the nearest train stations are Shoreditch High Street and Hoxton.

Service times:

Sundays

08.00 Holy Communion (first Sunday of the month)

10.00 Parish Eucharist

16.00 Evening Prayer

Weekdays

08.30 Morning prayer (Monday – Thursday)

The church is usually open from Monday till Friday 10.00 – 16.00.



*Bust of Daniel Defoe in
St. Giles-without-Cripplegate Church
(Source - Pinterest)*

British and Irish Saints

VENERABLE ITA OF LIMERICK, “FOSTER-MOTHER OF THE IRISH SAINTS”

Commemorated: 15/28th January

Saint Ita is the second most popular Irish woman saint after Brigid. She is venerated in Ireland by Orthodox and Catholic believers to this day.

The future saint was born in about 480 into a Christian family near Waterford - situated in the Munster province in the southeast of Ireland. Her father was a chieftain. The girl was baptised with the name ‘Deirdre’. From childhood she was distinguished by her zeal and desire for the ascetic life. Everyone noted purity, meekness, kindness, the presence of the grace of God and holiness in the child. To the amazement of the adults, the future abbess observed a very strict fast from her cradle. One night her parents saw that their little daughter’s bedroom was filled with an unusual fire which was understood to be divine grace.

When Deirdre was 16, she left her home together with her sister Fiona in order to lead a holy life and serve God to the end of her days. At first her father opposed the saint’s decision as he wished to marry her to a nobleman, but he was brought to his senses by an angel and gave her permission to become a nun. She was tonsured by



Icon of St Ita of Limerick

St Declan, Bishop of Ardmore, and received in monasticism the name ‘Ita’, which means ‘craving for holiness’. Ita together with her sister, guided by three unearthly pillars of light, reached the place predestined by God where she was to found a convent. The local ruler offered Ita a large area of land for her community, but the saint humbly asked him to give 4 acres of land for her nunnery that she then carefully cultivated.

Thus the holy woman founded Killeedy Convent near Limerick in the south-west of Ireland, becoming

its first abbess. The name 'Killeedy' means 'cell, or church of Ita'. The convent was noted for its particular veneration of the Holy and Undivided Trinity. St Ita, who had a keen interest in music, composed a famous lullaby to the Infant Christ which is used to this day.

At her convent Ita opened a school for children and young people where numerous young men from various parts of Ireland were sent to be educated. Ita raised, or 'fostered' many future Irish saints, so she has popularly been known as 'the foster-mother of saints of Ireland'. Among the saints who studied under Ita were Sts Brendan the Navigator, Mochoemoc, Cumian and Fachanan. St Brendan was a close spiritual child of Ita and often visited her between his sea voyages to obtain advice. The great missionary St Columbanus visited her convent as a young man for counsel. Once on the feast of Nativity of Christ, after praying, Ita was miraculously transferred to the Clonfert Monastery where Brendan gave her Holy Communion.

Ita used to say that the Lord loves three things in a Christian most of all: faith in God with a pure heart, a spiritual Christian life with simplicity, and generous love; but the Lord especially dislikes in us the following things: a gloomy face (according to another variant: hatred in our hearts), persistence in sin and excessive reliance on money.

Ita combined the qualities of a caring mother and a skilled spiritual guide. The holy and loving Abbess never left her convent. Her austere and simple life and thirst for holiness attracted many women to her from the Emerald Island, and they entered her community in large numbers. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy that her parents had received: that many people's souls would be saved through Ita. The convent sisters helped the needy and the elderly, cared for the sick, taught and cared for children. Manual work was encouraged: the convent had a wonderful vegetable garden.

Ita led a severe, ascetic life, with daily hours-long prayers, prostrations, days-long fasts, vigils and church services;



St Ita - a stained glass

the rest of her time she devoted to the care of those who sought her aid. Angels and saints miraculously appeared to her and conversed with her. On a certain occasion food was delivered to the saint directly from the heavens. From time to time Ita retreated to seclusion and prayed alone for a long time. Many came to her convent, seeking spiritual advice, instruction and consolation. There were many cases of miraculous healing of sick people through the intercession of Ita. By the force of her prayer Ita raised from the dead one of her relatives who had fallen in battle; she restored the sight of a blind man and healed a learned man from dumbness.

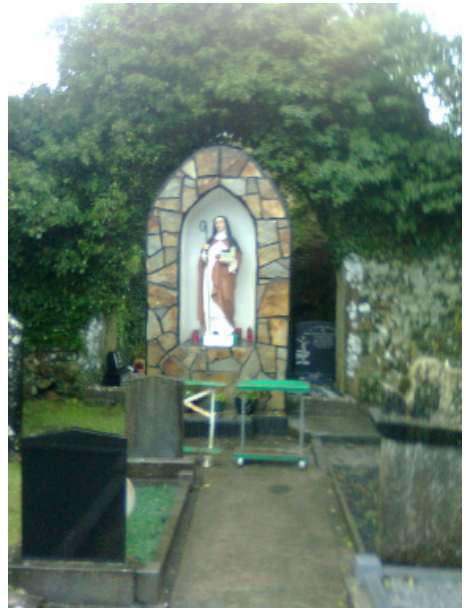
The Saviour abundantly bestowed on Ita the gift of wisdom. Already during her life Irish people from all corners of the island venerated her as a saint. She became known as a wonderworker, possessed the gifts of spiritual discernment and clairvoyance and was famous for her prophecies.

She is often called ‘the white sun of the women of Munster’, ‘the Brigid of Munster.’ There where Ita was born and founded her convent a number of churches are dedicated to her and several localities bear her name.

Ita lived an extremely long life, dying at the age of 90. Feeling that her end was near, she gathered her convent sisters, invoked the blessing of the Lord upon them as well as on all the priests, monks, nuns and laypeople in

the region. This holy abbess passed away in the Lord following a torturous illness in about 570. The veneration of this saint spread all over Ireland. The convent of St Ita, a great centre of holiness and learning, existed till the ninth-century Viking raids.

Only minor ruins survive of the once famous and important convent of St Ita in Killeedy which is now a parish in County Limerick. The supposed grave of Ita (now marked by a modern shrine with a statue of the saint) is located nearby. Locals and pilgrims decorate it with flowers, and a solemn Catholic service is celebrated annually on January 15 in surrounding churches



*The supposed grave of
St. Ita in Killeedy, Limerick*

with festive events dedicated to the holy patroness. Next to her grave there is an ancient holy well associated with Ita: its full name is ‘the holy well of my little Ita.’ Its water once healed many children from smallpox and nowadays there have been cases of healing of schoolchildren from warts. The well here first gushed forth during

Ita’s lifetime. St Ita is the patroness of children (especially of those studying), pregnant women, and those with eye diseases.

By Dmitry Lapa

Source: <http://orthochristian.com/76816.html>

NEW ARRIVALS IN CATHEDRAL BOOKSTORE

Dear Friends,

A new issue of the bilingual Orthodox children’s journal Sparrow/Vorobushek (Winter 2017/2018) has appeared. You can purchase it in the Cathedral bookshop, or online at www.sourozh.myshopify.com/collections/vorobushek-sparrow.

In this number you will find: New Year’s stories of Nikolai Gol and Irina Sergeeva-Kolesnikova, poems about winter by Galina Ilyina, a fairy tale by Oscar Wilde, Anna Remez’s story from the life of Picasso, an announcement about the Van Eyck and Pre-Raphaelites exhibition in the National Gallery of London, children’s songs with classical illustrations by Randolph Caldecott, photo material of



Anastasia Khoroshilova, the life of St Alban, the first Christian martyr in Britain. The issue is illustrated by remarkable artists: Elena Sakharova-Staroverova, Elizaveta Manihina (Reshetnikova), Ekaterina and Maria Shabanov, Lyubov Chernienko and Olga Florenskaya.

EXPLANATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY - PART 5

Continued from previous issue.

The Anaphora (continued)

After the sanctification of the Holy Gifts the priest, in a subdued voice, asks the Lord that the partaking of the Holy Gifts, will serve “*unto devoutness of soul (that is, to strengthening in every good deed), unto the forgiveness of sins, unto the communion of the Holy Spirit, unto the fulfillment of the Kingdom of Heaven, unto boldness toward Thee; not unto Judgment or condemnation.*” He then remembers those for whom the sacrifice is offered, for the Holy Gifts are offered to the Lord God as a sacrifice of thanksgiving for all the saints.

Then the priest prays for the special remembrance of the all-holy Virgin Mary and says aloud: ‘*Especially our all-holy, immaculate, most blessed, and glorious Lady the Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary.*’

The priest at this time silently prays first for the departed, and then for the living, in particular for the Church hierarchy: ‘*Among the first, remember, O Lord, our great Lord and Father, the most holy Patriarch ..., and our bishop Grant them for Thy holy churches in peace, safety, honour, health, and length of days, rightly to define the word of Thy truth.*’

The Preparation for Communion

The deacon proclaims the Litany, ‘*Having commemorated all the saints, again and again in peace, let us pray to the Lord.*’

The Litany ends with the following exclamation: *And make us worthy, O Master, that with boldness and without condemnation we may dare to call upon Thee, the heavenly God, as Father, and to say:’* As the Lord taught us, we address God as our Father, singing the Lord’s prayer.

‘Our Father, who art in the heavens, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’



At this time the words “*Give us this day our daily bread*” remind us of the Bread of Life that Jesus Christ gave to us, namely, His Body and Blood. As Jesus said: “*I am the living Bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever; and the Bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world*” (John 6:51).

Adapted from www.fatheralexander.org/booklets/english/liturgy_e.htm

www.fatheralexander.org/booklets/english/liturgy_e.htm



For and about Children

FOR CHILDREN ABOUT THE NATIVITY OF JESUS CHRIST

(December 25/January 7)

‘Something happened in the world’
- so Boris Pasternak said about the
Nativity of Christ.



I want to tell you, young reader,
about the Miracle, which happened
more than two thousand years ago.

Let's begin our story by remembering
the miracle of the birth of Mary, in
the city of Nazareth, in the family of
the good and pious people, Joachim
and Anna.

Mary was hardworking, zealous and
meek. Her favourite pastimes were
prayer, reading the Holy Scriptures
and helping the poor. But, sadly,
Mary's parents died and she became
an orphan. The Lord took care of
her in this difficult time as well, and
she remained in the Temple, in which
she was brought up. When Mary
grew up, she asked not to be given in
marriage, as she promised to devote
herself to God. But the law did not
allow her to live alone, so she was
given to the care of a distant relative,
the elderly man Joseph. There she
continued to live a righteous life
of prayer, the same way as in the

Temple. One day, while reading the Holy Scripture, her room was lit up with a bright light, and an angel of God, Gabriel, appeared before Mary.

‘Rejoice, highly favoured one, The Lord is with you; Blessed are you among women’.

Mary, seeing Him, was confused. But the angel said to her:

‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end’ (Luke 1:26-34).

Mary accepted the news with humility.

At that time, a census was conducted and Mary and Joseph went to the city of their ancestors, Bethlehem.

Christ is born

It was time for Mary to deliver, but all the rooms and houses were occupied. So at night, they stopped in a cold cave where ‘she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger’ (Luke 2:1-7).



The guiding star

That night the shepherds were grazing their animals when an Angel appeared to them and announced a great joy, the birth of the Saviour, who is the Lord Jesus Christ. At the time of the birth of Jesus Christ, a very bright star appeared in the sky, called the Star of Bethlehem. The Magi (as Eastern wise men were called) saw it in the sky and realized that it was announcing the birth of the King of the Jews. According to the Scriptures, the star moved across



the sky from east to west and stopped right above the cave with the baby in the cradle. Riding on camels, the wise men set out on their journey, and the wonderful Christmas star pointed out their path until they stopped over the place where Jesus was born.

The Magi bowed to the New-born Saviour and offered him their gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh. Gold - as King, frankincense - as God, and myrrh - sweet oil - as a Man who must die.

Eight days after the birth of the Divine Child (Jan 1/14), the priest performed the rite of circumcision on Him, and gave Him the name Jesus. This name, which was pronounced by the angel before His birth, means 'Saviour.'

The Warm Light of Christmas

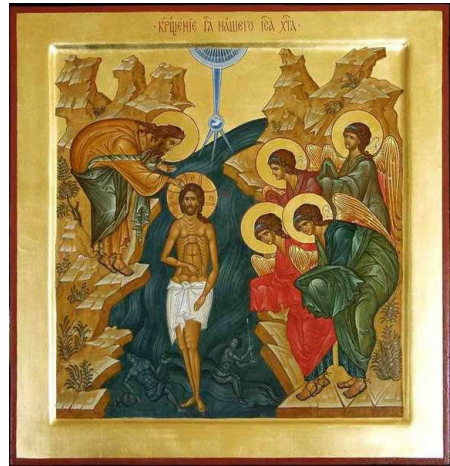
Since ancient times, the symbol of the star of Bethlehem has been used as a decoration for the Christmas holidays, as a traditional decoration



put on the top of Christmas trees.

In memory of the gifts that the wise men brought to the new-born Jesus, people still give each other presents for Christmas. It has long been accepted at Christmas not only to give gifts, but also to do works of charity.

If you think that you are small or not



so powerful for miracles, then let us inspire you, our young reader. You can go to the forest or park, feed the birds, help your parents around the house or make a toy of your own.

We wish the light of Christmas, goodness and mercy to touch every heart and fill your home with warmth. 'Christ is born, let us glorify Him.'

The Baptism of the Lord (Epiphany). (6th/19th January)

The feast was established in memory of the baptism of Jesus Christ in the River Jordan. The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is called the Epiphany, because on that day the Holy Trinity appeared for the first time - God the Father proclaimed the Son from heaven, the Son received Baptism in the River Jordan, and the Holy Spirit descended on the Son in the form of a dove. This

is evidenced by all four Gospels.

It came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptised by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven: "You are My Son, in whom I am well pleased"

(Mark 1:9-11).

For reflection

The soul that loves God has its rest in God and in God alone. In all the paths that men walk in in the world, they do not attain peace until they draw nigh to hope in God.

(St. Isaac the Syrian, Homily 56, 89)

*Sourozh Messenger is published with the blessing
of His Grace Bishop Matthew of Sourozh*

Online-version is available via the diocesan website: www.sourozh.org

E-mail: londonsobornylstok@gmail.com

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