

DIOCESE OF SOUROZH
RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
CATHEDRAL OF THE DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD AND ALL
SAINTS

67 ENNISMORE GARDENS, LONDON SW7 1NH

CATHEDRAL NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2015



ST NICHOLAS THE WONDERWORKER AND ARCHBISHOP OF MYRA IN LYCIA

6/19 DECEMBER

TROPARION, TONE 4

The truth of things revealed thee to thy flock as a rule of faith, a model of meekness and a teacher of abstinence: wherefore thou hast attained the heights through humility and riches through poverty. O holy Hierarch Nicholas our father, entreat Christ God that our souls be saved.

KONTAKION, TONE 3

Thou wast a celebrant of the sacraments in Myra, O Saint Nicholas; for, fulfilling the Gospel of Christ, O venerable one, thou didst lay down thy life for thy people, and didst save the innocent from death. Wherefore thou wast proclaimed a Saint, as a great minister of the mysteries of the grace of God.

HOLY FATHER NICHOLAS, PRAY TO GOD FOR US!

The icon of St Nicholas depicted on the cover of the Newsletter is located in the London Cathedral of the Dormition of the Diocese of Sourozh of the Russian Orthodox Church. The icon was painted for a Russian warship that took part in the Russo-Japanese war in 1904-05. During the action the icon was thrown into the sea by an explosion, where it helped to save a number of sailors who were clinging to it; they were taken on board a British warship. An inscription on the reverse of the icon reads: *This image was constructed through the efforts of officers of the training squadron, 1891.* The icon was taken from Russia to England and presented to the Russian church in London in 1935 by a certain Captain W. Godfrey. The holy image, which had suffered heavy damage from shellfire, was kept for many years on the gallery in the church. At the request of Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, Archbishop Anatoly of Kerch began to restore it in the 1990's. After restoration, the icon was once again blessed and installed in the church on the eve of the 100th anniversary of the Russo-Japanese war.

Photo: Irina Kalashnikova

THE NATIVITY FAST AND THE HOLY COMMUNION

*A Sermon by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh
25th November, 1990*



In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. In today's Gospel (Lk. 10:25-37) we hear the Lord saying to each of us that our neighbour is not the one whom we like, not even the one whom we love; it is the one who needs us, whether he likes us or not, and it is to him that we must turn in compassion, in charity, as indeed the Lord God Himself turned to us at the moment when the whole of mankind was alien

to Him; and again, turns to each of us at the moment when we are at rock bottom, when we are as far away from Him as we can imagine, indeed, much farther, because only God can measure the distance that separates us from our being in Him, with Him, the distance which measures His absence from our life.

On November 28th is the beginning of fasting time that prepares us for Christmas; many will turn to fasting, eating those things which are appointed by the Church; but is that the fast which God wishes us to keep? Listen to what the Lord said to the Hebrews, from the lips of Isaiah the Prophet [Is. 58:3-8]:

"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgressions ... Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways, as though they were a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their

God. ... Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and Thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and Thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast you find pleasure and exploit all your labourers! Behold, you fast for strife and debate and to smite with the fist of wickedness! You shall not fast as you do this day, to make your voice heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast I have chosen - to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke! Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him? And that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of thy Lord shall be thy rearguard."

Let us remember these words, because more than ever in our time we must not fast hypocritically, not fast with false piety, but fast by turning away from every evil, from all evil, put right in our lives everything that has gone wrong.

Are we going to meet the day when the Lord our God took flesh in order to enter into the realm of death, He Who is the Eternal One, the day when He chose to enter into the realm of suffering for our sakes – are we going to meet this day by accepting to continue in our estrangement from Him? And we are estranged from Him when we hate our neighbour, when we reject our neighbour, when we refuse to forgive, when we turn away from him or her who is in need of our mercy – not only of bread, not only of shelter – indeed, that also counts! – but in need of forgiveness, of the mercy of the heart! Are we going to meet the Lord who came to save sinners by rejecting those whom we consider as sinners, those who have offended us, those against whom we have fought? Can we meet the Lord on such terms?

Let us think of the shepherds: they were simple people, unsophisticated, uncomplicated, but their hearts were open to the extent to which it was possible to them, they were clean, pure of heart, and therefore, they could hear the news of the Incarnation; they could hear and receive the news as the most wonderful thing that changed everything in their lives. We have been listening to the good news day-in, day-out, year after year – has it come to us as good news that has transformed our lives, made us into people beyond compare, people who are prepared to live and to die for those who hate, who reject, who ignore, who offend us? If we are not – it is in vain that we speak of being Christian; he who does not love his brother is a liar when he says that he loves his God – these are the Apostle's words.

Let us therefore enter into this period of fasting in earnest, stand in judgement before God to be judged by Him, and ask ourselves whether we could stand side by side with Him when others come to be judged, and step forward and say, 'Lord! I have forgiven – Thou hast no grudge against him, against her, any more!' Amen.

ARCHBISHOP ELISEY CELEBRATED THE 9TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS EPISCOPAL CONSECRATION AND THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS ENTRY INTO HOLY ORDERS

The clergy and parishioners of the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Mother of God in London and members of the Diocese of Sourozh congratulated Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh on two anniversaries in his service in the Church – the 9th anniversary of his episcopal consecration and the 30th anniversary of his entering Holy Orders.

On November 22nd, the feast of the icon of the Mother of God "Quick to Hearken", Archbishop Elisey celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the main church of the Cathedral. Archbishop Anatoly of Kerch (suffragan



Archbishop Elisey on the day of his episcopal consecration with Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Alexy II

archbishop of the Diocese of Sourozh) and the clergy of the Cathedral concelebrated. The senior priest of the Cathedral, Archpriest Dimitry Karpenko, on behalf of the clergy and the many parishioners present, congratulated Archbishop Elisey on the 30th anniversary of his diaconal ordination and entry into Holy Orders. After the service, many parishioners approached Vladyka for a blessing and congratulated him.

On November 26th, the day when the Holy Church commemorates Saint John Chrysostom, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the small church of the Cathedral, after which Archbishop Anatoly, the clergy and the people congratulated Vladyka on the 9th anniversary of his episcopal consecration. This is a significant date for the Diocese of Sourozh in that it marks the time when Vladyka came to begin his archpastoral service in Great Britain. After the service, the congregation congratulated Archbishop Elisey, singing "Many Years" during the festive meal shared in the library of the Cathedral.



Parishioners of the Cathedral congratulate Vladyka Elisey on the 9th anniversary of his episcopal consecration and 30th anniversary of his entry into Holy Orders.

By Alexander Andreev

It was a special pleasure for Vladyka Elisey to receive a congratulatory letter from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. We are publishing it here.

**To His Eminence
Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh**

Your Eminence!

Please accept my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of your completing 30 years of service in Holy Orders, together with my prayerful wishes for unceasing joy in Christ Jesus and the grace-filled gifts of the Life-giving Spirit, the Comforter. In your youth, following the example of your father, you decided to dedicate yourself to the Lord: you entered the Leningrad Theological schools and after your graduation you were tonsured as a monk, ordained to the diaconate and then to the priesthood. You were enabled by the All-Wise Providence of the Almighty to carry out your obedience in many responsible positions: in the Russian Spiritual Mission in Jerusalem, and in the Department of External Church Relations. As representative of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia in Estonia and later in ancient Antioch, you bore witness to the beauty and truth of Orthodoxy to those near and those far off. Desiring the greater gifts, you received the lot of apostle ship and now performing your archpastoral service in Great Britain, 'you preach the gospel of the kingdom' (Mt. 4:24), working strenuously in order that 'the word of God should grow and multiply' (Acts 12:24).

May the All-Merciful Lord keep you in good health for many years.

With love in Christ,
+ KIRILL
Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia



PARISH ASSEMBLY DISCUSSES MATTERS OF PARISH ADMINISTRATION

The Parish Assembly, our parish's administrative body, held a meeting at the Dormition Cathedral on Wednesday, 2nd December 2015. The meeting was opened by Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh who stressed that the primary goal for the parish was to continue restoring and strengthening an active Church community. He pointed out that our parish was unique. Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh had wanted to create a church that could not only provide a space for regular services and beautiful singing, but also support a community of Christians seeking salvation together. The Dormition parish has a long history. Next year, the 300th anniversary of Russian Orthodoxy in Great Britain would be celebrated and a Diocesan Committee would be established to organise the events. Also the final consecration of the Cathedral after the refurbishment works was planned to take place at the end of the next year.

The following points were presented at the Assembly meeting: comprehensive reports on administrative matters; reports on the spiritual development of the

community (pastoral care, education and working with young people); a report on social work; an overview of the reconstruction of the Cathedral, and the parish budget. Each of them was actively discussed and new suggestions were put forward. The members of the Assembly noted that the atmosphere of the meeting was warm and open. The Churchwarden, Nataliya Tkachuk, highlighted this during her presentation and thanked the clergy and the parishioners for their ardent desire to make the life of the parish vibrant, interesting and well established on both the administrative and spiritual levels. Decisions were made based on the results of the Assembly meeting and they will be published in due course.

By Julia Pliauksta. Translated by Yekaterina Kartasheva

"WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR" - A SERMON BY ARCHPRIEST JOSEPH SKINNER AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NATIVITY FAST



In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In today's Gospel reading from St. Luke we hear the story of a man who came to Jesus with a very important question. "Teacher, - he says, - what must I do in order to inherit eternal life?" Surely this is the most important question that we could possibly have, how would it be possible for us to live eternally?

Not only to exist but to partake of that eternal life which is the life of God Himself. And it says in the Gospel that this man was testing Jesus to see how he would answer. He was not an ignorant man; he was an expert in the Law. In reply the Lord puts to him another question, "What do you read in the Scriptures?" Immediately, as one who knows the Scriptures from beginning to end very well, he answers: "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself*" (Lk. 10:27, Dt. 6:4, Lev. 19:18)). And the Lord says: "You have answered well. Do this and you will live", that is, you will have that eternal life which you seek. Then he comes back with another question: "Who is my neighbour?" In this, it says, he was seeking to justify himself, to make sure that his manner of life was in accordance with the requirements of the Law. And in answer the Lord tells this parable of the Good Samaritan. It is very well known. You will remember it.

A man was going down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. If you have been to the Holy Land you know that this is a very wild, deserted place. It was full of bandits. The man is attacked, beaten up and left for dead. And along comes someone else, as it happens, a priest. He probably was going home after serving in the temple. He saw the injured man but passed by on the other side. Then along comes another

clergyman, a Levite, today we would call him a deacon. He sees the man, comes over and has a good look. And fearing, perhaps, that it was a trap, that the thieves are waiting to rob him as well, he hurries on. Then comes a third man, this time not a clergyman, not even a proper Jew, but a Samaritan. He sees him, has compassion on him, dresses his wounds, takes him to the next inn and gives money for him to be looked after. Today the word Samaritan, if we know it at all, just means a kind of a good person, a 'Good Samaritan'. Historically, the Samaritans were people of the same ethnicity as the Jews, but they had become half pagan and were regarded as heretics by the proper Jews. They had nothing to do with them and they hated them. In order to feel the sense of this parable, ask yourself if there is a group of people whom you are not comfortable with, those of a different race, perhaps, a different colour, a different faith. And then just substitute those people for the word Samaritan in this story. At the end the Lord puts a final question: "Who do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell among thieves"? The man answers, 'I suppose the one who showed mercy to him.' We can look at this parable from different angles. In the symbolical interpretation, which you may find in the Holy Tradition, the Good Samaritan is Christ Himself. We are the man who fell among thieves, that is, assaulted by our passions, beaten up by the demons, left hardly alive. And Christ comes and has compassion on us, binds up our wounds, pours in the oil of His mercy, washes us with His precious blood, takes us to the Inn, which is an image of the Church - the spiritual hospital in which we are being looked after, being healed bit by bit. On the other hand, we can think of the story of the Last Judgement, when the Lord says: "What so ever you do to the least of these people, you do to Me". It means that when we encounter our neighbour, that is the person who needs us in one way or another, when we show mercy, when we have compassion on him, when we do what lies within our power to help him or her, then we are doing that to Christ Himself.

It is good to bear that in mind as we begin the Nativity Fast. It started yesterday and continues until Christmas - the Feast of the Lord's Nativity. Of course we know that we should practice the physical fasting, abstinence to the measure that is appropriate for us, without negligence, but without excessive zeal. We know that the point of fasting is to help us to pray and that we should make a special effort with the daily prayers, coming to Church every Sunday. Often, however, we forget the third element of keeping the fast, which is the works of mercy, to do good to those in need, to share what God has given to us. I think, dear brothers and sisters, that this is especially important for us now. More and more we are encouraged to consume, to buy, to spend, to satisfy every desire we have, starting from when we are little children and continuing with us, grown-ups. This is something very insidious. We have to stand against it, this cult of consumerism, of selfishness. And by fasting, by doing good and giving, we will be fulfilling the last word of Christ to the man who came with the big question. "*Go, and do thou likewise*" (Lk. 10:37). Amen.
By Archpriest Joseph Skinner

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF GOD: THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

"Thou shalt not make for thee any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them."

This commandment forbids creation of any substitutes for God - worship of any kinds of idols, either physical or imaginary.

The commandment was given when idolatry was mankind's sickness. In those times pagans deified all kind of objects - innumerable gods and goddesses - heavenly bodies, animals, birds, reptiles, plants, all kinds of demonic and grotesque creatures, anything in which dark superstition saw something supernatural or unexplainable. The Old Testament prophets and subsequently the Apostles and Christian preachers enlightened the world with faith in one and only one true God, the Creator of the universe and the Heavenly Father of mankind. However, there still exists a more subtle form of idolatry which persists even among those who would consider ludicrous any literal worship of idols. Indeed, the spirit of the second commandment forbids worship of anything or regard of anything more than God. Things like material wealth, worldly fortunes, veneration of political leaders might be considered as contemporary idols. For some, contemporary science has become the supreme authority by which they judge and even reject the God-revealed truths. In general, anything material and temporal that becomes the most important object for a person to the detriment of his soul has become his false god. Also, such strong passions as sex, drug addiction, drunkenness, smoking, gambling, gluttony, greed, vanity, pride, *et cetera*, have become the cruel masters of many. When the book of Revelation predicts the increase of paganism toward the end of the world, it certainly means this indirect form of idolatry: "They worshipped idols of gold, silver, brass, stone and wood which can neither see nor hear nor walk" (Revelation 9:20). The Apostle Paul labels greed as idolatry, and regarding gluttons he comments that "*their god is their belly*" (Col. 3:5; Phil. 3:19).

By Bishop Alexander (Mileant)

This is a shortened version of the article. The full article can be found here: http://fatheralexander.org/booklets/english/command.htm#_Toc513258224 . We will continue discussing the Ten Commandments in future editions of the Cathedral Newsletter.

OVERCOMING LANGUAGE BARRIERS

For several years the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Mother of God has been holding English language courses for people who do not speak fluent English, helping them to adapt to life in this country and deal with native speakers on day-to-day, as well as work-related matters. Ekaterina Smith, who organises the courses and teaches English, has told us about the work involved and the achievements of her pupils.

Our courses have been running since 2010. The idea behind them was obvious and natural: we are in England; services in the churches of the Diocese of Sourozh are conducted in two languages although, as we know, a good many of our parishioners speak English either poorly, or not at all. How can they



find work? How can they adapt to life in a foreign country? Where and how should they study the language so as not to feel semi-speechless, tongue-tied, inadequate or dependent on others? Clearly, reducing the language barrier as far as we can in our church community is a great blessing. The task is complicated by the fact that, no matter what courses a person may have completed or how long they have lived here, if Russian continues to be their constant daily language, as frequently happens, their English will be little used and will remain poor and primitive. Regular attendance at courses is essential twice, or at least once, a week, to prevent people's knowledge of English from simply being erased from their memory. For those who speak no English at all, having never studied it, the situation is clearly very challenging.

Now, with the blessing of Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh, we have regular English courses both for beginners and intermediate-level students, and we welcome parishioners and newcomers who require help and support in this regard. Our work is controlled by the Cathedral's Social Services Department and supervised by the Department Head. The teaching follows a programme that allows students to reach a standard of English equivalent to secondary school level. Good results can, of course, be achieved, provided attendance is regular and all necessary homework is actually done. The programme covers spoken English and includes reading, writing, and comprehension. Intermediate level students go further. Being already proficient in English grammar, and having a reasonable vocabulary, they can socialize with English speakers, read whatever they want, and enhance their language skills, using the internet and other accessible sources. In the summer, at the end of the academic year, we conduct our year-end tests, enabling us to assess student progress throughout the year.

As is commonly recognised, the process of teaching enables us to learn much and that is valuable. And not only about the English language. Our courses are attended by colourful and interesting students of different ages and nationalities, people who bring much we can all learn from. Some are lonely, some are ill, and others have no real interest in church life. And, sometimes, we have quite unforgettable characters, including students who are fresh out of prison. We start our lessons by reciting «Our Father» or «The Creed», either in English or in Church Slavonic, which some

know by heart and some read from a printed sheet. And, sometimes, we recite «Our Father» in a language of one of the former Soviet Republics. I love this work. When I see a student coping with English grammar, and becoming adept in making constructive use of their text books - in other words, making independent progress in improving their English - I see my job as done. I have taught foreign languages in London since 1988. But working in the church is different, because the church is also a kind of school, educating all of us who come here to recognize that our main teacher is Christ.

By Ekaterina Smith

THE CHRISTIAN UPBRINGING OF A CHILD - A DISCUSSION WITH ARCHPRIEST VADIM ZAKREVSKY (PART 2)



In the November issue of the Cathedral Newsletter, Father Vadim was explaining how one must begin the Christian upbringing of a young child. We here continue this discussion and touch upon the issue of the upbringing of a more grown-up generation.

- What must the parents of a child who has just started coming to church do at home? Have a prepared discussion or read a book?

- I think that we all must read, and to children for that matter, spiritual literature and an age-appropriate children's Bible. Nowadays, there are many publishers, especially in Russia, with books of tales on themes from the Bible, the Gospels and so on. Of course, this is very useful. But first of all, in my opinion, one must explain to the child what is going on. This is indeed the process of upbringing of children. In either case, we must explain everything to the

child - why we mustn't do this or why we must do that - everything needs explanation. If the child were to understand everything from the first explanation, we ourselves would not go through an upbringing. This is the whole point - we repeat our explanations many times and in that process, we ourselves come to an increasingly better understanding. In that way, we educate ourselves, maybe even to a greater degree than we educate our children. We also need to explain appropriately according to the child's age - just by speaking and explaining. This approach will yield results.

- Sometimes the parent is not very acquainted with the Church. What sort of literature should be read in this case? Who can they ask for help in our church?

- Our bookshop contains many books for both those just starting out and those who have begun to develop their connection with the Church. One can find everything there. Nowadays, you can find a lot of material online. However, I ask everyone to always be careful with reading church-related material on the internet, and to read only from the sites which belong to the Moscow Patriarchate, because nowadays there are often many people who of their own accord, acting with the best of intentions, write material which doesn't align with the truth. So, I recommend caution - although it is an available resource which can and must be used. However, one must not forget that if you have a question, some doubt to which you cannot find an answer, you can always and must come to a priest with a specific question or come to one of our discussions. We hold discussions for parents on Saturdays and Fr. Joseph holds discussions on Tuesdays - so we give a lot of attention to this matter in our parish, and it works. If the wish is there, then one needs to find the opportunity to make use of all the spiritual support we offer.

- As the child grows up, at school he is often exposed to children of other denominations and to Religious Education lessons, where occasionally representatives of other churches come and put forward their faith. These examples I take from experiences related to me by parents. How must we give our children direction, the understanding that Orthodoxy is our faith and that it is endowed with the fullness of Christian doctrine?

- This is of course not easy, but possible, because children in any case remain children. When a child goes to school, he or she is subjected to a particular regime - going to this or that place to do something. This is especially apparent in faith schools where children go to their school's chapel, church etc. Of course, this poses a serious question. In this matter, the responsibility absolutely falls upon the shoulders of the parents, family and Godparents. Here, the matter must be explained to the child, but more importantly, in these instances the parents must go to either the child's teacher or to the school's priest and explain that we are Orthodox Christians and that my child attends this school and is ready to participate in all lessons which form the school's curriculum - they have to attend, this is obvious. But my child will not participate in the celebration of the church mysteries because he participates in them in his own church. In general, from my own experience, this is met with absolute understanding and the school has no objections. There was, in my recollection, a particular case when in an Anglican church school, a Russian boy did not participate in Communion. Afterwards, some of the other boys came up to him and asked him what had happened. He told them that he comes to lessons, in accordance with the rules, with the whole class but participates in the holy mysteries in his own church - he is an Orthodox Christian, so he goes to Communion in an Orthodox Church. Then eight boys from the class asked themselves why they were doing it - when they were in fact Hindu!

- So, it appears, the children were going to Communion without understanding?

- It does appear so, yes. I do not know whether the children's parents knew about this – but for several years these Hindu children happily received Communion in an Anglican church, and the communion of non-Christians did not bother anyone. As I said, I am not sure that the parents were aware of this, but it is an example.

Julia Pliauksta was interviewing Archpriest Vadim Zakrevsky of the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Mother of God in London. You can read the continuation of the discussion of the Christian upbringing of children in our next issues.

Translated by Ilya Tolchenov

**CATHEDRAL NEWSLETTER 30 YEARS AGO
NO. 181, DECEMBER 1985**

**FR. BORIS BOBRINSKOY SPEAKS ON
'THE VOICE OF ORTHODOXY' RADIO**

During his visit to England to promote the work of the Voice of Orthodoxy radio, Fr. Boris Bobrinsky celebrated a moleben for the Church in Russia in St. Basil's House Chapel, Ladbroke Grove, and this was followed by a chance to meet Fr. Boris and hear him speak. It was sad that more people did not take advantage of this opportunity; but the numbers present may have played some part in giving the occasion a very special quality. This could best be characterised, not negatively as 'informality', but positively as 'simplicity' and 'spontaneity.'

The quiet and prayerful atmosphere of the brief Moleben offered for the whole hierarchy and people of the Russian Church, for the persecuted and oppressed and for their persecutors, was not lost in the rest of the evening. Fr. Boris gave a moving and fascinating account of the Voice of Orthodoxy and its broadcasts to Russia, from its difficult beginnings - when tapes would sometimes get lost in the jungle on their way to a transmitter in Gabon - to its current range of services, readings, youth programmes etc., and some of the impressive material now in preparation. One received an overwhelming impression of a labour of love and act of faith, of holy foolishness even, in embarking on a venture so costly and demanding in time and expertise as well as money, and planning for its expansion, knowing that there could be no going back - and yet lacking any guarantee that it would be feasible to continue. Hearing the responses which testify to the place these broadcasts already hold in the hearts of Orthodox listeners in Russia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, it is hard to doubt that such faith is justified, and that this is indeed a work blessed by God. Fr. Boris described how strongly he felt the personal contact with the unknown Christians whom he invited not simply to listen, but to join in worship as he introduced the broadcast services.

'Did people tune in to the Voice of Orthodoxy by chance?' a questioner asked. 'No,' replied Fr. Boris, 'by providence.' And he urged any one visiting Russia to assist Providence by letting people know the times of broadcasts and the frequency used, and if possible by gleaning reactions from listeners.

By Elizabeth Briere

PILGRIMAGE TO THE RIGHT HAND OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST IN BIRMINGHAM AND EVIDENCE OF A MIRACLE OF ST PHILOUMENOS OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

The Greek church of the Dormition and St. Andrew in Birmingham hosted the hand of St. John the Baptist and a stole of Hieromartyr Philoumenos for a short period of time at the end of November. They were brought there from Greece. The great holy relics of the Christian world gathered a lot of believers. Fr. Michael Gogolev, a priest of the Sourozh Diocese, was among those holding services by the hand of St John the Baptist. Our parish had a few groups of pilgrims who travelled there. Tatyana Andreeva was among them. She told us about a miracle from Hieromartyr Philoumenos which had happened in Birmingham.



The Right Hand of St John the Baptist

Elder Nektarios, the superior of the Monastery of St Seraphim of Sarov and St Augustine in Greece, and Fr. Kosma, the Dean of the Greek Cathedral of the Dormition and St. Andrew in Birmingham, went to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to visit a sick woman expecting to be operated. Upon their arrival on the seventh floor they met a nurse. Having expressed their intention to see the sick woman, Elder Nektarios and Fr. Kosma received a negative answer from the nurse explaining that she could not "let three visitors into a ward room". Having looked at each other, the priests said that there were only two of them. Bewildered, the nurse sternly said, "There are three of you and please do not make fun of me". Elder Nektarios realised what was happening and said, "St Philoumenos is here with us now. That is why she is seeing three of us. Do not say anything and walk through." Fr. Kosma took the stole of St Philoumenos out of a special box and the stole was found to be giving off a fragrance. Elder Nektarios and Fr. Kosma prayed in the ward room for the sick woman to be healed. Later on the doctors informed them that the sick woman had been operated on and felt fine. What had happened could be confidently affirmed as a miracle - St Philoumenos was visibly present and his stole continued to be fragrant after that.



The icon of Hieromartyr Philoumenos

Hieromartyr Philoumenos (civil name - Sophocles Hasapis) was born on October 15th in 1913 in the village of Orounta in Cyprus. He became a monk in 1937, this took place in Jerusalem. He attended High School and became a member of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre thereafter. St Philoumenos was a superior of various Greek churches and monasteries in the Holy Land - in Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Ramallah. He allowed Jews to come to Jacob's Well. But some Jews demanded for all crosses and icons to be removed because they were distracting them from praying. St Philoumenos refused to do that. On 16/29th November, 1979, Fr Philoumenos was brutally murdered by two Jews while serving Vespers in the chapel. The church was desecrated and blown up with a grenade. The body of St Philoumenos was found to be incorrupt after it had been exhumed. Quite a number of miracles have happened in connection with it. It now rests in a chapel of the church of St Photine.

By Elena Kuzina. Translated by Yekaterina Kartasheva

THE PARISH OF ST ANDREW THE FIRST-CALLED IN ROMFORD

On 13th December the Church celebrates the feast of the holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called. Few people know that once a month in Romford on the outskirts of London Father Joseph Skinner celebrates the Divine Liturgy for members of the Orthodox community of St Andrew. Members of the community have prepared an account of its history and life, which we present in full.

While the ever-memorable Metropolitan Anthony was alive, there was never any question of opening a new Sourozh parish in the Greater London area. Indeed any parish within reasonable travelling distance of the Cathedral would have found it difficult to survive, so great was the attraction of Vladyka Anthony. After his repose in 2003 the diocese tried to encourage people living in different parts of London to form 'neighbourhood groups'. One such group was started in North and East London, meeting for fellowship and discussion in people's homes. A member of that group happened to be the dentist for the then priest at St Andrew's Anglican Church in Romford. Thus began the Sourozh connection with the place where our Romford parish now holds its services. But this was a period of great change in the Sourozh diocese and it was only in May 2008 that the first Orthodox liturgy was served in Romford.



For almost three years Father Joseph served in an empty church. What a lot we did to make people aware of the Orthodox services in Romford. We put notices in Russian shops, distributed leaflets among neighbours, established our website, but people did not come. At some point we decided to serve the Liturgy for the last time and then we would establish a congregation in another place. And a miracle happened



—several new people came to the ‘last’ service. They liked being with us and they promised to tell their friends about us. So with each service our church began to fill up with new parishioners. Now our community comprises 30 adults and 15 children as the regular members of the congregation, among whom there are not only Russians, but also English people, Ukrainians, Moldavians, Romanians, Lithuanians and Latvians. The Church of England has always supported us, and we maintain good relations with the Bishop of Chelmsford. Our congregation also tries to be involved in charitable activities – once a month we send donations to the local Food Bank.

During one of his visits Archbishop Elisey noticed that our parishioners were very friendly and created a family atmosphere. Indeed we also feel ourselves to be a family. In spite of the fact that we do not live close to one another, we go to one another as guests, observe festive occasions together and share our joys and sorrows, and our children are friends. New people are very surprised that we stay for tea after the service, talk to one another and bring the food of our own countries. There are some amazing things: once, not having agreed beforehand about the menu for refreshments, everyone brought olive salad – there was a competition for the best salad. The happiest times of our parish life were at the beginning, when new people appeared and became members of our family. Someone had their first confession, someone else had their child baptised here, and someone came to ask the priest how to pray for a departed person and has not missed a single service since then. But we also had problems. We could not sing, we did not know how to bake prosphora, where to get candles for services, what wine to buy for Communion. Our dear Father Joseph and Matushka Sarah gradually taught us everything and now regular parishioners contribute their service: some open the church and set up the furnishings, others prepare prosphora and yet others concern themselves with the choir and finally others assist the priest. The main urgent problem is the establishment of a parish school. Our congregation has 15 children aged up to 12 years, and we want to get them to understand what happens in church, not to lose their connection with God when they grow up. More and more

there appear people who come simply to light a candle, but do not stay to the end of the liturgy. Although this is also a good indicator for us, because people know who we are; we know that our congregation is of use to some and believe that it is not for nothing that God did not permit Father Joseph to serve the last Liturgy in our church.

By Gregory Bridge and Ludmila Yekimchenkova

BRITISH AND IRISH SAINTS

SAINT EDMUND THE MARTYR, KING OF EAST ANGLIA 3RD DECEMBER/20TH NOVEMBER



St Edmund as depicted in the sgraffito murals in the Cathedral

The Latin Life of St Edmund was composed by St Abbo of Fleury in c.986. The saintly Archbishop Dunstan of Canterbury related to him the story of Edmund. This story Dunstan heard as a young man from King Athelstan who had heard from the old personal sword-bearer of St Edmund. The Life of Abbo was several years later translated into old English by the learned Abbot Aelfric of Eynsham. St Edmund, King of the East Angles (841-869), was wise and honourable, he always glorified God by his way of life. He was humble, devout and lived in true faith, refusing to commit sins. He was generous to the poor and like a father to widows, guiding his people to righteousness and restraining the violent. He was crowned and anointed in Bures, Suffolk, on the day of the Nativity of Christ, 855 (the ancient Chapel of St Stephen stands on that site) and ruled peacefully for ten years.

However, in 865 a fleet of Danes invaded, pillaging and killing all over the country. Their leaders were Ingvar and Ubba. Their ships landed in Northumbria, devastated the country and killed the people. While Ubba stayed in Northumbria, Ingvar sent his ships eastwards. He rowed into East Anglia. Ingvar marched swiftly through the land, slaughtering people, men, women and innocent children, tormenting defenseless Christians. He sent the King a threatening message, saying that he must bow down to him in homage if he cared for his life. The messenger went to King Edmund and announced Ingvar's message.

King Edmund, who was very brave, said to the messenger: "I would gladly be killed by you for my people, if God so ordained. Go and tell your lord that King Edmund will never bow down to Ingvar, the leader of the heathen, unless Ingvar first bows down in faith to Jesus Christ".

When Ingvar and his soldiers arrived, King Edmund was standing in his hall, thinking of the Saviour. He threw down his weapons, wishing to imitate the example of Christ, Who refused to defend Himself in the Garden of Gethsemane. The wicked men bound Edmund, insulted him and beat him with clubs. Then they tied the faithful King to a tree. They whipped him for long time. Edmund continually called on Jesus Christ with true faith. The pagans were furious because of his faith with which he called on Christ to help him. They shot arrows at him until he was all covered with them. When Ingvar saw the noble King refusing to deny Christ, he ordered him to be beheaded, which the pirates instantly did. His soul departed joyfully to Christ on 20th November, 869. There was a man nearby, who had been hidden from Vikings by God. He overheard all this and later told the story to Athelstan. The pirates returned to their ships, hiding St Edmund's head in the thick brambles. After they had left, the country-folk who were still alive started to return to where their lord's body lay. Their hearts were much grieved and they all went looking in the forest, searching for his head among the brambles. Then a great miracle happened. By Divine Providence a wolf was sent to protect the head from other animals. The people went on searching, calling out: "Where are you now, friend?" And the head answered them: "Here, here!" And finally they all found it. There lay the wolf guarding the head, holding the head between its paws. (Since that time painters have depicted this scene on icons). Remarkably, the oak tree to which St Edmund had been tied by the Danes stood until 1848, and, when it fell, the heads of two Danish arrows were found embedded in it – thus the account of the martyrdom of St Edmund was confirmed.

The country-people laid the head by the holy body and buried it as best they could. Soon they built a Chapel over it. Time passed. Later, when the pillaging had stopped and peace was restored, they met and, since many miracles had happened in the chapel where he had been buried, they built a larger church. Next they decided to raise the holy body from the grave and place it inside the church for veneration. A great miracle happened. The body was whole, as if the King were alive, with a clean body and the neck, which had been cut through, was whole. The wounds which the heathen had inflicted on his body with their arrows had also been healed by God. So the people in the area and many other regions faithfully venerated the saint and were cured from many diseases.

Veneration for St Edmund grew and spread all over England and many other European countries. He became a symbol of national unity. Not only did the death of the martyr save his people, but it also converted the Danes themselves to Christ – many of them were baptised and even minted commemorative coins of St Edmund on the territory of Danelaw. Soon the holy king was venerated as Patron Saint of all England. Since c.1343 he has been considered to be the second Patron Saint of the country, after the Great Martyr George the Victory-Bearer. For many centuries the relics of St Edmund were kept in the huge monastery in Bury St Edmunds in

Suffolk. This important abbey was like a lavra. In 1217 the relics were stolen by French soldiers and taken to Toulouse and returned to England only in 1901. Now they are kept in the private chapel of the Duke of Norfolk in Arundel in Sussex and are not accessible for veneration. Pilgrimages associated with St Edmund are held to this day: to Bury St Edmunds - to the ruins of the great Abbey of St Edmund, to St James' Cathedral (a former abbey church) and the Roman Catholic church which preserves a small portion of his relics; to the village of Hoxne in Suffolk - the site of his martyrdom - where the ancient Church of Sts Peter and Paul and the memorial cross to St Edmund at the scene of his martyrdom stand; to the hamlet of Greensted-juxta-Ongar in Essex, where to this day stands the Church of St Andrew, claiming to be the oldest surviving wooden church in the world - the relics of the king lay there in 1013. Over 60 churches across England are dedicated to St Edmund today.

By Dmitry Lapa

The story of St Edmund's martyrdom is based on the Life by Aelfric, translation into modern English by Archpriest Andrew Phillips.

THE GOSPEL CALL TO CARE FOR NEIGHBOURS IS REFLECTED IN THE ICON EXHIBITION ORGANISED BY SAINT ELISABETH'S CONVENT, MINSK



The Sacred Space Gallery in London hosted an exhibition of icons painted in the Russian and Byzantine styles from the workshops of the Saint Elisabeth Convent in Minsk. The exhibition took place from 16th to 30th October, 2015. This was a rare event in Great Britain and we were very happy to be able to attend the opening. It was a pleasure to see many guests; among these were clergy and parishioners from our Cathedral.

The exhibition was prepared and brought here by a group of sisters and brothers of the monastery's department for external affairs. Doctor Stéphane René, director of the gallery, a teacher and a researcher in iconography at the Royal College of Art, emphasised: "Sacred Space is a unique gallery, specialising in showing the best of contemporary sacred and traditional arts from the great world traditions." According to Dr René, the works of the artists from St Elisabeth Monastery are great examples of modern Russian iconography, and the gallery was proud to present the icons in Great Britain.

A film about the monastery, its workshops and the process of the creation of an icon was presented at the opening of the exhibition. It was accompanied by stories from

Sister Anna Vasilyeva and Brother Oleg Kovalenko. Brother Oleg explained: "The icon-painting workshop is one of the oldest in our monastery with 30 people working there. It has given a start to another workshop specialising in painting frescos, and to mosaic artists creating stained glass windows. All the icons in the churches of our monastery and its dependencies have been painted in our studios. Our icons can be found in churches in Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Canada, USA and France." The team answered even difficult questions with pleasure, showing a great knowledge of the English language, including church and theological terminology. Sister Anna Vasilyeva said that initially the organisers of the exhibition had themselves a cultural goal – to present the Russian Orthodox icon and the monastery (as Mother Maria (Yakovleva), a leader and motivator of the project, emphasised). However, the project also had social purpose - to use money from the sale of icons and gifts to help those in need and the sick. The monastery supports several orphanages and hospitals. The team would be displaying souvenirs made in the monastery workshops at Christmas fairs in Winchester, Bath, and Salisbury in December.

Officials of the Republic of Belarus were among the guests: Mr Valery Dougan, a Senior Counsellor of the Belarus Embassy, in an interview with a representative of *Cathedral Newsletter*, said, "First of all, this is an important exhibition allowing British people to learn about Belarus culture and Orthodox tradition in particular. As a Belarus, I am not ashamed to present these works to Western eyes. It is clear that the icons have been created by masters of the art with love and prayer. Secondly, the art of icon-painting is a part of the general Belarus culture. Our nation can be characterized as neat, elegant, subtle, and warm-hearted, and the exhibition reflects this very well. The organisers also help the sick and the disabled, and those who have problems with society. It reveals a lot of spiritual potential in the Belarus people."



Sister Anna shared the worries which had occupied her before the exhibition opened: what if people would not come to see the icons? But her fears were dispelled when three visitors entered the hall. It was clear there was interest in the exhibition. Glowing with joy, Sister Anna told us that the guests were surprised with the complexity of work involved in creating an icon, and impressed with the products of the icon-inlaying workshop. Many liked the frame on the icon of the Theotokos of Kazan, embellished with beads and pearls, and icons from the stone workshop, made using a stone inlay technique. The exhibition was visited by families with children. One lady asked Sister Anna to give her son a full tour around the gallery and to tell him about all the displayed icons, one by one, their meaning and the process of making them. The boy asked questions about

monasticism, the priesthood and how to "learn to be a priest", without his mother's prompting. Who knows - maybe a small interest in the Orthodox icon in the boy will grow into strong faith in Christ and love towards the Mother Church!

Dr René, director of the gallery, concluded his view on the exhibition: "The work of the Sisters of Saint Elisabeth Convent is multi-layered and fulfils the gospel imperative to care for the sick and the poor. I found this aspect of their work especially touching, which in my opinion gives their beautifully executed icons an extra dimension and an even deeper spiritual meaning."

By Julia Pliauksta. Translated by Yekaterina Kartasheva

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Father Joseph Skinner will continue the series of talks on St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians on **Dec 15th and 29th at 7.30 pm.**

On **Monday, Dec. 28th**, there will be a festive Divine Liturgy for the feast of St Stephen of Sourozh. There is an icon of St Stephen containing a piece of his relics in our Cathedral. It had been saved by Russian believers during persecution time and was consequently gifted to our diocese.

CATHEDRAL NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED WITH THE BLESSING OF HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP ELISEY OF SOUROZH

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We welcome your stories of finding faith, conversion, pilgrimages etc. If you would like to leave feedback or contribute content to the Newsletter, please contact us at the above address. We are always happy to hear from our readers.

As you will be aware, the restoration and refurbishment of the Cathedral continues. Any donation, however small, is welcome and will help to maintain and beautify the Cathedral, which is our common spiritual home. You can donate by:

- Cash to the church collection boxes
- Online via the diocesan website www.sourozh.org (click «Donate»)
- A cheque or a bank transfer to **Lloyds Bank**

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