

# Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch  
British Antiochian Orthodox Deanery

NEWSLETTER 52

FEBRUARY 2000

## Faith for the New Millennium

**H**OLY ORTHODOXY is very old. 2000 years old. It goes back to Christ himself, and his Holy Apostles. It is their very teaching. We add nothing. We take nothing away.

Yet it is also very new. It always has a freshness, a life, a vivacity, a capacity to answer all our needs.

It has the answer to all problems - at least ultimately. It can bring light to the problems between nations. It can bring our own personal troubles out of darkness into the pure light of Jesus Christ.

**So it is indeed a Faith worthy of the New Millennium.**

Be proud that your Faith is so old, so profoundly the teaching of the Church of Christ, all down through the ages.

But be proud, too, that this Faith can deal with the problems not just of Greeks and Arabs and Serbians and Russians, but of Englishmen, Irishmen, Scotsmen, and Welshmen - and all of every race.

Orthodoxy is not a religion to keep to ourselves. We must be spreading it, telling others of it, opening the door for them if they wish to enter. It is for the rich and for the poor, for the good and the bad, for the grand and the lowly.

We must not push it down other peoples' throats. We must not steal people from other denominations. But we must make it available to all who will see its beauty, its joy, its peace.

**Holy Orthodoxy is for everyone. For everyone in the Third Millennium of the existence of the Orthodox Church.**

God bless you as you seek to live and pass on your Holy Faith.

*Father Alexander*

*"Holy Orthodoxy : teaching  
the Truth since AD 33."*

## A CHANCE TO STUDY YOUR FAITH

ROBIN STONE suggested formation of a small group to study our Holy Religion - that seemed a good idea. Then Fr PAUL offered a video of PETER FRANCIS' TV series on becoming Orthodox - that also seemed a good idea. So now I suggest combining the two, starting each session with

### DIVINE & HOLY LITURGY

ST FURSEY, SUTTON

SAT 5 FEBRUARY 10 AM

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX

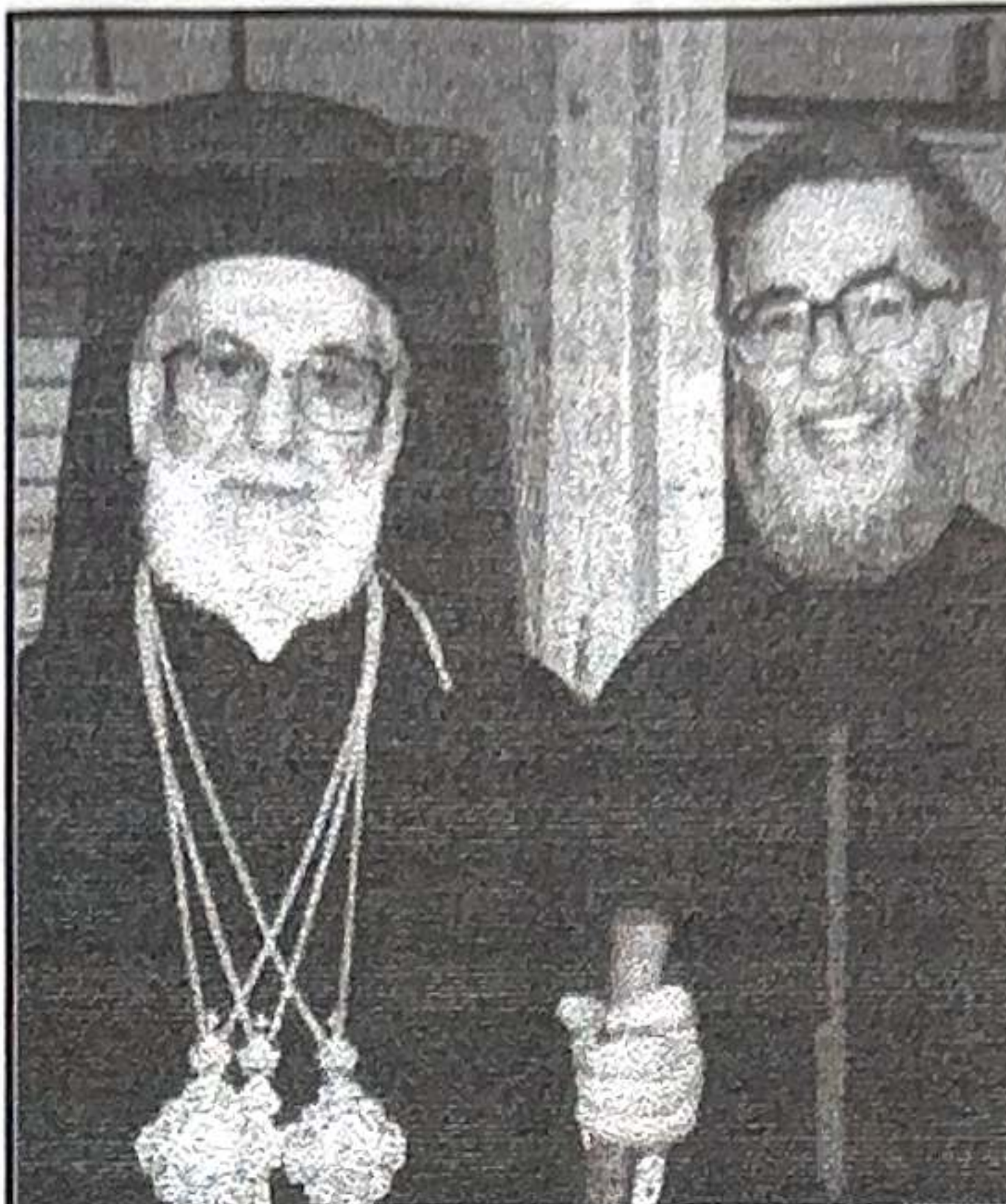
SAT 12 FEBRUARY 10 AM

ST JAMES, CLACTON

SAT 19 FEBRUARY 10 AM

a short video piece - that seems a good idea too, doesn't it? Come and join in:

**WEDNESDAY 16 FEBRUARY** at 7.30 pm at 66 Wimpole Rd. All are welcome, but please check date and time with me first.



Patriarch of Antioch IGNATIUS IV pictured with Father Alexander on a visit to London in 1996.

His Beatitude IGNATIUS IV, has been Patriarch of Antioch and All the East since 1979. He was one of the instigators of the 1940s renewal in the Antiochian Church. With others he founded the world-wide Orthodox Youth Movement called Syndesmos. The Patriarch's seat has been in Damascus for many centuries - in 'the Street called Straight', the very street where St Paul lodged at the time he became a Christian, as you can read in Acts 9.11. He has some 750,000 people in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, and large groups in North and South America, and Australia, and some in western Europe. The Patriarch is a gracious and spiritual leader.

## Our new Orthodox Parish Church?

St Martin's Church is just down West Stockwell Street, the little street tucked in beside Colchester's splendid Town Hall. The Town Hall tower of course is topped by the statue of our Patroness St Helen. In the midday sun the church lies literally in her shadow.

As announced in last month's Newsletter, St Martin's has provisionally been offered to us for our worship. Negotiations are now beginning on terms and costs. For the moment there is little to report: progress is slow. I hope to be able to announce a day when you can view it inside, as it is.

Then we shall be able to do some sums. We must work out what funds we shall need to use the church (a) in a minimal way, (b) in the fullest way, (c) a compromise way, somewhere between the other two.

(a) *a minimal way* would just be making it possible to worship there at all (there are absolutely no objects in the church at all) - we would need a Holy Table, a basic iconostasis, a prothesis etc, the basic things just to begin - but it would not be satisfactory for very long.

(b) *the fullest way* would include such things as dividing off sections for a hall, for an office, building lavatories, etc.

(c) *a compromise way* would include some of the extras we would like, but leaving others to be programmed in over the months or years.

Funds will have to be raised whichever line we follow. Prayer will have to be offered. Sacrifice will have to be made. We shall have to work hard for the good of the Parish and of the Holy Orthodox Faith in these parts.

**BUT GOD WILL BE WITH US, AND GOD WILL REWARD US:  
ALLELUIA, PRAISE TO HIM!**

**Late News:** It is good to hear (not directly, but through Fr Michael Harper, our Dean) that His Grace Bishop GABRIEL is pleased to learn of the probable acquisition of St Martin's for the use of the Parish.

## Services in the Parish

*At the Co-operative Chapel, Bourne Court, Mersea Rd*

Saturday: Great Vespers usually 6.30 pm (check before coming)

Sunday: Mattins or Hours 9.45 am; Divine Liturgy 10.30 am

*In Sutton, Norfolk at St Fursey's Chapel, 111 Neville Rd*

Divine Liturgy usually first Saturday of month 10.00 am

*In Clacton-on-sea at St James Anglican Church*

Divine Liturgy usually third Saturday of month at 10.00 am

*In Colchester at the University of Essex*

Divine Liturgy one Saturday per term at 10.00 am

*Confessions:* Saturday after Vespers, or by arrangement

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

*Parish Priest: Father Alexander Haig*

66 Wimpole Rd, Colchester CO1 2DN Tel: 01206-795275

Email: orthodox.colchester@aspects.net

*Reader:* Stephen Weston, St Fursey's House, 111 Neville Rd, Sutton NR12 9RR

*Parish Web Site:* www.aspects.net/~orthodox/



## ST SAVA, ARCHBISHOP OF SERBIA

St Sava (or Saba) is a saint of the whole Church. But he belongs especially to the Church of Serbia, as its founder and organiser. By doing that he also founded and organised the Serbian nation, whose life and culture has been profoundly Christian from its beginning. Many today do need to be led back into their full Christian heritage after the years under Communism and the present dictator, but they have indeed been ignorantly and shamefully maligned by Western leaders in these latter years.

Born in 1169, son of the national leader, St Sava became a monk on the Holy Mountain, but later first Archbishop. He secured independence for his Church from the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and for the state from the Roman Emperor. The saintly Bishop NIKOLAI writes, in *The Prologue from Ochrid*, "In creating the Serbian



Church, he created the Serbian state and Serbian culture along with it...He gave a Christian soul to the people of Serbia, which survived the fall of the Serbian state." Naturally, he holds an important place in the hearts of all Serbians. He died in 1236.

It has been a great pleasure to receive a gift for our church of a lovely icon of St Sava (illustrated here) from a Serb in our congregation, DUSAN GAVRILOVIC, which he brought back from a recent holiday at home. It will bring a blessing on our Parish, and I trust that not only our Serbian brothers and sisters will pray before him, but that all of us will pray there for the peoples of Serbia in their continuing troubles. Thank you to Dusan. "Many Years" to the people of Serbia!

*The Saint must not be confused with his nephew of the same name, St Sava II, who also became Archbishop – nor with St Saba the Sanctified, who lived in the Holy Land many centuries before.*

## HERE AND THERE

**HOLY THEOPHANY:** By going to St Fursey's, I was able, this year for the first time, to serve the Holy Liturgy on the day itself, and at the end we had the Great Blessing of the Waters. At Colchester on the Sunday, we went outside as usual and blessed the spring and pond.

**WEST-EUROPEAN ORTHODOX CONFERENCE:** A report of this excellent conference in France, which I had the privilege of attending, was published in the December Newsletter. A fuller account is now available on request.

**HAVE YOU HAD YOUR HOME BLESSED?** Do give me a ring if you haven't had me round to bless your home after Theophany. It is the Orthodox custom, and now there is an Orthodox Priest in the area, there is no excuse for not having it done! I will be pleased to visit for the ten-minute service.

**CONGRATULATIONS** to NICHOLAS and JANE MINA in Clacton on the birth of their daughter CHRISTINA. They live above the MINA family's Criterion Restaurant on the sea-front at Clacton - plenty of 'good and healthy' North Sea air for that baby!

**UNIVERSITY:** There will be a Divine Liturgy at the University on **Saturday 12 February** at 10.00 am. For the first time we shall use the Chaplaincy Centre worship room, and think we shall be able to make it reasonably suitable for Orthodox worship.

**EMAIL ADDRESSES:** Annoyingly and frustratingly, my computer 'crashed' at Christmas, and – among many other things – I lost all my email addresses. Some I have found again from other sources, but I would be grateful if anyone seeing this can email their address to me. This of course especially applies to students at the University of Essex.

**ADULT BAPTISM:** It was a real pleasure to baptise the new servant of God DIONYSIUS (DENNIS) HINDLE on 16 Jan, the feast of St Fursey. He did not cry at all, which is not bad on being the centre of attention like that – but he is an adult, the first adult I have baptised! I know it brought him great joy also. It was good to welcome his family and friends. Godparents were his friend ROBIN STONE and his mother-in-law THEOLOGHIA DE CARLO. He will continue to be called Dennis in ordinary life, but Dionysius at the Holy Altar – it's the same name anyway. Many Years!

## WORD FROM THE FATHERS

### *The Meeting of the Lord, 2 February*

**L**et us all run to meet him, we who honour and venerate the mystery of the Lord with pious devotion. Let us all go to meet him with eager minds. Let there be no one who does not share in this meeting, let no one refuse to carry a light.

We add to this the bright shining of candles. In this way we show forth the divine splendour of the coming of him who makes all things bright, in the abundance of whose eternal light all things are bathed in light when the evil shadows have been driven away. In this way we show the brightness of soul with which we must go to meet Christ.

The most chaste Virgin Mother of God bore in her arms the true light and came to the help of those who were lying in darkness. In the same way we must hurry out to meet him who is truly light, enlightened by the beams of his brightness and bearing in our hands the light which shines for all men.

Indeed this is the mystery which we celebrate, that the light has come into the world and has given it light when it was shrouded in darkness, and that the day-spring has visited us from on high and given light to those who were sitting in darkness.

*St Sophronius (c. 560-638)*

## UNDERSTANDING THE CHURCH YEAR

**T**he Church Year, of course, rolls on just as ever, whether or not it is a new century or even a new millennium. Next month it will be the Great Fast – in England called Lent, meaning Spring. It is the Forty Days leading up to Holy Week and Easter.

But before that starts the Church has an *introductory period*, beginning on the Sunday of the Pharisee and the Publican. On this day the Church gets out the *Triodion* book, which covers the period until Great and Holy Saturday. As Easter begins, she puts away the *Triodion*, and gets out the *Pentecostarion*. It may help to get it clear if I set it out with this year's dates:

20 Feb	Sunday of the Pharisee and the Publican: <i>Triodion</i> begins
27 Feb	Sunday of the Prodigal Son
5 Mar	Sunday of Meatfare, Sunday of the Last Judgement
12 Mar	Sunday of Cheese-fare, Forgiveness Sunday
13 Mar	GREAT FAST begins (Monday)
19 Mar	1st Sunday of Lent, Sunday of Orthodoxy
26 Mar	2nd Sunday of Lent, St Gregory Palamas
2 Apr	3rd Sunday of Lent, Veneration of the Cross
9 Apr	4th Sunday of Lent, St John of the Ladder (Climacus)
16 Apr	5th Sunday of Lent, St Mary of Egypt
22 Apr	Lazarus Saturday
23 Apr	Entry of Lord into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday)
	HOLY WEEK FAST begins
24/29 Apr	Great and Holy Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday
30 Apr	HOLY PASCHA (Easter): <i>Pentecostarion</i> begins

*[Western Easter this year falls on 23 April, a week before ours]*



St Helen on the top of the tower of Colchester Town Hall

### FEBRUARY DAYS

Wed	2 Meeting of our Lord and Saviour in the Temple
Thu	3 SS Simeon and Anna
Sun	6 Pentecost 36, Sunday of the Talents, St Photius
Tue	8 Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates
Thu	10 Hieromartyr Charalambos
Sun	13 Pentecost 37, Sunday of the Canaanite Woman
Sun	20 Sunday of the Pharisee and the Publican
Thu	24 1st & 2nd Finding of Head of St John the Baptist
Sat	26 Saturday of the Prodigal Son
Sun	27 Sunday of the Prodigal Son

A full list of the month's feasts and fasts is available on request

## ST HELEN ORTHODOX CALENDAR FOR COMPUTERS: VERSION 4

About to appear

– the same splendid features

PLUS readings for Holy Liturgy, Vespers etc

*Tailpiece:* "Do not fear to act. One man inflamed with zeal is enough to reform the world!" - St John Chrysostom