

# Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

NEWSLETTER 45

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch  
British Antiochian Orthodox Deanery

JULY 1999

## "I sought him whom my soul loved"

Complacency is a dangerous quality to allow into our lives. Just to be content with ourselves and our lot in a particular regard can be pure self-deception. We think that all is well – unaware that round the corner lurk the demons themselves, waiting to entrap and enslave us.

It is especially dangerous in regard to our spiritual lives and our personal spiritual condition. We can so easily slip into the attitude that we are "getting on all right, thank you".

Of course, there is the opposite danger of never being content to sit and be quiet with ourselves, always wanting to get up and do something more.

Part of the blessing of having a spiritual father or mother, is that we have someone with whom we can discuss our "spiritual life" – that is, our whole life in its fullness. They can prick the bubble of our complacency, see when we are just too content with ourselves. And yet they can stop us being over-zealous, always stretching out for more than we can cope with.

These thoughts are prompted in my mind by the example of St Mary Magdalene, Holy Equal to the Apostles, whose feast we keep in July (22nd). She has been a special Saint in my life, for I have twice in my life begun new ministries on her feast. She is in any case the wonderful first Witness of the Risen Christ.

In Jerusalem there is a spot I love, the Church of St Mary Magdalene, just outside the Church of the Holy Resurrection, supposedly on the exact point where she met the Risen Christ that Holy Pascha morning – it is the Church of the Arab Orthodox and I once had the privilege of being present at their Holy Liturgy there. The building is scarcely noticed by the throngs entering the main sanctuary – just as our brother Palestinian Christian brothers are scandalously unnoticed by Christians in the West. There at the very centre of Christianity, but unrecognised by the powerful!

But St Mary's other witness is that she was not complacent. She did not sit back and mourn – among the dead she sought out Christ. She did not just accept the situation of a beloved but dead Leader, a ruined cause. No, she was there, seeking him whom her soul loved. All right, for some it was indeed the wrong place ("Why seek ye the living among

**PLEASE NOTE:  
NO SERVICES  
IN COLCHESTER  
WEEKEND  
3/4 JULY**

the dead," said the Angel to the Apostles), but the calling of one servant of Lord is different from the calling of another – and she was in the right place for her, as she proved when the Lord met her.

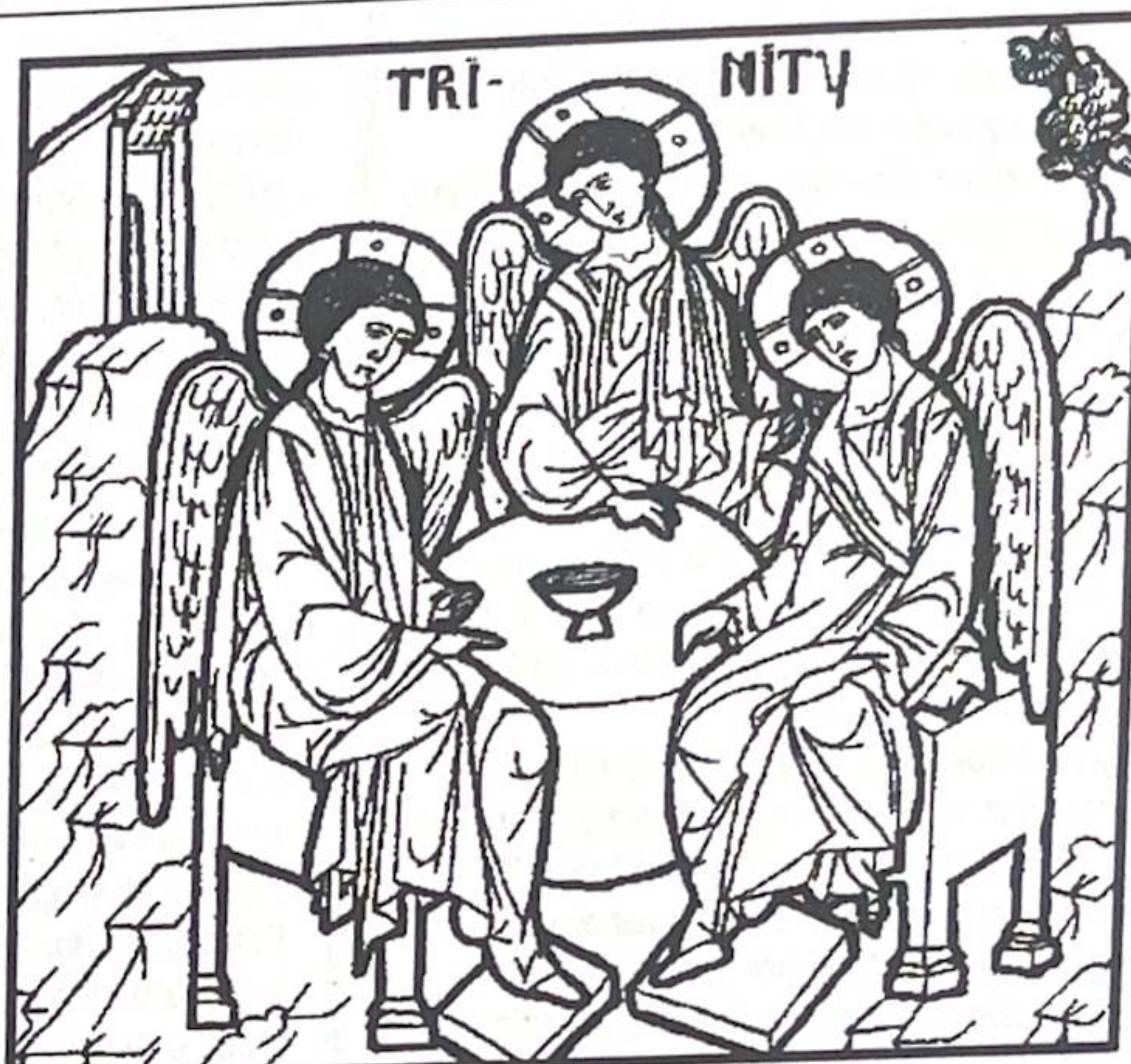
*The message then is, Seek the Lord while he may be found – and you will find him. Seek him with your whole heart, and you will find him in full measure.*

And seek him in the way you yourself personally feel led, for your way of seeking and finding holiness cannot be the way of anyone else – the call is always personal to us by name (He called her by name – "Mary," he said.)

Always mark this of course: the way we go, while a personal one, is not an individual one: we always obey the voice of Christ in his Holy Church – ours is no way of protestant individualism. That again is a function of the spiritual father or mother: to keep us in the way of God's Holy Church.

St Mary's way is also the way of the Cross, a personal taking up of our own personal cross. And that is the way to find the Risen Christ himself.

*It was she who had stood at the Cross of Christ who first experienced his*



Risen Power.

Please God, may we serve him faithfully, and by a necessary and sacred mixture of our effort on the one hand, and acceptance of God's over-ruling power on the other, attain the delights of the Kingdom of Heaven.

*Father Alexander*

### ORTHODOX WORSHIP

at the Co-operative Chapel  
Bourne Court, Mersea Road  
Colchester (opposite Bourne Rd)

**Saturday**

6.30 pm Great Vespers

**Sunday**

9.45 am Mattins or Hours

10.30 am Holy Liturgy

Confessions after Vespers or on request  
Baptisms, Marriages, Funerals,  
Memorial Services: by arrangement

Holy Liturgy Monthly/Termly  
St Fursey Orthodox Centre, Sutton, Norfolk  
St James Anglican Church, Clacton-on-sea  
University of Essex, Colchester

Parish Priest Fr Alexander Haig  
66 Wimpole Road, Colchester CO1 2DN  
Telephone-Fax 01206-795275  
Email [orthodox.colchester@aspects.net](mailto:orthodox.colchester@aspects.net)  
Web Site <http://www.aspects.net/~orthodox/>

Reader Stephen Weston

111 Neville Road, Sutton, Norfolk NR12 9RR  
Telephone 01692-580552

St Helen's Orthodox Parish, 66 Wimpole Rd, Colchester CO1 2DN

**CLACTON-ON-SEA**  
at St James' Church  
Saturday 17 July  
10.00 am  
Holy Liturgy

**ST FURSEY'S SUTTON**  
9/10 July  
Friday 6 pm  
Vespers  
Saturday 10 am  
Holy Liturgy



## A WORD FROM THE FATHERS

When Mary Magdalene came to the grave and did not find the Lord's body, she imagined that it had been taken away, and went to tell the disciples. They came, looked, and believed that it actually had happened as Magdalene told them. The Gospel account continues: "The disciples, therefore, went away again to their home. But Mary remained standing at the tomb, weeping."

At this point we must stop and reflect upon the ardent love in the heart of this woman who would not leave the Lord's grave even after his own disciples had gone away. She continued seeking him whom she could not find; in tears she kept searching; and, afire with love, she yearned for him whom she believed had been removed. Thus it happened that she alone saw him, she who had remained behind to seek him, simply because a truly good act involves the virtue of perseverance. For the lips of Truth itself have said: "He who perseveres to the end, he shall be saved."

She had already sought, and found nothing. But she persevered, and therefore found the object of her love. While she was seeking, her love grew stronger and stronger, until at highest pitch it was allayed in the embrace of him whom she was seeking.

Holy desires grow with delay: if they fade through delay they are no desires at all. Such must be the love that inflames anyone who is reaching out for the truth. That is why David says: "My soul thirsts for the living God; when shall I come and behold the face of God?" And the Church says in the Song of Songs, "I am wounded by love," and again, "My soul failed me."

"Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?" She is asked the cause of her sorrow so that her longing may increase, for when she names the one she seeks she burns with yet greater love for him.

"Jesus said to her: Mary." First of all he called her by the title common to all her sex, and she did not recognise him. So now he calls her by her own name, as if to say plainly; "Now recognise the one who recognises you. For I know you, not in some general way along with other people, but personally." Addressed by her own name, Mary recognises her Maker and straightway calls him "Rabboni", that is "Teacher".

Outwardly it was he who was the object of her search, but inwardly it was he who was teaching her to search for him.

*St Gregory the Dialogist,  
the Great (540-604)*

**PEACE IN KOSOVO:** Thankfully, peace has come, after a so-costly breach of international law by Britain and other countries, and after exodus first of Albanians, now of Serbs. Remember the Bishops, Priests, Monks and People of the Church of Serbia; pray that there may be genuine peace and stability, to allow for the enormous amount of necessary reconstruction. We shall no doubt gradually hear more of a tragic destruction of a large part of the Serbian Christian inheritance.

## Here and There

**DEANERY PILGRIMAGE TO ST CHAD:** The annual Pilgrimage to St Chad at Lichfield, in Staffordshire, north of Birmingham, is on **Saturday 24 July**. A car-load at least will go from here: if you would like to come, please let me know as early as possible. There will be a Holy Liturgy in the Lady Chapel of the Anglican Cathedral, picnic lunch, and a visit to St Chad's Well for Lesser Blessing of Water and Sprinkling. It will mean starting off at 7.15 am, and getting back about 8.30 or 9.00 pm, a long day. But those who have been before have enjoyed being with their Antiochian brothers and sisters, as well as with a number from other jurisdictions who attend.

**ORTHODOX YOUTH CAMP:** MARGARET and ALEX HAIG, will again be attending the Camp near Bungay in Suffolk 25 July - 7 August.

**EVIA (EUBOIA)** is that large island just off the coast of Greece north of Athens, joined to the mainland by a bridge. **ELEFTHERIOS MAVRAKIS**, who has been here at the University for a couple of years doing his Master's degree, goes on pilgrimage to the Holy Monastery of St David there. As reported previously, his wife **ANASTASIA** has returned to Greece, with their lovely little **KANAKIS**, and she visited the Monastery recently. When buying something for us she told them of St Helen's, and the good Fathers piled on more gifts for us - a Holy Icon of their St David, a video, and books about the Monastery. It has been very good to see these things (lovely pictures - but my Greek is almost non-existent!) It has been especially good to learn of the holy Elder **JAMES**, Abbot of the Monastery until his death in 1991, who shortly, we learn, is to be glorified or canonised. We are very grateful both to the holy Fathers and to Anastasia. Do borrow the books and/or video.

**NO DIVINE LITURGY** here on the *first weekend of July*, as noted on the front of this leaflet. But if you have a car you can still get to the Holy Liturgy at the St John the Baptist Monastery. Third and Sixth Hours there are at 10.15 am, the Liturgy about 10.45 am.

**PHILIP SHERRARD** was an Orthodox writer well known in the West as a fine interpreter of Orthodoxy and "thinker in Theology", to coin a phrase, and in Greece as a fine translator of modern Greek poets. He died in his home in Limni on the above-mentioned island of Evia in 1995. We were privileged to have his wife (whose mother lives in Dedham) with us on the fourth anniversary of his death last month, and after the Holy Liturgy we celebrated a Trisagion for him. Memory eternal!

## JULY DAYS

Thu	1	Unmercenary Cosmas & Damian
Fri	2	Placing of the Robe of Theotokos at Blachernae
Sun	4	<b>Pentecost 5</b> , S Andrew of Crete
Mon	5	S Athanasius of Mount Athos
Wed	7	Great Martyr Cyriaca
Thu	8	Kazan Icon of Theotokos
Sun	11	<b>Pentecost 6</b> , Gt Martyr Euphemia
Tue	13	Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel
Thu	15	S Vladimir Enlightener of Russia
Sat	17	Gt Martyr Margaret (Manna) of Antioch
Sun	18	<b>Pentecost 7</b> , H Fathers of 4th Council
Mon	19	S Seraphim of Sarov
Tue	20	H Prophet Elias (Elijah)
Thu	22	H Equal to Apostles Mary Magdalene
Sun	25	<b>Pentecost 8</b> , Dormition of St Anna
Mon	26	H Martyr Paraskeva
Tue	27	H Gt Martyr Panteleimon

A full list of the month's Feasts and Fasts is available on request

## St Helen Orthodox Calendar for Computers Version 3

Available direct from St Helen's Orthodox Parish  
or from the Orthodox Christian Book Service  
or, in the USA, St Nektarios Press  
£10 inland (overseas £15) including p&p  
Profit divided between the Parish Extension Fund  
and the Order of Orthodox Hospitaliers, working in  
Europe and the Middle East  
Published with the Blessing of HG BISHOP GABRIEL

## St Helen Leaflets

1. *Orthodoxy and England* [on why English people are becoming Orthodox]
2. *St Kyranna* [on the 18th century saint of a Salonika village, who guarded it during WW II]
3. *Equals of the Apostles* [on the tradition connecting SS Constantine and Helen to Colchester]
4. *Orthodoxy Exclusive and Inclusive*



## THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN....LOOKS TO THE FUTURE.

We must as Orthodox Christians know in whom we believe, and know of what the rock is hewn which is our present-day, living, vibrant, Faith. We must know our history, our past.

We should not however give other people the impression that as Orthodox we are backward-looking, concerned only with events of long ago.

Our Faith is indeed based on past events, notably on the events of the earthly life, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, but also on the events of the Old Testament before that, and the whole life of the Church afterwards, even to our own time.

For our Faith does essentially *look forwards* to the final event of history, the *eschaton*, the last, fateful, decisive moment of the world's existence before it is finally recreated into the Kingdom of Heaven.

We can then have our heads erect and upright, "looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith". We must be aware of this world, not hiding our heads from it, and seeking to allow Christ to bring in his Kingdom of Mercy around us - in other words, seeking the salvation of this world while there is time.

I always remember my dear mother telling me to hold up my head and to walk with dignity. Later I was taught the same as a young soldier.

You and I can hold our heads high as sons of God and co-heirs with Christ. We Orthodox need not be ashamed of the Holy Gospel, nor apologise that we so firmly look to the past.

For we in fact also look to the future, when, in his majesty and glory, Christ will come again. We look forward also with strong confidence. The world is overcome already: 'Thy kingdom come!'