

# Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, Vicariate for Europe  
British Antiochian Orthodox Deanery

NEWSLETTER 56

JUNE 2000

## Seizing an opportunity !

**Y**OU may remember that during May I was asked to help at the Christian Resources Exhibition at Sandown Park race course in Surrey. As anticipated, there were no horses running to distract me, so I was able to give my full attention to the stall I was helping at – NICHOLAS CHAPMAN's Orthodox Christian Books Ltd, a firm which distributes Orthodox literature, based at the village of Audley (near Stoke-on-Trent) where there is an Antiochian parish.

We stayed the four nights with friends of Nicholas in Redhill, were made very welcome there, and fed alarmingly well. It was good to have such an interesting home and such enjoyable hospitality to return to each night.

Setting up on Monday, we spent each day, Tuesday to Friday, at the stall, with occasional individual forays to see other stalls. These were of every conceivable type, and it was a useful opportunity to see lots of firms and societies together in one place. For example, I picked up literature about heating and lighting which will prove useful in connection with St Martin's [if we get it – see right!], and made contact with a firm which can find me a computer version of the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament.

We met a number of old friends – Anglicans, Roman Catholics, and Protestants – and that was a great joy. But it was also interesting that several Orthodox people came along, and that was really lovely and encouraging. Fr SAMIR, from our Cathedral in London, was one of them.

*Both Nicholas and I were very impressed, however, by the great show of interest in Orthodoxy by many of the Christian public in general.*

We had icons available (supplied by our own Reader STEPHEN), and books of interest to evangelical Protestants and to Anglicans and Catholics. To a greater or lesser degree all these items attracted individuals. We had innumerable conversations with those passing by, some of profound importance, many of course of only passing interest, but which may help people in the future. It was an enjoyable week, profitable in terms of Orthodox contact as much as, or more than, in sales of books etc. It was altogether encouraging.

Some people were very interested in the icons of course, which have proved opening into Holy Orthodoxy for many. Some enquired of the differences between Orthodox and Western teaching. Obviously many of the 10,000 who attended would just have passed us by, as was their right, but Nicholas calculated that we had at least 500 visitors to our stall.

*People, consciously or unconsciously, are looking for the certainties and reality, the richness and the simplicity of the Orthodox Christian Faith. Every night I prayed for those I had met that day and for those I would meet the next. It was good to help some of them, as I hope and trust we did, on their path to Christ and the fullness of our Holy Faith. I was pleased that Nicholas had grasped this very real opportunity to spread the Faith.*

*Father Alexander*

### DIVINE AND HOLY LITURGY

ST FURSEY, SUTTON.....SATURDAY 10 JUNE 10.00 AM  
- PLEASE NOTE ST FURSEY'S 2nd SAT OF MONTH IN JUN, JUL, AUG -  
ST JAMES, CLACTON.....SATURDAY 17 JUNE 10.00 AM

**NB NO SERVICES IN COLCHESTER SAT 24 & SUN 25 JUNE**

## St Martin's: something and nothing to report

At long last we have received a letter with some detail about our having this ancient and beautiful church in the heart of Colchester. It came from the Church Commissioners this time, rather than from the owners, the Churches Conservation Trust. Apparently the Trust must take advice from the Commissioners.

It was encouraging to receive this letter on my return from the Christian Resources Exhibition – something to get my teeth into, something to help the process forward. Now at last we could begin to get down to the nit and gritty of the situation.

But, alas! I am not sure, having read the letter a number of times, that we are really any further forward. Indeed, you could say that we have gone backwards.



### "The only way forward"

For the letter outlined various possible routes – and dismissed them. It seemed to leave only one possible route to our acquiring use of it – *buying it!*

But this route we had already told the Trust – years ago and very recently – we were unlikely to be interested in, at least for the moment.

But the real problem was that they *still* have not given any idea of what the charges would be – and how can we say if we can afford it, if we do not know how much they want for it?

I am beginning to wonder whether they really want us to use and love this building back into life, or not!

It is really incredible that it has taken so long to get to nowhere, or at least almost nowhere.

### O God, hear thy people's prayer

Yet, I do still hope and believe that this may be the building God wants us to have for his glory and the building up of his Holy Orthodox Church in this place. In so many ways, it seems the right place for us to be, even if there are and will be problems. It was even *suggested to us* as our church by the then Anglican Archdeacon as long ago as 1994!

**But I admit I am getting weary. Please pray that something positive may happen soon, that God will forgive us our sins and grant us a home.**

## Usual 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

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

Divine Liturgy usually first Saturday of month 10.00 am

*At St James Anglican Church, Clacton-on-sea*

Divine Liturgy usually third Saturday of month at 10.00 am

*At the University of Essex, Colchester*

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](mailto:orthodox.colchester@aspects.net)

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

*Parish Web Site:* [www.aspects.net/~orthodox/](http://www.aspects.net/~orthodox/)



# HERE AND THERE

**COLCHESTER NIGHT SHELTER** is in need of assistance. They help people without a place to sleep, and are looking for funds, blankets, sleeping bags – and more helpers. If you can help in any way, I will put you in touch.

**CONGRATULATIONS** to the Felixstowe parish of St Felix and St Edmund (Russian Church in Exile, but like any other English-speaking parish), which has obtained a building for itself, beating us to it, though as a parish slightly younger than us. They obtained a previously-Anglican building in time to hold their Great Week services and Holy Pascha, and some of us have been able to join them there for worship.

**PECTORAL CROSS:** Some of you will have noticed that I have worn a cross recently. The Bishop has given his clergy permission to wear one. It is not done among the Greeks, but is common or universal among the Russians.

**LINKS WITH CYPRUS** build up: we are very grateful to MARIA DIKOMITROU who has brought us a gift of a lovely icon of the Holy Mystical Supper for the church – together with a very interesting English *History of the Church in Cyprus* – and a bottle of local medicine for the priestly throat! Many thanks, Maria.

**CONGRATULATIONS** to the GEORGIU family at their restaurant in Clacton – formerly the *Imperial*, and now reopened as Geo's. We hope that XENOPHON and KLEO will enjoy their retirement, and wish their sons TONY and GEORGE well as they take on full responsibility there.

**AT THE SAME TIME** we must congratulate the ANTONIOU family: their customers recently voted their restaurant in Rosemary Road, Clacton *Best Fish and Chips*. MIKE and ATHENOULA handed over the running to their children VASSOS and XENIA a while ago.

**PILGRIMAGE TO ANTIOCH:** The Bishop is leading a Pilgrimage to the ancient seat of the Patriarchate 27 June – 1 July. Anyone interested in going should let me know, and I can give them the contact.

**"PENTECOST PICNIC":** An ecumenical affair for the people of the churches in central Colchester – and from the wider area too – in Castle Park. But please note that it is 11 June the *Sunday before our Pentecost*. People can arrive any time after 12 noon – but obviously we shall not arrive till after the Holy Liturgy; so it will be about 1 pm when we get there. Bring a picnic, they say, and any games you want (e.g. a ball to throw around). The idea is to get people from the different denominations together for time and chat. Of course, it is realised that if it is wet, few will turn up.

**THE HOLY APOSTLES PETER & PAUL** As many people know, both these Apostles suffered Martyrdom for the Faith of Christ in Rome. They are considered joint Founders of the Church in that city.

But not so many realise that they were also joint Founders of the Church at Antioch, which was the hub of the Roman Empire in the East, and was a highly influential Christian

**MONASTERY VISIT:** The local Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius branch are spending Saturday 3 June at the Monastery, arriving 10.45 with a picnic, having a talk, and attending Vespers at 5. You can join them if you give me a ring first.

**PILGRIMAGE TO ST ALBAN:** St Alban was of course the first Holy Martyr of Britain, dying at the Roman city of Verulamium, the city now named St Albans, just north of London. Every year the Fellowship has a Pilgrimage there, with the Orthodox Liturgy. This year it will be on Saturday 17 June at 9.30 am. I shall not be there as we have the Clacton Liturgy that day, but if you want a day out you can enjoy the loveliness of the city and cathedral, and the peace of the Martyr's shrine (now beautifully restored, but sadly without his holy relics of course).

**THE APOSTLES' FAST** is very short this year: 26-28 June only. This is because it always starts on the Monday after All Saints Sunday – which is late this year because Holy Pascha was late – and ends the day before SS Peter and Paul. Even though it is not the most important Fast-period of the Church, we should still take it seriously!

centre for many centuries.

They are still venerated as Patrons of our own Mother Church. Pray therefore on 29 June, their joint Feast, for His Beatitude Patriarch IGNATIUS IV and all the Bishops of our Church at home and around the world, and for the Antiochian Faithful, which now includes so many converts, where they have been welcomed joyfully into the Orthodox Faith.



## OUR PARISH ICON OF ST HELEN

the work of  
ELENI STELLAKI (Athens)

Beautiful prints of our lovely icon (A4 size, as this Newsletter) now available: one of these icons would bless *your* home

Unmounted prints  
£3.00

Mounted on wood  
£10.00

(mounted by our READER  
STEPHEN WESTON)

Orders to Fr Alexander

## JUNE DAYS

Thu	1	S Justin Martyr
Fri	2	S Odo, Archbishop of Canterbury
Sun	4	Pascha 6, the Blind Man, Holy Fathers of 2nd Ecumenical Council
Mon	5	S Boniface of Crediton, Martyr
Wed	7	Leave-taking of Pascha
Thu	8	Ascension of Our Lord
Fri	9	S Cyril of Alexandria, S Columba of Iona
Sun	11	Pascha 7, H Fathers of 1st Ec. Council, Holy Apostles Bartholomew & Barnabas
Sat	17	Memorial Saturday
Sun	18	HOLY PENTECOST
Mon	19	Day of the Holy Spirit, H Apostle Jude
Thu	22	S Alban, Protomartyr of Britain
Sat	24	Nativity of S John the Forerunner
Sun	25	Pentecost 1, All Saints
Mon	26	Beginning of Apostles' Fast
Thu	29	Holy Apostles Peter and Paul
Fri	30	Synaxis of the Holy Twelve Apostles

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

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## THE WEDNESDAY GROUP

LEARNING ABOUT OUR ORTHODOX FAITH

Wednesdays (finishing 21 June) 7.30 – 9.30 pm at 66 Wimpole Road

A series of talks is in progress to help you understand...

### "Two Millennia of Orthodox Christian History"

Each talk ends with discussion, refreshment, and short prayers

ALL WELCOME: JUST COME ALONG

## Orthodox Millennium Festival Saturday 1 July at Shrewsbury

A long way from here – well the other side of Birmingham – so we will not organise a bus, but if you can get there it will be a good day, that's for sure! It's a celebration with many events and exhibitions going on all day, indeed all weekend. Details available.

## UNIVERSITY ORTHODOX "HOUR"

Every Wednesday, except 28 June, a time for Students to chat, have tea, and pray – in the Chaplaincy Centre 3.00 – 4.30 pm.

**L**uke says that at Pentecost, after the Ascension of the

Lord, the Spirit came down on the disciples with power to grant all nations entry into life, and to open the new testament. And so in every language they sang a hymn to God in unison; for the Spirit brought the scattered races together into a unity, and offered to the Father the first-fruits of all the nations.

Therefore the Lord promised to send us the Holy Spirit to make us fit for God's purposes. Just as dry flour cannot

## A WORD FROM THE FATHERS

coalesce into a lump of dough, still less a loaf, without moisture, so too we, being many, could not become one in Christ Jesus without the water which comes from heaven. And just as dry soil cannot bear fruit unless it receives moisture, so we, who to begin with are dry wood, can never bear the fruit of life unless the rain from heaven falls upon our wills. For our bodies through the water of baptism have received the unity which leads to freedom from corruption; but our souls have received it through the Spirit. *St Irenaeus of Lyons (c 130-200)*