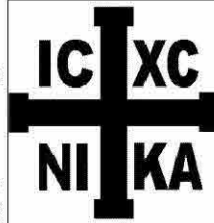


Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Antiochian Orthodox Christian
Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland
Metropolitan: His Eminence Archbishop Silouan
NEWSLETTER 226 DECEMBER 2015



WEDNESDAY 9 DECEMBER, Conception of the Theotokos
FRIDAY 1 JANUARY, Circumcision of Christ, St Basil
Holy Liturgy both days at 9.30 am

A holy and happy Christmas to all our members and friends

Our world is in a bit of a mess, to say the least! In the homeland of the Church of Antioch - Syria and Lebanon and other parts of the Middle East, we know that there is no external peace, much fear, uncertainty, and hatred, much evil-thinking.

This lack of external peace now seems to be passing into all parts of the world, not least Europe, as terrorism spreads its web ever further. Paris, Brussels, Mali, are all suffering as I write, and authorities warn of trouble to come in other European capitals, and cities and around the world.

How are we to deal with this, as Christians, as Orthodox?

Well, the first thing is that we must not panic. Nor must we lose faith. The Roman world at that first Christmas did not have all that stability. In Palestine there were problems of non-compliance by the under-dogs, oppressed, taxed and taken advantage of. *Pax Romana* was not really strong, at least to any depth.

Yet into this dark world came Christ our God. He who made all in harmony, peace and joy came to share the sicknesses, the troubles of our human existence. God shared all that it means to be human—the joys, yes! but also the heart-aches and the pains, the sorrows. God became Man. He took human flesh.

Try in this holy season to catch a glimpse of the Love of God that is shown to us in the Birth at Bethlehem. Even a tiny glimpse will bring light into your soul.

The Priest says so often in the services of the Church, *Christ our God loves mankind*. He shows it at Bethlehem, and will still today give peace in our souls, peace inside, *internal* peace whatever the external circumstances.

Let not external destruction and debasement, wherever found - in Syria, France, Belgium, even London - affect you and your inner peace. Prayer will give you confidence in God, that his peace will reign in your heart.

The peace of God be always with you. Peace be unto all.

Happy Christmas!

Father Alexander

Precious donation to St Helen's: a Piece of the True Cross!

The Parish has been given a relic of the Holy Cross of Christ, found in the fourth century in Jerusalem by our own dear Patron St Helen!

This overwhelming gift comes from Dr John Ashdown Hill, a Colchester resident and historian who decided that his precious possession would appropriately and honourably be guarded by the parish dedicated to the Saint. Recently he knocked on my door, came in, and simply handed over a lovely glass-fronted casket containing a smaller similar casket containing a tiny sliver of wood in cross-shape.

Dr Ashdown Hill is now well-known, for [Continued on page 2]

HOLY LITURGY
CLACTON
Saturday
before
Nativity
19 December
10.00 am

Enthronement delayed

Most of you will have heard that unfortunately PATRIARCH JOHN had a fall in Athens, his spectacles broke, and glass got in his eye. As a result, the Enthronement of our new Archbishop in London, due at the end of November, is postponed.

We understand that His Beatitude is recovering after operations, but is not yet allowed to fly.

It is now hoped to have the Enthronement in the New Year, but no date has been fixed.

In the last Newsletter I expressed greetings to METROPOLITAN SILOUAN, and His Eminence has replied:

God be with you. Thank you very much for the warm words you have written in the Newsletter... In Christ

M. Silouan

Christmas at St Helen's

Thursday 24 December

EVE OF THE NATIVITY

4.30-6.00 pm Vigil of Christmas

Friday 25 December

NATIVITY ACCORDING TO THE FLESH OF
OUR LORD & SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST

10.15 am Third & Sixth Hours

10.30 am Divine Liturgy & Carols

Saturday 26 December

SECOND DAY OF THE NATIVITY,
SYNAXIS OF THE THEOTOKOS

4.30 pm Great Vespers

Sunday 27 December

THIRD DAY OF THE NATIVITY,
PROTOMARTYR & ARCHDEACON STEPHEN

9.45 am Mattins

10.30 am Divine Liturgy

Confessions before Christmas

Sat 19 Dec 5.00 pm, Thu 24 Dec 6.00 pm,

or at any time by appointment

St Helen's Chapel, Maidenburgh St, High St

St Helen's is 200m down behind the George Hotel in the High Street, but accessible from there only on foot. By car: leave Middleborough Roundabout (between dual carriageways Westway and Balkierne Hill), to Northgate, go straight along St Peter's Street to Castle Park; continue round the bend, up into Maidenburgh Street. The nearest car park is Nunns Road NCP, off St Peter's Street.

Saturday: Great Vespers usually 4.30 pm (check before coming)

Sunday: Mattins 9.45 am (or Hours 10.15 am), Divine Liturgy 10.30 am

Confessions: Saturday 5 pm, after Vespers, or by arrangement
Holy Marriage, Baptism, Funerals, Memorials etc: by arrangement

Parish Priest: Father Alexander (Alistair) Haig

17 Maidenburgh Street, Colchester CO1 1UB

Tel: 01-206-530-530 Mob: 07-947-047-201 Eml: parishpriest@orthodoxcolchester.org.uk
Rdr Andreas Moran, 6 Woodlands, Welshwood Park CO4 3JA Tel: 01-206-865-697
Churchwardens: David Davies 01-473-745-167 Dusan Radunovic 01-206-762-553

The Parish of St Helen is Registered Charity No. 1134418

Bank account: Sort Code 20-22-67 Account No. 50349364

Parish Website: <http://www.orthodoxcolchester.org.uk>

At St James Anglican Church, Beatrice Rd, Clacton-on-sea CO15 1LE

Divine Liturgy: usually third Saturday of month 10.00 am

FELLOWSHIP OF ST ALBAN & ST SERGIUS

Tuesday 1 December 7.30 pm

St Cedd's RC Hall, Frinton

Virtues & Vices: What to seek and what to avoid

Rev Dr John Turner on sayings by

Paul of Constantinople

St Ignatius the God-bearer

St Ignatius was an early Bishop of Antioch. He is traditionally identified as the child that Christ took in his arms and said we adults were to be like him in his innocence and trust.

He was a disciple of St John the Theologian, and became a beloved and trusted Bishop, and desired to suffer for Christ. At a great age he was arrested and taken in stages to Rome.

On the way he composed letters to some of the Christian Churches, asking for prayers and giving advice. These letters still exist and are strong and very moving. He is remarkable for the emphasis he places on the unity of the Church around the Bishops.

In Rome he was cast among the lions in the famous Coliseum, the ruins of which you can still visit. This was about



the year 108 AD.

He is a constant inspiration in the Church of Antioch, and also throughout the Orthodox Church—and indeed in western communions. He is often called *Theophorus*, the God-bearer.

His feast is 20 December, which this year falls on the Sunday before Nativity.

The People Column

SAFFRON SCOTT, of Brightlingsea, was received into the Orthodox Church by Holy Chrismation on 1 November, with the Orthodox name of **SERAPHIMA**. We congratulate her and wish her Many years!

LOUKAS GYORBIRO, second son to **ISTVAN** and **ANDRADA** of Collingwood Road, has been baptised at St Helen's October. Many years!

THEODOROS CHORAITIS, son to **CONSTANTINOS** and **CLAIR** of Chelmsford, was baptised in October. Many years!

MARIA EMMA SCORTEANU, daughter to **CONSTANTIN** and **LUCIA** of Highwoods, was baptised in November. Many years!

IVAN MICHAELVICH BOCHAROV had lived in Colchester for some years with his daughter **ELENA DOUGHTY**, her husband **PATRICK** and daughter **EKATERINA**. He was from Moscow. He died in October and his funeral was in St Helen's. Our sympathy to all the family on their sad loss. Memory eternal!

DEACON ALEXANDER HAIG is now officially attached to the St Dunstan parish in Poole, Dorset, but is only there monthly as it is a considerable journey. Other Sundays he serves at the Greek parish in Southampton or the Russian in Portsmouth.

Here and There

TWENTY YEARS ORTHODOX: On **Thursday 10 December** the **HAIG** family will celebrate their reception into the Orthodox Church in 1995. Fr **SAMIR GHOLAM** received them by Holy Chrismation in St George's Cathedral in London. *Doxa si, Kyrie, doxa si!*

EBOLA: We sent gifts from the Parish to the Kings College London nursing team in Sierra Leone. That country has now been officially declared free of Ebola. The team leader writes: *We want to say a huge thank you to you too for donating to the King's Sierra Leone Partnership. We couldn't have achieved what we did without you. When King's and the people of Sierra Leone needed you, you offered your support; and in doing so, you helped to stem the spread of Ebola and save lives. Thank you.*

ST BARBARA'S GREEK CHURCH in Southend will observe their patronal

feast on **Friday 4 December**, and as usual I hope to attend to express our solidarity and goodwill. His Eminence **ARCHBISHOP GREGORIOS** of Thyateira will serve the Hierarchical Liturgy at 10.00 am. If anyone would like to come with me, let me know.

MEN'S BREAKFAST: St Anne's Anglican church off the Ipswich Road has a monthly meeting of the men of the parish. I have accepted a kind invitation to eat with them and give a short talk on **Saturday 12 December**, and look forward to that.

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH is a 'Penguin' book by His Eminence **METROPOLITAN KALLISTOS** (Timothy Ware). Best-selling for an incredible fifty years, it has been reissued this year in a third edition. It is available on the Church Bookstall at **£11.50**, less than the recommended price. It is a very readable gold-mine of information on Church history and teaching, and her present position.

Holy Cross Relic given to us

[continued from page 1]

he found the lost bones of King of England Richard III, killed in 1485 by a claimant to the throne who became King Henry VII. You may recall that those remains were found under a car-park in Leicester: they are now buried in the Cathedral there.

For his painstaking research Dr Ashdown Hill has been rewarded by the Queen with an MBE.

We are of course most honoured by his gift to us of the Holy Cross. We will now consider the best way to keep and protect the tiny wooden splinter of the Cross for the veneration of the faithful. Our thanks indeed to him - and to all those who have preserved it faithfully over the centuries.

DECEMBER DAYS

Fri	4	Great Martyr Barbara, S John Damascene
Sat	5	S Saba the Sanctified
Sun	6	Pentecost 27, S Nicolas the Wonderworker, Abp of Myra in Lycia
Mon	7	S Ambrose, Bishop of Milan
Wed	9	Conception of Theotokos by Righteous Anna
Sat	12	S Spyridon the Wonderworker, Bishop of Tremithus
Sun	13	Pentecost 28, Sunday of the Forefathers, S Herman of Alaska, Wonderworker of All America, Virgin-Martyr Lucy of Syracuse
Mon	14	S Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Tours, S Hybald, Abbot in Lincolnshire
Tue	15	Hieromartyr Eleutherius, Bishop of Illyria
Thu	17	Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Children, S Dionysius, Bishop of Aegina, the Wonderworker
Fri	18	Martyr Sebastian at Rome
Sun	20	Pentecost 29, Sunday before Nativity, Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-bearer, Bp of Antioch
Thu	24	EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST
Fri	25	NATIVITY OF CHRIST
Sat	26	SECOND DAY OF THE NATIVITY, SYNAXIS OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS
Sun	27	THIRD DAY OF THE NATIVITY, SUNDAY AFTER NATIVITY, PROTOMARTYR & ARCHDEACON STEPHEN
Tue	29	Holy Innocents slain by Herod at Bethlehem

A Word from the Scriptures

While all things were in quiet silence,
and that night was in the midst
of her swift course,
Thine Almighty Word leaped down
from heaven, out of thy royal throne.

Book of Wisdom chapter 18 verses 14, 15

A fuller list of the month's Feasts and Fasts is available