

Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Antiochian Archdiocese of the BI & Ireland
NEWSLETTER 217 FEBRUARY 2015



WEEKDAYS AT ST HELEN'S	
MONDAY 2 FEB 9.30 am	MEETING OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE Divine Liturgy
TUESDAY 10 FEB 9.30 am	HIEROMARTYR CHARALAMBOS Divine Liturgy
WEDNESDAY 25 FEB 9.30 am	FIRST WEDNESDAY OF LENT Liturgy of the Presanctified
FRIDAY 27 FEB 6.00 pm	FIRST FRIDAY OF LENT Akathist of the Mother of God



A new Saint: Paisios of Mount Athos

Elder Paisios has been glorified by the Holy Synod of the Church of Constantinople. The announcement was made on 13 January.

As I understand the process, canonisations newly agreed by the Holy Synod of one Orthodox Church are simply accepted by the others. So he is now recognised as a Saint of the Orthodox Church throughout the world.

The Saint was born in Asia Minor in 1924 and baptised by his parish priest, St Arsenios. He was quickly taken from there with the refugees who settled in northern Greece.

After army service in the second world war, he went to the Holy Mountain, where over the years he lived in several of the holy monasteries.

He was a gentle and loving soul, and his counsel was sought by many. He suffered a good deal of poor health, and it was in poor health he left Athos, and died in 1994, a few days before his seventieth birthday, at the women's monastery of St John the Theologian which he cherished at Souroti near Thessalonica. There he is buried.

Much of his teaching is published, and even now his simple and wise counsel is highly valued, especially amongst the Greeks.

May the prayers of this newly-glorified Saint enlighten and inspire us, and draw us into the kingdom of our Lord and Christ.

Holy Father Paisios, pray to God for us!

Father Alexander

A fuller account of the Saint is available in church. Feast day: 12 July.

STOP PRESS: a miracle apparently by the prayers of the new Saint appears to have happened already in our own congregation: news next month.

The Lent service pattern

A characteristic of Lent is that there is no full Liturgy on weekdays, except on the Annunciation.

On Wednesdays and Fridays we can have the Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified, the Liturgy of St Gregory. This has no Anaphora, no Offering of the Bread and

Wine to God to become his Body and Blood. Instead, an extra Lamb is pre-sanctified on the previous Sunday.

In fact the service is really Vespers with some special beautiful ceremonies, followed by Holy Communion.

We have it just on Wednesdays, at 9.30 am.

The Meeting of Christ in the Temple

This lovely and touching feast falls forty days after the Nativity of Christ (Christmas), so that Mary and Joseph were obeying the Jewish law for a new child to be presented in the Temple in Jerusalem at forty days.

Our mothers and fathers follow this practice with their own children even to this day in their own local temple.

It teaches us that we are to present all that we hold dearest to God himself for his service, acknowledging that all we have comes to us from the Almighty Provider of all good things.

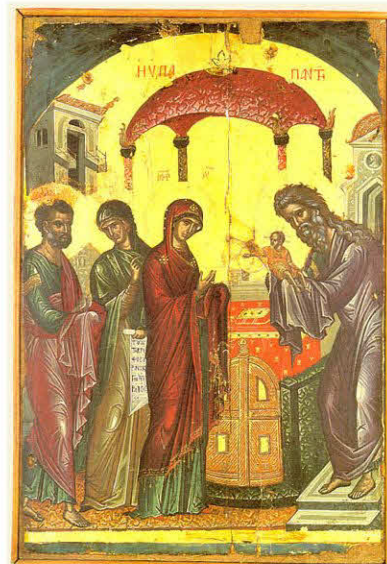
We must not of course sentimentalise this—old Anna tells Mary that a sword will pierce her soul also.

But there is a real sense of peace in the scene—the Priest Simeon is now ready to die, for he has seen the Lord's Will come to pass.

God grant us the wisdom to understand it, and the courage to obey it.

Holy Liturgy for the feast Monday 2 Feb at 9.30 am. Do come if you can.

HOLY LITURGY CLACTON Saturday 21 February 10.00 am



Fellowship of

St Alban & St Sergius

Tuesday 3 February 7.30 pm in St Helen's Chapel

Hieromonk Patrick Ramsey 'Orthodoxy in the Antipodes'

Not much is known or recognised in Europe about Orthodoxy in Australia and New Zealand. Fr Patrick, a New Zealander presently living in Colchester, will open up the subject to us.

This meeting is open to all.

Parish Annual General Meeting

Sunday 1 March

immediately after the Holy Liturgy. The Liturgy will start on time and conclude early. Staying to the meeting will not keep you much later than usual. Please book it in your diary, and remain for it.

The Sundays of the Great Fast

- Lent 1** Sunday of Orthodoxy
- Lent 2** St Gregory Palamas
- Lent 3** Veneration of the Cross
- Lent 4** St John Climacus
- Lent 5** St Mary of Egypt

The period from Lazarus Saturday & Palm Sunday is not Lent but the separate Holy Week (also a Fast).

On the first four Friday evenings we here follow the Greek practice and sing a part of the very beautiful Akathist to the Mother of God at 6.00 pm, with the full prayer on the fifth Friday.

Come to these extra services as part of a Lent rule if you can. Come to Jesus Christ our God and learn penance.

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 Balkeme Hill), to Northgate; go straight along St Peter Street to Castle Park; continue round, up into Maidenburgh Street. Nunns Road NCP is the nearest car park.

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

Sunday: 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

Rdr Alexander Haig Jr, detached service in Winchester parish

Churchwardens: David Davies 01-473-745-167 Dusan Radunovic 01-206-710-073

The Parish of St Helen is Registered Charity No. 1134418

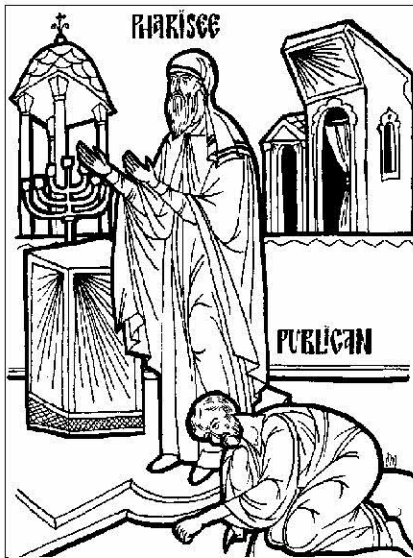
Parish Website: <http://www.orthodoxcolchester.org.uk>

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

Divine Liturgy: usually third Saturday 10.00 am

The People Column

SOLOMONOS TSAERA was the father of ELIZABETH FANCY of Halstead. I baptised his grandson BEN here several years ago. Soli and family from Cyprus lived in Bow in east London and his wife DESI remains there, but he came to live at the Old Deanery in Bocking just over a year ago to receive the care he needed by then. This was a good point as far as I was concerned, because twenty years ago I was Dean and Rector of Bocking and lived in the Deanery, next door to the beautiful Old Deanery. In the light of the recent public criticisms of that home, it was good to hear only compliments about it from Soli's family. It was also good to hear that his living locally allowed his grandchildren really to get to know him. After his funeral in St Helen's, we buried him in the cemetery at Halstead. Memory eternal! And God grant all who mourn him peace in believing and trusting in Christ.



The parable of the Publican & Pharisee (as in this icon) teaches me to value others more than myself, and also to concentrate my spiritual effort on *me and my own sinfulness* rather than on the efforts or non-efforts of others. The Publican says: *God be merciful to me a sinner.*

The Great Fast is almost upon

In English we commonly call the season leading up to Holy Pascha (Easter) *Lent*, but *Lent* just means *spring*, and the proper Orthodox title *The Great Fast* implies so much more. *Great Lent* is a common but rather odd mixture of the English and Orthodox titles.

The Fast always begins on a Monday, '**Clean Monday**', this year 23 February. It is a challenging time and many Orthodox Christians try to take it seriously, particularly the first week.

And so should we all - but not overdoing it, because that can lead to Pharisaism, to thinking how good we are, how well we are doing, in comparison with others. Instead we should try to model ourselves on the Publican - *God be merciful to me, a sinner*. So before Lent we have the **Sunday of the Publican & Pharisee** to remind us of all this.

Then we have the **Sunday of the Prodigal Son** - teaching that if I truly repent, God always welcomes me back in love and forgiveness.

The next week is the **Sunday of the Last Judgment**, reminding us that we must be judged for our deeds. That day is **Meatfare Sunday** too, the last day we eat meat till Pascha.

Cheesefare Sunday, the last day for dairy products before Easter, is also **Forgiveness Sunday**, when we have Forgiveness Vespers, and the ceremony of forgiving each other our sins against each other.

The next day, Clean Monday, we begin our penitential exercises before God himself.

How should I fast?

- *With devotion and care*, but not being picky, over-anxious, or overly-correct, obeying the rules as far as we can but not being overly-worried when we cannot obey for good reason (such as being in the company of non-Orthodox people).
- *With prayer and concern*, but also 'lightly' - joyfully, with a happy face, not a miserable one.
- *With penitence* leading us towards the Mystery of Holy Confession, making our confession some time before Pascha.
- *With almsgiving* for those in need.
- *With discretion* before others, especially non-Orthodox, not making a song and dance about it.

A Word from the Fathers: St Jerome on the Book of the Prophet Joel

Return to me with all heart, and prove that your repentance is genuine by fasting and weeping and lamenting.

Fast now and you will feast hereafter; weep now and you will laugh hereafter. Present mourning brings future joy.

I know it is one of your customs to rend your garments as a mark of distress and anger.

The high priest did this to underline the charges against the Lord our Saviour, and even Paul and

Barnabas did it, though only because of the blasphemy they had heard.

Well, I say that it is not your garments you must rend but your sinful hearts which like the wineskin will burst unless you tear them.

When you have done this you can return to the Lord your God from whom you have been estranged by your former sins.

Do not let the greatness of your sin make you despair of pardon. The greater the sin, the more striking is the power of God's mercy.

Here and There

YOUR CHRISTMAS GREETINGS: Our thanks indeed to those who sent cards of greetings, or generous gifts, at the feast. All were much appreciated.

ST HELEN'S CHAPEL is certainly valued by some readers! *One Christmas card from a Greek lady in Colchester read, "Thank you, and even though I am not a regular churchgoer I am so grateful our chapel and yourself exist!"* That is an example of the way that no church exists exclusively for those who come to worship. Nor is it just for pilgrims, nor even tourists and other visitors. Our church is, praise God! *a beacon of light* for many in its hinterland. It is *a city set on a hill*. It is in itself, just by its being here, *a witness to the love and purposes of God*. May God protect and guide us all, as we try to serve him in holiness and devotion.

St Finan, Bishop and Abbot of Lindisfarne

(feast, 17 Feb.) is important for the history of Essex, but little known. In AD 653 he sent St Cedd from Lindisfarne (Holy Island on the east coast of Northumberland) to convert the East Saxons. Successful in his mission, Cedd soon returned to report, and Finan consecrated him as Bishop for Essex.

Prayer of St Ephraim the Syrian

Said at home and in church on weekdays in Great Lent. With uplifted arms the priest in church, or the individual at home, says:

O Lord and Master of my life, grant not unto me a spirit of laziness, despondency, lust of power, or idle talk. + *prostration*
But grant rather unto me, thy servant, a spirit of humility, purity, patience, and of love. + *prostration*
Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own faults, and judge not my brother; for blessed art thou, unto the ages of ages. Amen. + *prostration*
O God, cleanse me, a sinner. + *bow* (12)

O Lord and Master of my life... Amen. + *prostration*
The second time the prayer is said, only one sign and one prostration is made, at the end.

FEBRUARY DAYS

Sun 1	Sunday of Publican & Pharisee, Forefeast of Meeting
Mon 2	Meeting of our Lord & Saviour in the Temple
Tue 3	Righteous Simeon the God-receiver & Anna the Prophetess
Wed 4	Hieromartyr Aldate, Bishop of Gloucester
Fri 6	S Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople
Sat 7	S Richard of the West Saxons
Sun 8	Sunday of the Prodigal Son, Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates, New Martyrs & Confessors of Russia
Tue 10	Hieromartyr Charalambos, Bishop of Magnesia
Wed 11	Hieromartyr Blaise, Bishop of Sebaste S Caedmon of Whitby
Thu 12	New Martyr Kristo the Gardener (Albania)
Sat 14	Saturday of Souls
Sun 15	Sunday of Meatfare, of the Last Judgment
Tue 17	S Finan, Bishop of Lindisfarne
Wed 18	S Leo the Great, Pope of Rome S Colman, Bishop of Lindisfarne
Thu 19	New Martyr Philothei of Athens
Sat 21	Commemoration of All Monks & Nuns
Sun 22	Sunday of Cheesefare, Forgiveness Sunday
Mon 23	FIRST DAY OF THE GREAT FAST (LENT) Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna
Tue 24	1st & 2nd Findings of the Head of S John
Fri 27	S Raphael, Bishop of Brooklyn
Sat 28	Commemoration of Miracle of the Kollyva of S Theodore the Recruit S John Cassian the Roman

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