



Prophet Elias News

News for the Orthodox Church of the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon
20th March 2022



Fr Alexander Schmemmann on the Sunday of the Cross

The third Sunday of Lent is called "*The Veneration of the Cross.*" At the Vigil of that day, after the Great Doxology, the Cross is brought in a solemn procession to the centre of the church and remains there for the entire week-- with a special rite of veneration following each service. It is noteworthy that the theme of the Cross which dominates the hymnology of that Sunday is developed in terms not of suffering but of victory and joy. More than that, the theme-songs (*irmoi*) of the Sunday Canon are taken from the Paschal Service-- "The Day of the Resurrection"-- and the Canon is a paraphrase of the Easter Canon.

The meaning of all this is clear. We are in *Mid-Lent*. On the one hand, the physical and spiritual effort, if it is serious and consistent, begins to be felt, its burden becomes more burdensome, our fatigue more evident. We need help and encouragement. On the other hand, having endured this fatigue, having climbed the mountain up to this point, we begin to see the end of our pilgrimage, and the rays of Easter grow in their intensity. Lent is our self-crucifixion, our experience, limited as it is, of Christ's commandment heard in the Gospel lesson of that Sunday: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mark 8:34). But we cannot take up our cross and follow Christ unless we have *His Cross* which He took up in order to save us. It is His Cross, not ours, that saves us. It is His Cross that gives not only meaning but also power to others. This is explained to us in the *synaxarion* of the Sunday of the Cross:

On this Sunday, the third Sunday of Lent, we celebrate the veneration of the honourable and Life-Giving Cross, and for this reason: inasmuch as in the forty days of fasting we in a way crucify ourselves.... and become bitter and despondent and failing, the Life-Giving Cross is presented to us for refreshment and assurance, for remembrance of our Lord's Passion, and for comfort.... We are like those following a long and cruel path, who become tired, see a beautiful tree with many leaves, sit in its shadow and rest for a while and then, as if rejuvenated, continue their journey; likewise today, in the time of fasting and difficult journey and effort, the Life-Giving Cross was planted in our midst by the holy fathers to give us rest and refreshment, to make us light and courageous for the remaining task.... Or, to give another example: when a king is coming, at first his banner and symbols appear, then he himself comes glad and rejoicing about his victory and filling with joy those under him; likewise, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is about to show us His victory over death, and appear to us in the glory of the Resurrection Day, is sending us in advance His sceptre, the royal symbol-- the Life-Giving Cross-- and it fills us with joy and makes us ready to meet, inasmuch as it is possible for us, the King Himself, and to render glory to His victory.... All this in the midst of Lent which is like a bitter source because of its tears, because also of its efforts and despondency.... but Christ comforts us who are as it were in a desert until he shall lead us up to the spiritual Jerusalem by His Resurrection.... for the Cross is called the Tree of Life, it is the tree that was planted in Paradise, and for this reason our fathers have planted it in the midst of Holy Lent, remembering both Adams bliss and how he was deprived of it, remembering also that partaking of this Tree we no longer die but are kept alive....

Thus, refreshed and reassured, we begin the second part of Lent.

From Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann Great Lent Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press 1974

Fr Thomas Hopko's 55 Maxims for a Christian Life

In 2006, in response to a request, Fr. Thomas compiled this simple but powerful set of spiritual maxims that "a believer, very simply put, would do if they really were obedient to God and wanted to live in the way that God would have us live." (*Surely a useful framework for Lenten self-examination* - Ed.)

Source: Website of Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church, Tacoma, Washington <https://orthodoxtacoma.com/55maxims>

1. Be always with Christ, trust God in everything.
2. Pray as you can, not as you want.
3. Have a keepable rule of prayer that you do by discipline.
4. Say the Lord's Prayer several times a day.
5. Have a short prayer that you constantly repeat when your mind is not occupied with other things.
6. Make some prostrations when you pray.
7. Eat good foods in moderation.
8. Keep the Church's fasting rules.
9. Spend some time in silence every day.
10. Do acts of mercy in secret.
11. Go to liturgical services regularly.
12. Go to confession and communion regularly.
13. Do not engage intrusive thoughts and feelings. Cut them off at the start.
14. Reveal all your thoughts and feelings regularly to a trusted person.
15. Read the scriptures regularly.
16. Read good books a little at a time.
17. Cultivate communion with the saints.
18. Be an ordinary person.
19. Be polite with everyone.
20. Maintain cleanliness and order in your home.
21. Have a healthy, wholesome hobby.
22. Exercise regularly.
23. Live a day, and a part of a day, at a time.
24. Be totally honest, first of all, with yourself.
25. Be faithful in little things.
26. Do your work, and then forget it.
27. Do the most difficult and painful things first.
28. Face reality.
29. Be grateful in all things.
30. Be cheerful.
31. Be simple, hidden, quiet and small.
32. Never bring attention to yourself
33. Listen when people talk to you.
34. Be awake and be attentive.
35. Think and talk about things no more than necessary.
36. When we speak, speak simply, clearly, firmly and directly.
37. Flee imagination, analysis, figuring things out.
38. Flee carnal, sexual things at their first appearance.
39. Don't complain, mumble, murmur or whine.
40. Don't compare yourself with anyone.
41. Don't seek or expect praise or pity from anyone.
42. We don't judge anyone for anything.
43. Don't try to convince anyone of anything.
44. Don't defend or justify yourself.
45. Be defined and bound by God alone.
46. Accept criticism gratefully but test it critically.
47. Give advice to others only when asked or obligated to do so.
48. Do nothing for anyone that they can and should do for themselves.
49. Have a daily schedule of activities, avoiding whim and caprice.
50. Be merciful with yourself and with others.
51. Have no expectations except to be fiercely tempted to your last breath.
52. Focus exclusively on God and light, not on sin and darkness.
53. Endure the trial of yourself and your own faults and sins peacefully, serenely, because you know that God's mercy is greater than your wretchedness.
54. When we fall, get up immediately and start over.
55. Get help when you need it, without fear and without shame.

Detecting What Is Significant

To keep Lent is to turn aside from the ordinary routines of our life in order to reflect; to notice what is going on, to detect what is really significant. It is to attend properly to what seems insignificant and might otherwise be missed, but is actually indicative of the whole direction of our unconscious priorities – so that these can be reconsidered. It is consciously to take a slice out of ordinary time, so as to understand how we use time overall.

Janet Morley *The Heart's Time – A Poem a Day for Lent and Easter* SPCK 2011

‘Just War’ and the Orthodox Church

by Fr Philip LeMasters

In contrast with Western Christianity, there is no explicit ‘just war’ theory in Eastern Orthodoxy. Certainly, the Byzantine Empire and other Orthodox nations have had rules of conduct for soldiers and expectations about when and how it was appropriate for nations to go to war. But even observance of the strictest moral or professional code does not make war good. Instead, the church tolerates war as an inevitable, tragic necessity for the protection of the innocent and the vindication of justice. The canons of the church suggest a period of repentance for those who have killed in war, which indicates both that taking life is spiritually damaging and that bloodshed falls short of Christ’s normative way of non-resistant, non-violent love. Peacemaking is the common vocation of all Christians, but the pursuit of peace in a corrupt world at times inevitably requires the use of force. In such circumstances, the church provides spiritual therapy for healing from the damaging effects of taking life. In every Divine Liturgy, the church prays for the peace of the world and all its inhabitants, and participates in the heavenly banquet of the kingdom to which all – soldier and pacifist alike – are invited.

Orthodox Christianity is not concerned fundamentally with morality as an end in itself. The vocation of humanity is for deification, participation in the eternal life of the Holy Trinity. . . . In this light, it is not hard to see why warfare, and any taking of human life, is fraught with spiritual peril. Death comes into the world as the result of sin. Christ has come to conquer death, to raise humanity to the eternal life for which humanity was created. To kill a human being is to do the work of death, to involve oneself in a paradigmatic act of spiritual brokenness and of estrangement from God and neighbour. Granted, some instances of killing may be tragically necessary, such as the actions of a soldier in defending his or her nation from invasion by a conquering power. Killing in such circumstances may be understood in light of the Orthodox category of “involuntary sin”, which includes actions that damage the soul despite the fact that they are done without malice and out of necessity. The church knows that killing does not have to be murder for it to be spiritually damaging.

Repentance is understood therapeutically in Orthodoxy. The focus is not on paying a legal penalty for one’s sins, but instead on finding healing by reorienting one’s life towards God. The soldier who has killed in war needs repentance not because of breaking a law, but because taking life presents many profound challenges to spiritual health. It is obviously difficult to grow in holiness while killing people, regardless of the circumstances.

The canons of the church are applied pastorally to repair the damage done by sinful actions. Soldiers, police officers and others may at times have no choice but to use violence to defend the innocent from abuse. Their roles and responsibilities preclude them from a straightforward manifestation of Christ’s non-resistant love for the enemy. They serve to protect the innocent from harm, and risk their own spiritual brokenness for the sake of others. Despite their “involuntary sin”, it is still possible for them to advance toward theosis by using force in as limited and just a manner as possible, while doing what is possible to guard themselves against the damaging effects of the passions that are often aroused in situations of violence. Passions are disordered attachments of the soul that tempt people to sinful actions. Hatred is a passion often aroused during war, for it is hard to kill without a hatred that dehumanizes the enemy. When human beings “cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war”, a great many passions are unleashed that often lead to the abuse and slaughter of innocents. . . . Nonetheless, it is possible for a soldier to fight these passions successfully and to grow in holiness, even becoming a saint.

Abridged from Philip LeMasters Orthodox Perspectives on Peace, War and Violence
Ecumenical Review / March 2011. Used with permission. [Read the whole thing here.](#)

Fr. Philip LeMasters is the pastor of St. Luke Orthodox Church, Abilene, TX. He works as Professor of Religion and Director of the Honors Program at McMurry University and serves as the Corporate Secretary of the Board of Trustees at St. Vladimir’s Theological Seminary.

The world is crooked and God straightens it. That is why Christ suffered (and still suffers) as well as all the martyrs, confessors and saints – and we who love Christ cannot but suffer as well.

Fr Alexander Elchaninov *The Diary of a Russian Priest* Faber and Faber 1967

This Fortnight We Celebrate

On Sunday 20th: **Second Sunday of Lent**

Sunday of Saint Gregory Palamas

We wish **Fr Gregory Palamas** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
Saint Cuthbert of Lindisfarne (687)

On Monday 21st: **Saint Seraphim of Vyritsa** (Russia 1949)

On Wednesday 23rd: **Saint Nikon of the Kyiv/Kiev Caves** (1088)

On Friday 25th: **THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR MOST HOLY LADY
MOTHER OF GOD AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY**
Saint Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow (1925)
New Confessor under the Bolshevik Yoke

On Saturday 26th: **Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel**

We wish **Sofia Gabrielle** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Sunday 27th: **Third Sunday of Lent**

Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross

On Thursday 31st: **Saint Innocent of Alaska,**

Apostle to the Americas (1879)

Saint Maria of Paris, New Martyr (1945)

We wish **Maria G** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Friday April 1st: **Saint Mary of Egypt** (1st C)

We wish **Julia M, Bea P** and all at **Saint Mary of Egypt
Sub-Parish** in Uganda a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**



Icon of the Mother of God Cross-Bearer

by Saint Maria of Paris

Christ, the Cross and the Church can in no circumstances go hand in hand with anything that contains an element of violence and oppression.

Saint Maria of Paris: 'The Cross and the Hammer-and-Sickle' in
Mother Maria Skobtsova: Essential Writings Orbis Books 2003

A Prayer for Peace in Ukraine

circulated to all his churches by Metropolitan Onufry of Kyiv
(Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Moscow Patriarchate)

Lord Jesus Christ our God, You have destroyed the wall of enmity, You have granted true peace to Your people, and You have called the peacemakers 'blessed sons of God'. We implore You, bless those who seek true peace and those who work for this cause. Enlighten the eyes and hearts of all those who want to engage in the Godpleasing work of peace. Give wisdom to those who hold authority, strengthen the will of the rulers of our peoples and enlighten their minds so that they can work with wisdom, discernment and great concern for good to build the desired peace. By the grace of Your Holy Spirit, let peace be made in all peoples, not by words, but by deeds, so that orphans and widows may be comforted and no longer weep. Soften hardened hearts, so that they may seek in sweetness harmony and love. Bless every person and teach them to understand and do Your will, which is salvation, love, peace and union of all men. For You are the King of Peace, to Whom there are no limits, and to You be glory, Thanksgiving and worship, with Your Father without beginning and Your most holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and always and in the ages of ages. Amen.

For the peace of the whole world, for the stability of the holy churches of God, and for the unity of all people, let us pray to the Lord

Divine Liturgy: The Litany of Peace

Noticeboard

Services:

- Saturday March 19th: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm
- Sunday 20th: **Second Sunday of Great Lent – Sunday of Saint Gregory Palamas**
Typika and Sunday Vespers Saint Anne's 10.30am
Orthros and Divine Liturgy Plymouth 9.30am Torquay 9.30am
- Thursday 24th: Vespers of the Feast of the Annunciation Saint Anne's 6.30pm
- Friday 25th: **FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION**
Orthros and Divine Liturgy Plymouth 9.30am Torquay 9.30am
- Saturday 26th: **Divine Liturgy (Celebration of the Annunciation) Saint Anne's 10.30am**
Vespers/Veneration of the Cross Saint Anne's 6pm
- Sunday 27th: **Third Sunday of Great Lent – Veneration of the Cross**
Vespers Saint Anne's 3pm
Orthros and Divine Liturgy Plymouth 9.30am Torquay 9.30am
Matins and Divine Liturgy (in Romanian) Saint Stephen's, Exeter High St 9am
- Saturday April 2nd: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm
- Sunday 3rd: **Fourth Sunday of Great Lent – Sunday of Saint John of the Ladder**
Typika and Sunday Vespers Saint Anne's 10.30am
Orthros and Divine Liturgy Plymouth 9.30am Torquay 9.30am
- Wednesday 6th: Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete Saint Anne's 6.30pm
- Friday 8th: Akathist Hymn of the Mother of God Saint Anne's 6.30pm
- Saturday 9th: **Divine Liturgy Saint Anne's 10.30am**
- Sunday 10th: **Fifth Sunday of Great Lent – Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt**
Vespers Saint Anne's 3pm
- Saturday 16th: **Lazarus Saturday** Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm
- Sunday 17th: **PALM SUNDAY – ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM**
Typika and Blessing of Palms followed by Matins of the Bridegroom Saint Anne's 10.30am
- Services in Holy Week:**
- Monday 18th: Bridegroom Matins Saint Anne's 6.30pm
- Tuesday 19th: Bridegroom Matins Saint Anne's 6.30pm
- Wednesday 20th: Rite of Anointing Saint Anne's 6.30pm
- Thursday 21st: **Vesperal Liturgy Saint Anne's 10.00am**
Matins of the Twelve Gospels Saint Anne's 6.30pm
- Friday 22nd: Vespers **Saint James' Hall 3pm**
Matins **Saint James' Hall 6pm**
- Saturday 23rd: **Vesperal Liturgy Saint James' Hall 9.30am**
- Saturday 23rd: **Paschal Matins and Liturgy Saint James' Church 10pm**
- Sunday 24th: Paschal Vespers Saint Anne's 6.30pm

Covid 19: Please note that while here is no ruling on the wearing of face coverings in Saint Anne's, a supply of ffp2/N95 protective face masks will be available in church for those who feel they need to better protect themselves.

Open unto us the door of your loving-kindness, O blessed Mother of God: in that we put our hope in you we may not go astray, but through you, may we be delivered from every adversity, for you are the salvation of all Christian people.

At the trial of God, we will ask: Why did you allow all this?
And the answer will be an echo: Why did you allow all this?

Welcome



A warm welcome to Melanie (Michaela) and Sofia (Gabrielle) Cowpland, who were baptised at Saint Anne's on Saturday 26th February. They were sponsored by Michelle Gallaher. Father Trayan officiated, assisted by Deacon Brandon. We wish Michaela, Gabrielle and Michelle Many Years!

The 'Russian World' Heresy

Some of you may have seen on Facebook 'A Declaration on the "Russian World" Teaching', co-published on the Sunday of Orthodoxy (13th March) by Volos Academy for Theological Studies and The Orthodox Christian Studies Centre of Fordham University. (*I understand Deacon Brandon had some considerable input.*) The first part gives background to the present situation and the 'Russian World' teaching/heresy. It then goes on to explain why the contributors condemn and reject this notion, which it does clearly and succinctly. And reading it, I thought it reinforced what being Orthodox really means, especially useful in this world that is so keen to put us all into labelled boxes. At the end there is a link if you want to sign it and see who else has signed – including some from this parish and from all corners of the world: Ukraine, India, Alaska, The Marshal Islands, to name but a very few.

[A Declaration on the "Russian World" \(Russkii mir\) Teaching - Public Orthodoxy](#)

Celia

[*See also on P7 the letter of introduction to the Declaration by the coordinators – Revd. Dr Brandon Gallaher and Dr Pantelis Kalaitzidis*]

The Mystery That Is From All Eternity

Today is revealed the mystery that is from all eternity. The Son of God becomes the Son of man, that, sharing in what is worse, He may make me share in what is better. In times of old Adam was once deceived: he sought to become God, but received not his desire. Now God becomes man, that He may make Adam God. Let creation rejoice, let nature exult: for the Archangel stands in fear before the Virgin and, saying to her 'Hail', he brings the joyful greeting whereby our sorrow is assuaged. O Thou who in Thy merciful compassion wast made man, our God, glory to Thee.

By Theophanes, from Matins for the Feast of the Annunciation

More Feedback Please

Many thanks to those of you who responded to our request for your thoughts about the future of the newsletter. We could do with more, though, for us to make sure we have a wide range of views to guide our decisions. You can email us at martinolsson827@btinternet.com or ring 0183782796. Ed.

DECLARATION ON THE “RUSSIAN WORLD” (RUSSKII MIR) TEACHING

POSTED AT ORTHODOXY IN DIALOGUE [MARCH 13, 2022](#)

The following letter was sent out by the Orthodox Christian Studies Center at Fordham University. We reprint it here to urge Orthodoxy in Dialogue’s readers around the world to sign it. Click the three links to read the Declaration, add your name, and check daily on the updated list of signatures. The Volos Academy in Greece co-sponsored this project with OCS.

Dear Friends,

In the wake of Vladimir Putin’s unconscionable and horrendously destructive invasion of Ukraine, Orthodox Christians across the globe must face a difficult question: how can a nation whose majority embraces Orthodox Christianity possibly justify attacking and killing the people of a sibling nation, who almost all share the same faith?

How, at the beginning of Great Lent, when our tradition calls us to forgiveness, fasting, and prayer, can Orthodox Christians unleash violence and bloodshed against their brothers and sisters in Christ?

The painful truth, but one that we need to confront in this time of repentance, is that our own leadership, and specifically, the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church, has developed and promoted a false teaching known as “Russkii Mir” or “Russian World,” providing Mr. Putin with the religious “blank cheque” that underwrites his heinous invasion and annexation of Russia’s peaceful, democratic neighbours: Ukraine.

During this sacred season, Orthodox Christians throughout the world need to declare in no uncertain terms that the “Russian World” ideology is both false and destructive, feeding violence and bloodshed, causing scandal and division in the Church. Nor can we fool ourselves that this ideology is an exception in the history of Orthodoxy: we must condemn all Orthodox ethno-phyletist ideologies akin to the false teaching of the “Russian world” in every age, nation and culture.

Orthodox scholars and theologians have drafted a powerful Declaration (attached) concerning the theologically condemnable “Russian World” ideology. We urge you to read this Declaration, sign it, and share it with those around you.

We urge you to pray for repentance for those who propagate this evil teaching, which continues to feed the megalomaniacal ambitions of Vladimir Putin. Pray also for the repentance of every Orthodox Christian, for our own complicity in this evil through silence, obfuscation, and denial.

Only if we confront this evil, which thrives both within and outside us, bowing low in repentance with the simple words of the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete—“Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me!”—can we truly reaffirm our divided, bloodied community as the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, united only by our broken and contrite hearts in the person of Jesus Christ, who alone is with us in adversity.

If you wish to sign and support this Declaration, please follow the link <https://forms.gle/uCBo8YVhTupjaf0A6> and add your name.

The Coordinators on Behalf of the Drafting Committee
Revd. Dr. Brandon Gallaher and Dr. Pantelis Kalaitzidis

[Read the declaration here](#)

The list of signatures is automatically updated here: <https://bit.ly/3MOq0Le>
At least once daily, signatures will be updated in the webpage of the Declaration too.