



Prophet Elias News

**News and Views for the Orthodox Church of the
Holy Prophet Elias in Devon
July 2022**



On June 19th, the Sunday after Pentecost, we celebrated the Feast of All Saints. In subsequent weeks the various Orthodox nations have celebrated the Saints of their own traditions, including in our case all the Saints of the British Isles.

In each issue of Prophet Elias News we include a list of notable saints' days, originally under the heading 'This Week we Celebrate'. The list was always selective, of course, 'since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses' (Hebrews 12:1), but now that this newsletter appears only monthly, we will have to be more selective still, concentrating particularly on the namedays of parishioners, where we know them, on saints with local or historical relevance to our parish, and on saints of modern times, people local to us in time.

Fr Alexander Schmemmann often quoted Leon Bloy's statement that "The only real sadness, the only real failure, the only great tragedy in life, is not to become a saint." It can sometimes be a temptation to think that the great saints lived in a different sort of world, a less complicated world, where the road to sainthood was somehow more clearly waymarked. That this is not the case is clear from the number of twentieth century saints listed in the calendar for July alone – nor must we forget the many saintly people of recent times not yet formally glorified by the Church.

Archbishop Nikitas said during our recent Deanery Conference, 'The fact that God still sends us Saints is proof that He has not given up on us.'



We will continue, of course, to note the feastsdays of great pillars of the Church, such as, during July, the holy Myrrhbearer and Equal-to-the-Apostles Mary Magdalen.

Martin Olsson

The Way of the Saints

by Father Thomas Hopko

There are certain characteristics which belong to all of the saints, whoever they were and whenever they lived. Among these characteristics are the following:

Every saint is God-centred and seeks in his or her life the “one thing necessary”—to glorify God by doing His will.

Every saint is Christ-centred and seeks to pattern his or her life after the life of Jesus; following Him, keeping His commandments and imitating His example.

Every saint is Spirit-centred, knowing and living by the fact that it is only by the Holy Spirit that any person can do anything that is good, true and beautiful in his life.

Every saint is Other-centred, giving up his or her own life for the sake of the life of others, rejoicing in the good of others as the only satisfaction and fulfilment in life.

Every saint accepts and loves his or her own person and position in life, sanctifying and fulfilling it according to the real possibilities that are given. The servant serves. The worker works. The parent nurtures. The ruler rules. The preacher preaches. The teacher teaches. The pastor guides. The

scholar inquires. The artist creates. Each one does his own thing, according to his or her own talents and gifts . . . for the glory of God and the good of the other.

Every saint lives in the present moment, in his or her own time and place. The saint never pines over the past or worries about the future. The saint never wishes to be somewhere else, in some other conditions, with some other people. The saint never wishes to be somebody else. He trusts God in all things and does what has to be done and can be done in the given circumstances. The saint knows that whatever it is that has to be done, it can only be done right now . . . for only the present is in the power of the person, and nothing else.

Every saint pays attention to details and does the smallest, seemingly most insignificant act with the greatest love and devotion. For the saint, no act is too small, no work too trifling, no task too demeaning, no deed too insignificant. Every little thing, for the saint, has eternal value and importance. Every little thing is done before God and has meaning and fulfilment in Him.

Every saint pays attention to persons . . . and not to structures, institutions, parties, programs or roles. For the saint only the person counts, and everything else is subordinated and ordered to the good of the person. The saint is never impersonal. He never loves or serves “humanity in general.” He only loves and serves the person near at hand, the neighbour given by God—the most difficult and most divine manner of acting that there is.

Every saint loves the whole of God’s good creation, not only living persons, but animals, plants and all that positively exists. The saint never blasphemes God’s good world, but rejoices in the beauties of creation to the glory of their Creator.

Every saint is an utter realist. There is no sentimentality in the saint, no partial views, no prejudicial opinions, no petty interests. There may be real passions and fanatically impassioned actions. There may be factual one-sidedness and fierce conviction, but it is always in the light of the total reality of God and man, and it is always for the good of all. The saint is not self-indulgent in his sanctity. He is not a “spiritual glutton.”

Every saint suffers—with joy and gladness—for others. The saint does not “come down from his cross.” He loves his cross as the way to his resurrection. He loves his death to himself as the way to his life in God. He loves to put himself down, and be put down, if it means that someone else will be saved and exalted. The saint is not a masochist. He does not love sufferings and pains for their own sake. But he is a realist who knows that what is lasting and good requires the payment of a great price, and he is willing to pay the price in his own blood. When one does good in the sinful world, he suffers. It is as simple as that. And the saint does good.

Every saint hates sin, in himself and others, but he loves the sinner, including his own “self,” as created in the image and likeness of God, and as loved and saved by God in Christ. The saint knows himself to be the “greatest of sinners.” It is his very sanctity which gives him this knowledge. And like God, he loves men in their sins and does them good as the expression of his love. Every saint recognizes the devil and the power of evil, and he fights them to his last breath, in himself and others. The saint never justifies sin and he gives no place to the rationalization of evil. Evil is to be vanquished, not explained. The devil is to be destroyed, not discussed. And the proof of a person’s sanctity is seen in the intensity with which the devil attacks him, and in the power with which the devil is overcome.

Every saint fasts and prays and lives fully in the life of the Church. It is in this way that he or she is a saint: empowered with grace, enlightened with wisdom, inspired with love and enlivened with the life of God that has no end. Every saint—whoever he or she is—has learned to transform the routine of his small, limited, human, mundane, earthly existence into the paradise of the Kingdom of God.

According to the scriptures, we are all “called to be saints” (*Romans 1:7*).

This Month We Celebrate

On Friday July 1st: **Saints Julius and Aaron**, First Martyrs of Wales (c304)

On Saturday 2nd: **Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco** (1966)

We wish **Edward S** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Sunday 3rd: Translation of the relics of **Hieromartyr Philip**, Metropolitan of Moscow (1652)

On Tuesday 5th: **Saint Morwenna**, Hermit of Morwenstow, sister of Saint Nectan of Hartland (6thC)

On Thursday 7th: **Great Martyr Kyriaki** (c303)

We wish **Kyriaki H** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Sunday 10th: **Saint Anthony of the Kyiv Caves**, Founder of monasticism in Rus (1073)

On Monday 11th: **Saint Sophrony of Essex** (1993)

On Tuesday 12th: **Saint Veronica** who was healed by Christ

We wish **Veronica D** and **Veronika M** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Friday 15th: Holy Equal to the Apostles **Grand Prince Vladimir**, Enlightener of Rus (1015)

Saint Swithun, Bishop and Wonderworker of Winchester (862)

On Sunday 17th: Great Martyr **Marina (Margaret)** of Antioch in Pisidia (c303)

Passionbearers Czar Nicholas II, Empress **Alexandra**, Crown Prince **Alexis**
and Grand Duchesses **Olga, Tatiana, Maria** and **Anastasia** (1918)

On Monday 18th: Martyrs the Grand Duchess **Elizabeth** and the Nun **Barbara** (1918)

We wish **Eliza S** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Wednesday 20th: **HOLY, GLORIOUS PROPHET ELIAS (ELIJAH)** (9thC BCE)

We wish **Otto S** and **all Parishioners** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

Saint Alexis (Medvedkov) of Ugine, France (1934)

New Martyrs **Saint Maria of Paris and Ravensbruck** (1945) and her co-workers

Fr Dimitry Klepinin (1944), **Elias Fondaminsky** (1942) and **George (Yuri) Skobtsov** (1944)

We wish **Maria G** and all our friends in the French **Vicariate of Saint Maria of Paris**
and **Saint Alexis of Ugine** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Friday 22nd: **Holy Myrrh-bearer and Equal to the Apostles Mary Magdalen**

We wish **Margaret E**, **Mary S** and **Maddy S** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Sunday 24th: **Saint Christina** of Tyre (3rdC)

We wish **Christine A**, **Christina S** and **Kirsty S** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years**

On Monday 25th: **The Dormition of the Righteous Anna**, mother of the Most Holy Mother of God

We wish **Emma G-L** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Wednesday 27th: **Great Martyr and Healer Panteleimon** (305)

On Thursday 28th: **Saint Nicanor** of the Seventy Apostles

We wish **Father Nicanor** a **Happy Feast**, **Happy Birthday** and **Many Years!**

On Sunday 31st: **Saint Joseph of Arimathaea**

Saint Germanus of Auxerre, opponent of Pelagianism in Britain (448)

Saint Neot, Hermit in Cornwall (c877)

Saint Philip of Moscow 1507 - 1569

Metropolitan Philip considered it impossible to mix the earthly and the heavenly, serving both the Cross and the sword. After he publicly refused to bless Tsar Ivan IV's massacre of Novgorod, he was arrested during a liturgy at the Cathedral of the Dormition and immured at the Otroch Monastery of Tver. A year later, he was strangled by the tsar's minion, Malyuta Skuratov. At first, his relics were committed to the earth there at the monastery, beyond the church altar. Later, they were transferred to the Solovetsky Monastery, and from there, in 1652, Patriarch Nikon persuaded Tsar Alexis to bring his relics to Moscow, where he was proclaimed a saint later that year.

Source:OrthodoxWiki



Deanery Conference

A short report on the Deanery Conference 27th to 30th May: ‘How to be the Church – Learning from Our Past, Discerning Our Future.’

Martin and I set off for the long journey to High Leigh in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, without a great deal of enthusiasm. However, by the end of the first evening that had dissipated. It was lovely to see people again after two years of cancelled conferences.

There were several very interesting talks and panel discussions relevant to our place as Orthodox in the UK and the place of the Deanery in Orthodoxy. On the first evening there was a discussion on lessons from the pandemic, in which many aired problems and distress they had encountered during the past two years. It seemed some parishes were not able to hold streamed services of any kind and those people had felt abandoned. I, once again, felt how extraordinarily lucky we were here in Devon. On Saturday morning Dr Athanasios Papathanasios talked via video link from Athens on the need for the Church to rediscover a sense of mission. On Saturday and Sunday afternoons there were workshops on various topics. Martin gave one based on the work of the Bishop Spartas Trust and I attended two led by Mary Cunningham and Ian Randall on the themes of the conference. All these talks and discussions allowed everyone to have an opportunity to air experiences, both painful and positive, of the last two years in an open and safe environment, and I think people went away happier.

Archbishop Nikitas came on Sunday, attending the Liturgy not vested as the bishop but just seated in the altar. At breakfast afterwards he came round to each table to chat to people. He seems to be a very busy person, attending functions all over the place (*Did you catch sight of him in the entrance procession of the Platinum Jubilee thanksgiving service at St Paul’s?*). He gave a talk on ‘How to be the Church’. I got the impression he is keen for us to look outwards and forwards with the full knowledge and appreciation of our past, but not sticking to traditions for the sake of them without knowing why they are there.

The highlight of the weekend for me had to be the children’s play at the Sunday night party. It was brilliant. I shall never be able to hear the reading on Holy Saturday morning about Jonah and the whale without seeing an upturned table with a cardboard box whale’s head hovering up Jonah.

Martin and I left before the very end on Monday morning, after an interesting talk by Fr Dragos Herescu on Orthodoxy in Britain today, from ‘landlocked’ to ‘portable’ religious identity. Basically, should we be transporting our national/ethnic traditions to Britain or rather using those traditions to forge something new? Several times he stressed the need for us to be creative in all aspects of Church life. It was very thought provoking.

Our car decided it wasn’t keen on leaving – the battery was flat – so we had to call out Green Flag to get us going for the long journey home.

Celia

We hope to be able to feature extracts from some of the talks in future issues. Ed.

Message from Saint James’

Dear Philip, Alice and all our friends of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Prophet Elias,

I am sorry that I didn’t write before to thank-you for the very generous gift of £200 following your Easter celebrations. It was a privilege for us that you should choose to be at St James for such a special occasion. Please be assured of our continued support and friendship.

With many blessings,

Nigel Ridgway, Father Henry and all at St James’.

Since St James’ made no charge for our use of the church from Good Friday to Easter night, the PAC decided to make a contribution equivalent to the hire of the Hall over that time.

Ed.

*Contributions for the August issue should reach the Editors at martinolsson827@btinternet.com or by post at Little Linhay, Bondleigh, EX20 2AJ by **Friday 23rd July**, please.*

Any opinions expressed in this newsletter are entirely those of the named authors or identified sources and should not be taken as representing the views of the parish as a whole.

Noticeboard

Services:

Saturday July 2nd: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm
Sunday 3rd: Typika Saint Anne's 10.30am
Orthros and Divine Liturgy Plymouth 9.30am Torquay 9.30am

Saturday 9th: Divine Liturgy Saint Anne's 10.30am

Sunday 10th: Matins and Divine Liturgy (in Romanian) St Stephen's Church, Exeter High St. 9am

Saturday 16th: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm

Sunday 17th: Divine Liturgy Saint Anne's 10.30am

Celebration of the Feast of the Holy Prophet Elias followed by Bring and Share meal.

*Sunday 24th: Fr Trayan will celebrate the Liturgy in Slavonic in Torquay: his son and son's fiancée will be visiting following their graduation in Theology in Bulgaria. Matins 9am Liturgy 10.15
Matins and Divine Liturgy (in Romanian) St Stephen's Church, Exeter High St. 9am*

Saturday 30th: Divine Liturgy Ss Symeon and Anna, Combe Martin 10.30am

Sunday 31st: Typika Saint Anne's 10.30am
Orthros and Divine Liturgy Plymouth 9.30am Torquay 9.30am

Saturday August 6th: Feast of the Transfiguration Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm

Sunday 7th: Typika to celebrate the Transfiguration Saint Anne's 10.30am

THREADS THROUGH CREATION

'Threads through Creation' is a spectacular display of twelve huge and beautiful silk panels inspired by the first pages of Genesis.

Artist Jacqui Parkinson lives near Exeter, and has a national reputation for large scale work that's been shown in most of the cathedrals of England. She spent three years, used miles of thread, and eight million stitches ... this exhibition is touring 20 cathedrals.

The display will be at Exeter Cathedral until Friday 24th July.

More info: www.creation-threads.co.uk www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk



Saturday 16th July 7pm

St David's Church, Exeter EX4 4HR

Choir in a Day: Handel's Messiah

Tickets and info available

from www.laurenceblyth.com/messiah

SUPPORT FOR AFGHAN REFUGEES

In October a group of Afghan refugees arrived in Exeter with only what they could carry. Very slowly, they are being housed. Some bikes have already been donated but more would be most useful (men's, women's and children's). They have also requested unneeded sewing machines. If you can help to provide any of these items, please could you contact the Mint Methodist Church on: 01392 279786 or email Chris: facilitator@themint.org.uk in order to arrange the best times for delivery to us. Many thanks.

Health Updates

We have received the following updates on the health of Sophia R and Joanna.

Thank you for your love and prayers. After undergoing a lot of tests an explanation for the scarring on my lungs has been narrowed down to two contenders: either a reaction to the long-term use of medication or Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis. The former should be relatively easy to treat. I await to know what the palliative treatment options for IPF amount to... After my last appointment the consultant anticipated that a forthcoming scan will, at long last, clarify matters. I'll keep you posted. Sophia.

As many of you are aware Joanna Taylor has recently gone in to hospital following a couple of falls. It is unclear at the moment how long she may have to be there for, but she is very grateful for all of the love and support she has received from well wishers so far. Please do continue to remember her in your thoughts and prayers. Love Joanna, Irene & James