



# Prophet Elias News

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



## Opening the Eyes of Our Souls

Extract from a Homily on the Transfiguration by Fr Philip LeMasters

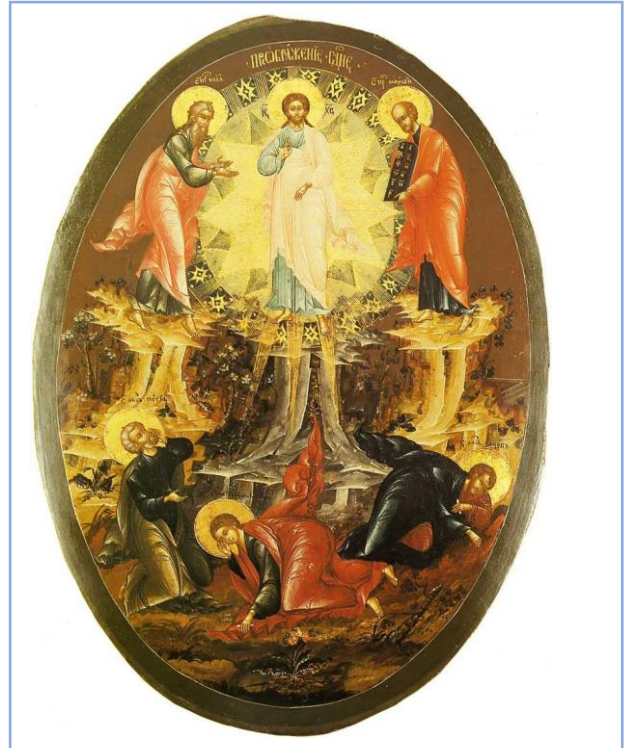
The change that occurred that day was not in the Lord Himself, Who is eternally radiant with the divine glory in a way beyond our comprehension. The change was in the disciples, for Christ opened the eyes of their souls to behold His infinite holiness, to the extent that they were able as human beings. If we observe this feast simply by celebrating the doctrinal teaching of Christ's divinity or the great mystical experience of the apostles, we will have excluded ourselves from the full meaning of this event. For as in all feasts of the Church, the point is not simply to look back at what happened long ago. It is, instead, to enter into the eternal truth that is revealed. And on this great day of the Transfiguration, the only appropriate way to celebrate is to cooperate with the gracious divine energies of our Lord so that we also will behold His divine glory. That means that we too must become transfigured through personal union with the Son of God such that His eternal majesty permeates our existence, making us shine brightly like an iron left in the fire.

If we want to enter into the joy of this great feast of our salvation, we must persistently walk into the light by opening the eyes of our souls to the blinding glory of our Saviour. We will often not like what we see in ourselves as a result, but by stumbling forward as best we can, constantly calling out for His mercy, the Lord will change, strengthen, and purify us. In ways that we cannot yet understand, He will make us "a lamp shining in a dark place" that gives light and hope to a world that so desperately needs to be healed by union with His gracious divine energies. The message of this feast is not to lose heart, but to press on in faithfulness. For the darkness is simply the absence of light and a sign that we have yet more room to embrace the blessed life of Christ.

We celebrate the Transfiguration of our Lord already knowing of His resurrection, by which He has illumined even the tomb. Let this sink in: There is no darkness in our souls or in our world that our crucified and risen Lord cannot make radiant with His gracious divine energies. We must, however, do our part by opening the darkness in our lives to His healing light. Even as we stumble and fall, we must continue to do so with abiding trust in His mercy for blind sinners such as ourselves. For though we do not yet have the eyes to see it, that is how our gracious Lord will make us shine with holy light for our salvation and that of the entire world. Let us join St. Peter, then, in living as "eyewitnesses of His majesty."

Extract from 'Seeing is Believing: Homily for the Transfiguration' by Fr Philip LeMasters, Professor of Religion at McMurray University, Abilene, Texas. Posted 19<sup>th</sup> August 2017.

Reprinted with permission. The full text can be found at [Eastern Christian Insights](http://EasternChristianInsights.com)



Contributions for the September issue should reach the Editors at [martinolsson827@btinternet.com](mailto:martinolsson827@btinternet.com) or by post at *Little Linhay, Bondleigh, EX20 2AJ* by **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> August**, 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.

## Can There be a Church Without Mission

Excerpt from a talk given by Professor Athanasios Papathanasiou to the Deanery Conference at High Leigh, Hoddesdon on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2022

A Deanery conference is a really important matter. I firmly believe that it is extremely important to experience the Church in all her dimensions: as a worshipping community, as a community in dialogue, as an itinerant community. All three of these dimensions (worship, discussion, itinerant) are together of vital importance and no one of them should be absolutized at the expense of the others. I'd rather say that the Church has been invited by her Master to worship and discuss en route – as an itinerant community, together with her itinerant Master to the ends of the earth and until the end of time. There is no autopilot on this journey. Believers have a tremendous responsibility. The disciples are urged to fight back sleepiness, to constantly listen to their Lord (not only to have listened to him), to accommodate the surprises which their Lord has been working out, and finally to be willing to examine their own pace and adjust if need be. One may say that all this is self-evident. Personally, I am not so sure. It may be self-evident in theory, but I doubt whether it is really self-evident in lived religious life. You see, a crucial problem (which we meet in the narratives of the Gospels as well as in the history of the Church through the centuries) is the paradoxical behaviour of the disciples: the difficulty the disciples have in accepting Him, whom they acknowledge as their own Master!

In order to understand this difficulty (and contradiction), let us consider a great feast of our Church, the feast of the Transfiguration of the Saviour, celebrated on August 6. The Gospels tell us that Christ took three of his disciples (Peter, James, and John), climbed a mountain (in other words: withdrew to a mountain) and there revealed his divine glory to them. In response to the miraculous event of the Transfiguration, the only one who spoke was Peter: "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three tabernacles; one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." That is, Peter, caught up in this extraordinary experience, asked to remain there, on the mountain, on a higher spiritual level, out of society and everyday life. So very often we hear preachers and theologians praising Peter as a model for all believers, as a model of the person who seeks the spiritual. But is this really the spirit of the Gospel? Is Peter really a role model? Or is he—quite the opposite—an example of what not to do?

Luke's narrative of the Transfiguration features a laconic and enigmatic phrase that warrants our attention. The evangelist says that Peter made this suggestion "not knowing what he said"! Why did Peter not know what he was saying? What did he do wrong? We will find the answer if we think about how Christ answered Peter. He did not answer him in words. Instead, he answered him with an action: he descended from the mountain. Christ rejected Peter's request and, instead of remaining forever in this theophany on the mountain, they returned to society and history, i.e., they returned to Christ's work. It is no coincidence that, according to the Gospels, as soon as they came down from the mountain a liberating act took place: a miracle in which Christ freed a suffering child from demonic possession. So Peter was wrong. Despite his zeal and good intentions, he espoused a wrong theology. He took the experience of the Transfiguration as an end, as a way out of the messiness of history, as a mysticism that aims at personal purification and experience. But no event and no experience within the course of history can be the end. The only end, the only literal end will be the Eschaton, the Resurrection of all, the renovation of all creation, the fullness of the Kingdom of God. Christ's Transfiguration was not the end. It was a sign that revealed what the end would be.

Both audio and pdf versions of the complete talk can be found at [Deanery Conference & Festival 2022: Talks | Deanery \(thyateira-deanery.uk\)](https://www.thyateira-deanery.uk/Deanery-Conference-&Festival-2022-Talks)



Liturgy for Our Patronal Feast – Sunday July 17th

Neither the tomb nor death had power over her who brought forth God, who is ever watchful in her prayers and in whose intercession lies unfailing hope. For as the Mother of Life she has been transported into life by Him who dwelt in her ever-virgin womb.

Kontakion of the Feast of the Dormition

## Extract from a Sermon on the Dormition by Saint John of Kronstadt

The translation of the Mother of God is a paradigm of the translation in general of the souls of Christians to the other world. We say that our dead have “fallen asleep” or “passed away.” What does this mean? This means that for the true Christian there is no death. Death was conquered by Christ on the cross. But there is a translation, i.e, a rearrangement of his condition: his soul is in another place, in another age, in another world beyond the grave, eternal, without end, that is what is meant by “falling asleep”. It is as if it were a temporary dream after which, by the voice of the Lord and the fearful yet wonderful trumpet of the Archangel, all the dead shall live and come forth each to his place: either to the resurrection of life or to the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:29). This is what the Christian means by translation. We should be ready for this translation, for the day of the general resurrection and judgment, for this indescribable world event, recorded in the Holy Scriptures.

This preparation for the meeting of the heavenly King before the dread judgment seat, after death, is essentially the person’s preparation throughout the whole of his life. This preparation means a change in all his thoughts, and the moral change of all his being, so that the whole man would be pure and white as snow, washing clean everything that defiles the body and spirit, so that he is adorned with every virtue: repentance, meekness, humility, gentleness, simplicity, chastity, mercifulness, abstention, spiritual contemplation, and burning love for God and neighbour.

Our preparation for meeting the heavenly King, and for the inheritance of eternal life in heaven, should consist of these things. The heavenly King desires souls adorned with immutable virtue, souls prepared so that the Very Lord Himself could abide in them. Do not marvel that the Very Lord wants to live in us. In fact the human soul is more spacious than the heavens and the earth, for it exists in the image of God. And if one removes sins from the soul, the Lord of all will settle in it and will fill it with Himself. “We will come to him and make our dwelling with him” (John 14:23), says the Lord about the souls who love Him.

The full text can be found at

[Sermon on the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos - Orthodox Church in America \(oca.org\)](#)

### Noticeboard

#### Services:

Saturday July 30<sup>th</sup>: Vespers Saint Anne’s 6pm (Please note there will be no Liturgy in Combe Martin)

Sunday July 31<sup>st</sup>: Typika Saint Anne’s 10.30am

Saturday August 6<sup>th</sup>: **Feast of the Transfiguration** Vespers St Anne’s 6pm

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup>: **Typika - Celebration of the Transfiguration** St Anne's 10.30am

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup>: **Divine Liturgy - Celebration of the Dormition** St Anne’s 10.30am

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup>: *Matins and Divine Liturgy (in Romanian)* St Stephen’s, Exeter High St 9am

Monday 15<sup>th</sup>: **Feast of the Dormition**

*Orthros and Divine Liturgy Plymouth 8.30am Torquay 9.30am*

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup>: Vespers St Anne’s 6pm

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup>: Typika St Anne's 10.30am

*Matins and Divine Liturgy (in Romanian) St Stephen’s 9am*

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup>: Divine Liturgy St Anne's 10.30am

#### Parish News:

**Baptism** on 16.06.2022 at St Anne’s:

Baby Alexander ; mum Tatiana, father Ander, living in Tiverton.

**Funeral** on 20.06.2022 at St Anne’s:

Velika Yanakieva 90+ years old, mother of Elena Nedelcheva.

**Father Patrick** and Matoushka Mary once more made the long journey from Norfolk to be with us to celebrate our Patronal Feast on 17<sup>th</sup> July. Our heartfelt thanks to them once again for their continuing care for our parish.

**Joanna** (Taylor) is home from hospital, and very glad to feel she is once more able to live her own life. She sends love to all and thanks for all the messages of support while she was in hospital, but will not be able to come to church for a while yet as it will be some time before she can drive.



## This Month We Celebrate

- On Monday August 1<sup>st</sup>: **Beginning of the Dormition Fast**  
**The Procession of the Honourable Wood of the Life-Giving Cross of the Lord**
- On Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup>: **Holy Myrrh-Bearer Salome**
- On Friday 5<sup>th</sup>: **Saint John the Romanian** of Chozeba Monastery (Jerusalem 1960)
- On Saturday 6<sup>th</sup>: **THE HOLY TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST**  
We wish **Father Christopher** and all in the **Parish of the Holy Transfiguration**  
at **Great Walsingham** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
- On Sunday 7<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Poemen** the Ailing (1110) and **Saint Pimen** the Faster (14thC), of the Kyiv Caves
- On Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>: **The Apostle Matthias** (c63)
- On Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup>: Archdeacon **Martyr Lawrence of Rome** (258)
- On Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Blane**, Bishop of Bute (6thC)  
We wish **Father Alexander** and all members of the **Community of Saint Nicholas** in **Dunblane**  
a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
- On Saturday 13<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Tikhon**, Wonderworker of Zadonsk and All Russia (1783)  
**Saint Benjamin**, Metropolitan of Petrograd (1922) Martyr under the Bolshevik Yoke
- On Monday 15<sup>th</sup>: **DORMITION OF OUR MOST HOLY LADY THE MOTHER OF GOD AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY**
- On Thursday 18<sup>th</sup>: **Saint John, Abbot of Rila** (946) Patron Saint of Bulgaria  
We wish **Father Trayan** and all our **Bulgarian Friends** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
- On Monday 22<sup>nd</sup>: **Saint Alexis** (Medvedkov) of Ugine (France, 1934)
- On Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup>: **Saint Irenaeus**, Bishop of Lyons (202)
- On Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Kosmas** of Aetolia, Equal-to-the-Apostles (1779)
- On Friday 26<sup>th</sup>: Martyrs **Adrian and Natalia** of Nicomedia (4thC)
- On Sunday 28<sup>th</sup>: **The Prophetess Anna**, who met the Lord in the Temple  
We wish **Anya K** and **Felicia F** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
- On Monday 29<sup>th</sup>: **The Beheading of the Holy, Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John** (Fast Day)
- On Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Decuman** of Watchet in Somerset, Monk and Martyr (7<sup>th</sup>)
- On Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup>: **Saint Aidan**, first Bishop of Lindisfarne (651)  
We remember **Aidan C** – **May his Memory be Eternal!**

### Saint Kosmas the Aetolian – c1714-1779

Kosmas felt a calling to do missionary work in Greece, especially in the remote areas where, as an aftermath of four centuries of Turkish oppression in Greece, there was a lack of churches and priests for the many unbaptized adults. Kosmas received the patriarchal blessing in 1759 to travel wherever needed, with complete independence, to breathe life back into Christianity in Greece.

Kosmas travelled in Greece, its islands, and Albania for 20 years, founding over 200 schools, as well as charities and rural churches. He travelled by foot, by donkey and by ship. When he came to a village he would ask the villagers to plant a large wooden cross in the village square. Then he would mount a bench next to the cross and preach to the villagers about the love of God and the Orthodox faith. The Muslims tried him on charges of conspiracy and sentenced him to hang in August 1779 in Albania.

Source: OrthodoxWiki

### Saint Lawrence of Rome

In 258 the Emperor Valerian, having executed Pope Sixtus II, demanded of the Archdeacon Lawrence that within three days he should hand over all the riches of the Church in Rome. When the third day came, Lawrence brought to him crowds of poor, crippled, blind, and suffering people. "These are the true treasures of the Church," he proclaimed, adding "The Church is truly rich, richer by far than the Emperor." Valerian ordered his death that same day by grilling on a rack.

Source: OrthodoxWiki

**‘The Glory of God is a human being  
fully alive’**

Saint Irenaeus of Lyons