



# Prophet Elias News

**News and Views for the Orthodox Church  
of the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon  
February 2023**

## **Sermon on the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord by Metropolitan Dmitri of Dallas and the South (OCA)**

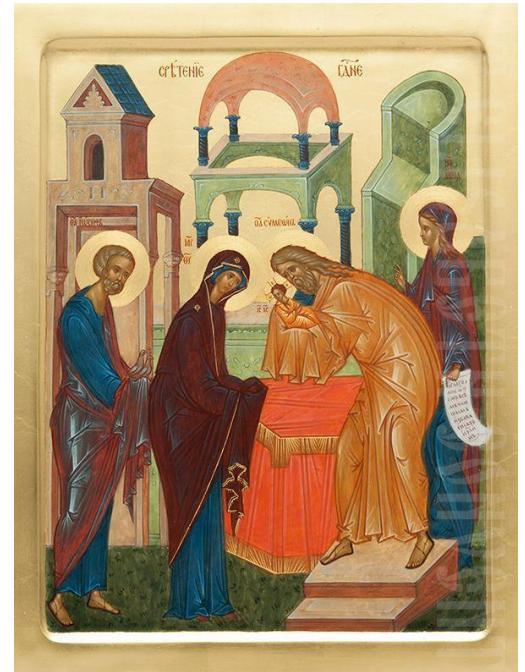
On February 2nd the Church celebrates the great feast of The Meeting of our Lord in the Temple. The Gospel lesson for that day relates how the mother of Jesus brought Him to the temple, as was the custom and requirement under the God-given Law of Moses, of Israel (Exodus 13:2, 12; Leviticus 12:2-8). When the righteous Simeon, who received Christ in his arms at the temple, saw the child, he knew immediately that this was the Redeemer promised by all of Israel's prophecies, for the elder was inspired by the Holy Spirit (Luke 2:26-27). Being inspired, he himself uttered prophetic words which form the hymn sung or chanted at the end of every Vespers service: *"Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation which Thou hast prepared before the face of Thy people, a light to lighten the gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel"* (Luke 2:29-32).

This particular feast is part of the great celebration that began forty days prior, with the Nativity of Christ (December 25). Eight days later (January 1) we remembered the Circumcision of Christ and then His Baptism (January 6). The commemoration of these events in our Lord's earthly life basically form one feast, the feast of the Incarnation of God the Word. God literally entered the world, into time and history. He was physically present in the midst of His people, His creatures whom He loves. Our Lord took on human nature in order to reconcile unto Himself man who had strayed far from the Source of his life.

In taking on the "form of a servant" God, at the same time, in the Person of Christ, fulfilled every requirement of the Law that He Himself had given to His people through Moses. He demonstrated, thereby, that everything that had happened in Israel's history could not be described merely as a succession of unrelated events. Rather this was a history with a definite goal: the salvation of mankind. He identified Himself as the Director of that history and fulfilled its expectation. When the righteous Simeon took the child into His arms and declared that this indeed was Salvation Incarnate, the "Light to lighten the gentiles, and the glory of Israel," a new era began; the era of God's presence among His children.

To this day, all of the Church's celebrations, no matter what the event commemorated may be, whether in the life of Christ, of the Theotokos, or of the saints, all are celebrations of Christ and the establishment on earth of the Kingdom of His presence. He initiated this Kingdom and promised its ultimate realization. And now, just as the Old Israel had awaited the beginning of God's Kingdom, the New Israel (the Church) awaits the Second and Glorious Coming of Christ and the fullness of His Kingdom, revealed.

Although all of our celebrations are intimately rooted in the knowledge that we have been called for complete communion with Christ and to live in function of His Kingdom to which we already belong, we still live in a world that has for the most part rejected what Christ gave it, that is, authentic life "in



abundance,” life with real purpose and meaning. We Christians, in spite of having accepted what God’s intervention in human affairs gave us, slip repeatedly and fall into the great temptation to convert the things of this world into gods. We are constantly attracted by ways of seeking happiness and fulfillment that exclude God. This, of course, always proves to be vain and futile. So our lives vacillate, back and forth, between the assurance of salvation and indifference, between moments of real joy because we know that God is with us, and moments of boredom because we cannot give ourselves totally over to Him.

Every Christian celebration reaches its climax in the Divine Liturgy for the feast. In this sacred work, when God’s people assemble in His name, we actually become participants in the Heavenly Kingdom to come. We are as literally present with Christ in His future Kingdom as the Apostles were with Him at the Last Supper. So the Kingdom is initiated among us and we enjoy it before our time, by anticipation. This is what every Eucharist is; this is what our feasts and celebrations are all about, and that is why the Eucharist is the very centre of all of them.

I will emphasize again, however, that although what we have said is true, we continually orient our lives towards everyday pursuits, often living as though we had never experienced this divine reality. That is why repentance and penitential seasons are in order. That is why in approximately one month we will enter the Great Fast or Lent during which time we are exhorted to repent of our sins. What is important for us Christians is that we have really “seen the True Light, received the Heavenly Spirit, found the true faith” in this experience of the Kingdom of God. The question we must all ask ourselves sincerely, however, is “what are we like when we return into this world after this Heavenly experience?”

To Christ Who willed to be held in the arms of the righteous Simeon for our salvation be glory, honour and worship, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

First published in *The Dawn* publication of the [Diocese of the South](#) Orthodox Church in America January 1999

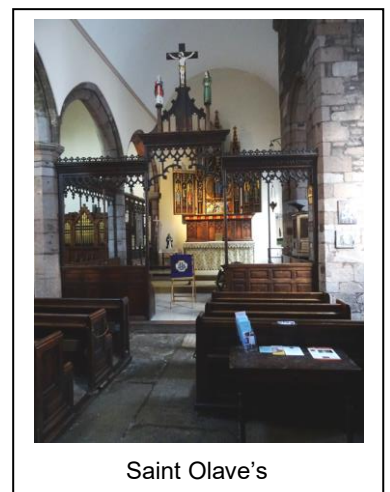
## **An Exeter Pilgrimage: Part 2** **by Hugh Allen**

We start this second part of our pilgrimage at **St Mary Arches** in Mary Arches Street, named for its surviving Norman arches, although heavily made-over in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. At one time it was the civic church, attended on state occasions by the Mayor and Corporation; today it is used by “Unlimited Church”, an informal organisation for young people to bridge the gap between “unchurch” and church proper. Pray for the local council, and for young Christians and enquirers.

A few steps will bring you to Synagogue Place, with the **Synagogue** itself squashed between the modern office building Elm House and the back of the Mecca bingo hall. It was built for the local Jewish community in 1763 and is still going strong: see <http://exetersynagogue.org.uk/> for information. Pray here for this community and for the ingathering of all God’s people, the “old” and the “new” Israel together (see Romans 11.25f).

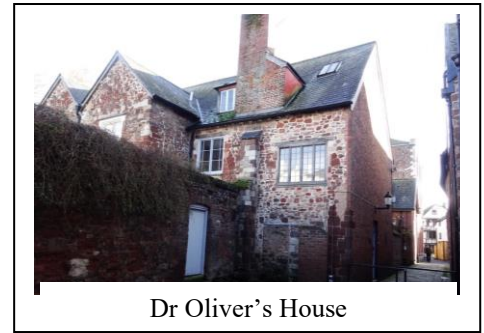
Round the corner in Fore Street is the church of **St Olave** (Olaf of Norway, 11<sup>th</sup> century king and martyr) which like the others forming the new Central Exeter parish is usually open in the daytime (those not belonging to it are likely to be locked). I have a particularly soft spot for this church, going back to when at a tender age I was shown it by my RC convert mother. With six candlesticks and a tabernacle on the altar and a faint smell of incense it had all the atmosphere of the (Roman) Catholic churches with which I was familiar, and she explained that it belonged to that section of the Church of England identifying as “Anglo-Catholic”, in which she had herself been brought up, although this may be less true of St Olave’s now than it was then. Pray here for those who still so identify, especially in their present difficulties.

Next door is the **Mint Methodist church**, a practical modern replacement for an 18<sup>th</sup> century chapel of more traditionally nonconformist style which had become unsafe. The Exeter Foodbank operates in the adjacent church centre: see <https://exeter.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/> for details of how you can support this vital service.



Saint Olave's

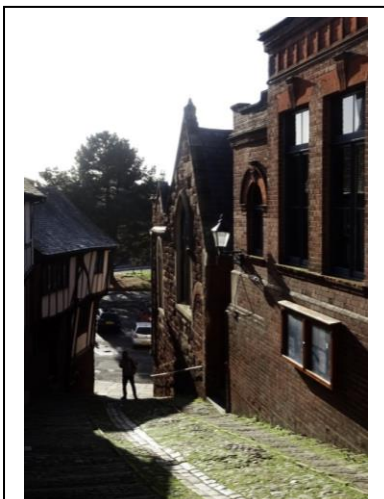
A little way down the hill turn right into The Mint, which cuts through the site of **St Nicholas's Priory** (Benedictine; late 11<sup>th</sup> century). The main part of the domestic buildings is on your left and open to the public; the church-like building through the iron gate on the right (now converted to domestic use) was Exeter's RC chapel before the opening of the Sacred Heart in South Street in the 1880s. Dr George Oliver (1781-1861) the priest here for over forty years was a noted historian and universally popular local figure; he is commemorated by a plaque on the wall of his house (number 21), also once part of the Priory buildings.



Dr Oliver's House

Continuing into Bartholomew Street the large open space is the former churchyard of **All Hallows on the Walls**, rebuilt here in the 1840s, its predecessor having been down the hill near where Bartholomew Street meets Fore Street; like the replacement St Mary Major this new church lasted not much more than a century. An early incumbent, Fr Pearse, founded the sisterhood known as the **Community of St Wilfrid** in the 1860s; it occupied two of the tall terraced houses overlooking the east side of the churchyard, with a little chapel in the garden behind and a shop selling articles of devotion beyond this in Mary Arches Street. After a hundred years the few surviving sisters moved to Duryard; in their heyday they ran a home for aged women, an orphanage and the school still known as St Wilfrid's on St David's Hill. The last sister, Mother Lilian, died at the age of 107 in 2004. Pause here to thank God for the contribution of monks and nuns to the life of the Church in both East and West, and pray that He will continue to call people to this way of life.

A little way down Bartholomew Street is Friernhay Street, whose name recalls the 13<sup>th</sup> century Franciscan friary which stood nearby. Follow this little thoroughfare back into Fore Street: the road on the opposite side is John Street, named for the former church of **St John** (probably the Baptist rather than the Evangelist). Most resident parishioners having departed for the suburbs it was demolished in the 1930s, at the same time as St Paul's in Paul Street. The modern building on the corner (Taunton Leisure) is where the church stood; at one time it had a "bow" like that of St Stephen's in the High Street (which we will reach in the next episode) going across the mouth of the street. Here it would be appropriate to give thanks for your Baptism, when you "*put on Christ*".



Stepcote Hill, with Saint Mary Steps at its foot

If you walk along John Street and turn right you will find yourself on the steep descent of Stepcote Hill, originally the main road between the city centre and the mediaeval Exe Bridge. On the bottom corner is the church of **St Mary Steps**. It would be well worth arranging a visit (it's administered by Heavitree parish and locked outside service times) to see how the tastefully remodelled sanctuary with its brilliant east window depicting Christ in glory combines with Victorian and older woodwork. The curious clock on the face of the tower is popular with sightseers: try and be there when it's striking the hour. We pray with and for those who honour the Mother of God in places she has particularly chosen as her shrines, remembering in this country Walsingham where she is honoured by Orthodox, Anglicans and Catholics.

Immediately ahead of you is where the West Gate pierced the City Wall; take a few steps across the car park alongside "the house that moved" and on your right you will see a commemorative plaque, then what remains of the wall forming the foundation of the buildings backing on to Rackclose Lane. On the other side of the inner bypass is the ruined church of **St Edmund** standing on the end of the old river bridge, exposed in the early 1970s when the new bridges were built but now marooned on a grassy island. The dedicatee is

Edmund of East Anglia, Saxon king and martyr, and what we see mostly dates from the 1833 rebuilding, although the pillars at the lower level are mediaeval, allowance having been made for water to flow past them under the suspended floor. In the midst of the never-ceasing traffic surrounding this spot pray for safety on the roads, and for those killed and injured on them.

If you're walking back up Fore Street, you'll pass on your left the **Tuckers' Hall**. The façade is Victorian but the main structure is much older; it was founded c1471 as a chapel of the Assumption (Dormition) of the Mother of God for the Guild of Weavers, Tuckers and Shearmen, but secularised at the 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation. Let us pray that as Mary was taken by her Son to share his life in heaven we will have "*a Christian end to our life, painless, unashamed and peaceful, and a good answer before the dread judgement seat of Christ*"

I realise that not every reader of these itineraries will have either the time or the motivation actually to follow them on foot, but if you find yourself anywhere near any of the places mentioned I hope you'll find these notes useful. From this instalment you could of course make a very small tour round just those mentioned in its first half, i.e. up to an including the site of the former church of St John.

Third (and last) part next month.



## This Month We Celebrate

On Wednesday February 1<sup>st</sup>: **Holy Martyr Tryphon** of Campsada in Syria (250)

We wish **Father Trayan** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

**Saint Bridget** of Kildare (c525)

We wish **Poppy O** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup>: **THE MEETING OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE**

On Friday 3<sup>rd</sup>: **Righteous Symeon the God-Receiver** and **Prophetess Anna**

We wish **Father John and Dawn** and **all parish members in North Devon,**

**Symeon L , Anya K and Felicia F** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

**Saint Nicholas** Archbishop of Japan (1912). First Saint of the Japanese Orthodox Church

**On Sunday 5<sup>th</sup>: SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE** - Beginning of the Triodion. Gospel - Luke 18:9-14

On Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup>: **Saints Emmelia, Nona and Anthousa**, Mothers of the three Great Hierarchs (4thC)

On Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup>: **Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates** ('The General') (319)

On Thursday 9<sup>th</sup>: New Martyrs **Fr Dimitri Klepinin** (1944), **Elias Fondaminsky** (1942) and **George (Yuri)**

**Skobtsov** (1944) Co-workers with Saint Maria of Paris

On Friday 10<sup>th</sup>: **Hieromartyr Haralambos**, Bishop of Magnesia (202)

On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>: **Hieromartyr Blaise**, Bishop of Sebaste (c316)

**Empress Theodora**, Restorer of the Icons (c867)

**Saint Caedmon** of Whitby, Monk poet. (c680)

**On Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>: SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON** Gospel – Luke 21: 12-19

**New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia**

On Monday 13<sup>th</sup>: **Apostles Aquila and Priscilla**, fellow workers with Saint Paul

On Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup>: Repose of **Saint Cyril**, Equal-to-the-Apostles and Enlightener of the Slavs (869)

On Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup>: **Apostle Onesimos** of the Seventy

**Saint Anthimos** of Chios (1960)

On Friday 17<sup>th</sup>: **Great Martyr Theodore the Recruit** (c306)

We wish **Bojidar P** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Colman**, Bishop of Lindisfarne (676)

**On Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>: SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT** (Sunday of Meatfare) Gospel - Matthew 25: 31-46

**Apostles Archipus and Philemon** of the Seventy, and **Martyr Apphia**, wife of Philemon

On Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup>: **Saint Polycarp** of Smyrna (167)

On Friday 24<sup>th</sup>: 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Findings of the Honourable Head of the **Holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John.**

**On Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>: FORGIVENESS SUNDAY** - Sunday of Cheese-fare. Gospel – Matthew 6:14-21

**Holy Martyr Photini (Svetlana)**, the Samaritan Woman at the Well

On Monday 27<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Raphael (Hawaweeny)** Bishop of Brooklyn (1915) First Bishop to be canonised in America

## Saint Dimitri Klepinin

In 1939 Fr Dimitri Klepinin was assigned priest at the sanctuary for impoverished Russian emigres at 77 Rue Lourmel in Paris run by Mother Maria Skobtsova. In 1942, as the occupying Nazis began the mass arrests of French Jews, many sought help and refuge at Mother Maria's shelter. As a shield against deportation to a concentration camp, many Jews sought to obtain baptismal certificates from Father Dimitri. While initially troubled by engaging in such deception, he realized that his Christian faith and priesthood demanded that he act. He placed a small mark on the false certificates in order to remember which were authentic and which were not.

He later wrote: *I think the good Christ would give me that paper if I were in their place. So I must do it. If a man surprised by a storm takes shelter in a church, do I have the right to close the door?*

Fr Dimitri was arrested by the Gestapo in February 1943 and sent to Buchenwald Concentration Camp. He died at the satellite Camp Dora on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1944.

The fullest account of Saint Dimitri's life is to be found in *Dimitri's Cross: The Life and Letters of St. Dimitri Klepinin* by his granddaughter Helene Arjakovsky-Klepinine, Ancient Faith Publishing 2004. The book form is expensive, as it has to be imported from America, but it is available in Kindle and as an Audiobook. *Ed.*



## Noticeboard

Wednesday February 1<sup>st</sup>: Vespers for the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord Saint Anne's 6pm

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup>: **FEAST OF THE MEETING OF THE LORD**  
*Orthros and Divine Liturgy Plymouth 8.30am*

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup>: Typika Saint Anne's 10.30am  
Celebration of the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord

Friday 10<sup>th</sup>: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>: Divine Liturgy Saint Anne's 10.30am**

*Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>: Orthros and Divine Liturgy (in Romanian) at St Stephen's Church, Exeter High Street 9am*

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>: Typika Saint Anne's 10.30am

Friday 24<sup>th</sup>: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>: Divine Liturgy Saint Anne's 10.30** followed by bring and share meal at Belmont Park Hut

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>: **FORGIVENESS SUNDAY** Vespers of Forgiveness Saint Anne's 3pm

Monday 27<sup>th</sup>: First Day of Lent – Clean Monday Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete Saint Anne's 6pm

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup>: Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete Saint Anne's 6pm

### Gaia Globe at Exeter Cathedral

**A seven-metre representation of Planet Earth by internationally acclaimed artist, Luke Jerram, will be on display at Exeter Cathedral throughout February.**

The giant, internally-lit globe, which Jerram has named *Gaia* (the personification of Earth in Greek mythology), will be suspended from the cathedral's famous nave ceiling throughout February. Printed with accurate, high-resolution NASA imagery of Earth's surface, and accompanied with a specially-created surround sound composition by BAFTA award-winning composer, Dan Jones, the installation is designed to communicate a sense of the fragility of our planet.

As Jerram explains:

"I used precise imagery from NASA's Visible Earth series to make the artwork as realistic as possible. For most of us, this will be the most intimate, personal and close encounter we will ever have with the whole of our planet.

"I hope visitors to *Gaia* get to see Earth as if from space; an incredibly beautiful and precious place. An ecosystem we urgently need to look after – our only home. Halfway through Earth's sixth mass extinction, we urgently need to wake up and change our behaviour."

[Book your place >](#)

From *Cathedral News*

### Words of a Wise Man

I don't know if anyone else follows 'Eglise Locale en Europe Occidental' on Facebook (*If you don't, I recommend it for seeing what our fellows in France are posting*), but I came across this comment from Alexander Zanemonets recalling some words of Fr Alexis Struve of Paris:

I often recall his words at one of our last diocesan meetings: "Our roots are not Russia. Our roots are in the revival created by the Paris School, the theologians of the St. Sergius Institute, who created in constant dialogue with the world. Our roots are the Church of emigration, free from all temptations of money, because it lives in poverty. And free from all temptations of power, because it is insignificant politically. The church is as a space of freedom, where the greatness of a man is summoned to expression in the love of Christ."

When I first heard them, at the said meeting, I thought how clearly they summed up what was our (at that time our Exarchate's, now our Deanery's) place in the world itself and in the world of Orthodoxy. To my mind they are as relevant today as they were to the matter under discussion at that meeting.

Celia Olsson

## The Song of Symeon

Part of the preparation of each issue of Prophet Elias News is consulting issues from a year and two years ago to avoid duplication. Sometimes, though, I find something I think could bear repeating, in this case my recommendation last February of Sigurdur Saevarsson's setting of the *Nunc Dimittis*, Symeon's prayer as he held the Christ child in his arms. I had quite forgotten this piece, but hearing it again I still find it breathtakingly beautiful. You can hear it at

[Nunc dimittis - Saevarsson - YouTube](#)

There is also a setting by Saevarsson of the *Magnificat* at

[Magnificat \(Sigurður Sævarsson\) - YouTube](#)

We can find another expression of quiet thankfulness to God in old age in Kathleen Raine's poem *Winter Paradise* ⇒

## Winter Paradise

Now I am old and free from time  
How spacious life,  
Unbeginning unending sky where the wind blows  
The ever-moving clouds and clouds of starlings  
on the wing,  
Chaffinch and apple-leaf across my garden lawn,  
Winter paradise  
With its own birds and daisies  
And all the near and far that eye can see,  
Each blade of grass signed with the mystery  
Across whose face unchanging everchanging pass  
Summer and winter, day and night.

Great countenance of the unknown known  
You have looked upon me all my days,  
More loved than lover's face,  
More merciful than the heart, more wise  
Than spoken word, unspoken theme  
Simple as earth in whom we live and move.

Kathleen Raine

## Welcome Christ the King!

Adorn thy bridal chamber, O Zion, and welcome Christ the King!  
Salute Mary, the heavenly gate, fashioned as the throne of the Cherubim!  
She carries the King of Glory! The Virgin is a cloud of light:  
she has borne in the flesh the Son begotten before the Morning Star.  
Simeon, taking Him in his arms, proclaimed to the peoples:  
“He is the Master of life and death; the Saviour of the world!”

by Cosmas the Monk from the Aposticha of Vespers for the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord

## Memory Eternal – Sasha Perepelov

It is with sadness that we report the death on 24<sup>th</sup> December from Covid19 of Sasha Perepelov. The Perepelov family were active members of our parish from the time they arrived in Devon from the USSR in 1988 until they moved to Bristol in 1995. Sasha was a skilled goldsmith and a maker of beautiful things. May his memory be eternal!

Contributions for the March issue should reach the Editors at [martinolsson827@btinternet.com](mailto:martinolsson827@btinternet.com) or by post at Little Linhay, Bodelleigh, EX20 2AJ by **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February**, 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.