



# Prophet Elias News

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



## **On the Sunday of Pentecost by Father Anthony Hughes**

Pentecost is a theophany, a revelation of God like that of Moses on Mt. Sinai or the Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor. Witnesses of these events try hard to describe them, but words fail, so there is a special type of dramatic, stylized language used in Holy Scripture, using symbols.

Wind and divine fire are common because both are symbols of wild, uncontrollable power. In the great biblical theophanies we see God as He is, unbounded, wild, uncontrollable, and free. The experience leaves witnesses staggering and confused like the apostles and disciples who were accused on this day of Pentecost of being drunk.

Theophanies are sensory-overload events, for God is greater than the senses. In them God is revealed as He is, not as we want or believe him to be. At such times what we think - our theologies, myths, legends, holy traditions - become irrelevant. All of it burns away like the empty chaff that it is. Everything we hold dear melts away as what really is reveals itself - and that includes our view of ourselves.

The great holocaust survivor and psychologist Victor Frankl described it like this. "What is to give light must endure burning." If we are to become as Jesus says we are, "the light of the world," then all that is false and all that is true in us must submit to the flame.

Of course, the spiritual life cannot always be a grand theophany. We could not possibly bear it. Pentecost is like a surge of 10,000 volts of electricity. We are not built to contain that much power for long. Therefore, it comes to us in stages, as we are able to handle it. That is the meaning of the saying, "God will not give us more than we can bear." But the corollary of that statement is that God will also not give us less than we can bear.

Receiving the fullness of the Spirit is beyond us; it would be like pouring the seven oceans into a teacup. The teacup could not handle it. Neither could we. When the teacup breaks, it must be replaced by something larger. More space must be made for more tea. So as we become more and more empty, more space becomes available for God. But since God is infinite, we must always be expanding and becoming empty. The heart must break to grow. The space we create by letting go will always prove inadequate for deification because God is infinite. Thus, the progress of deification never ends.

Jesus once told his disciples a strange thing. "Before now you have asked nothing in my name." Before we can ask anything "in the name of Jesus" we must give up our own name; our ego must be dissolved. Without that dissolution we are only able to pray in our own names because we will always be asking for what we want, desire, and expect. To pray "in the name of Jesus" implies that we have given up our own name for his. "It is no longer I, but Christ who lives in me."

What comes after Jesus says these words is the great example of total dissolution: the Cross. Of the Cross we must all have our own personal experience. Dean Alan Jones suggests it comes in the form of three crises: the crisis of meaning where all we hold dear comes into question; the crisis of betrayal, of being untethered, forgotten, alone; and, finally, the crisis of utter emptiness, of dereliction - the Crucifixion. Through these stages the ego is dissolved and we begin to live as little "christs". As we grow we discover that our personality formations and ego structures are too small,

inadequate to contain the growth in knowledge and enlightenment. The new wine bursts the old wine skins.

The coming of the Spirit points us to this essential work, to our hearts, where the truth about ourselves and God is revealed. It is here that the necessary work is done and why it was better that Jesus should go away. If he had not ascended, then we would have been tempted to cling to him, as Mary Magdalene did in the Garden. It was not the Lord's desire that we make an idol of him. That is to hold on to old inadequate ways of perceiving Him. Instead he ascended and sent the Holy Spirit so that we would not be tempted to cling to exterior forms that must pass away, but rather turn to the Christ who lives within the heart, where the Holy Trinity dwells.

In the coming of the Holy Spirit the prophecy of our Lord to the Samaritan Woman comes true, "There is a time coming when worshippers will no longer worship in Jerusalem or on this mountain, but rather in spirit and in truth."

Here is a beautiful and cogent quote from the great psychologist Carl Jung. "Your vision will become clear only when you look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakens."

The fire of the Holy Spirit is a cleansing and purifying fire. To open our hearts to receive it is to accept the martyric death of the false self, a death to all that we have built and called "ourselves" or rather, a transformation so great that we must endure the periodic shedding of our egotistic exoskeletons to make way for more and more of the Truth.

It is in the heart that Christ dwells and it is within that the Holy Spirit directs us.

Sermon preached by Fr. Antony Hughes on Sunday, June 3, 2012 Father Anthony is Pastor of **St. Mary Orthodox Church**, Cambridge, MA, of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America.

<https://www.stmaryorthodoxchurch.org/orthodoxy/sermons/2012/pentecost>

### **This Final and Saving Festival**

On this final and saving festival Thou art pleased to accept propitiatory prayers for those imprisoned in hell, granting us great hopes that Thou wilt send down repose and refreshment to all held in bitter bondage. Hear us who humbly and piteously beseech Thee: and to the souls of Thy servants who have fallen asleep before us, grant rest in a place of light, a place of green pasture, of refreshment, whence all pain, sorrow and sighing have fled away; make their spirits to dwell where the righteous rest, and grant them peace and pardon.

For Thine in very truth, O Master and Maker of all, is the great mystery both of the temporary dissolution of Thy creatures, and of their subsequent restoration and repose unto all ages. We thank Thee for Thy grace in all things: for our entry into this world and our departure from it, and for the hopes that we enjoy of resurrection and eternal life, pledged to us by Thine own infallible promise, which shall be our portion at Thy second coming. For Thou art the precursor of our resurrection, the impartial and compassionate judge of all who have lived, the Master and Lord who gives us our reward.

*From Vespers of Pentecost*

### **Xenia's on the Move**

As from Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May, Xenia Crockett's address will be  
14 Betjeman Court, Parkway, Wantage, Oxfordshire OX12 9BW  
No landline as yet – email: [xeniacrockett@gmail.com](mailto:xeniacrockett@gmail.com)

## This Month We Celebrate

- On Thursday June 1<sup>st</sup>: **Afterfeast of the Ascension**  
**Nun-Martyr Wite** of Whitchurch Canonorum in Dorset (?7<sup>th</sup> C)
- On Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>: **Saturday of Souls**  
**Saint Kevin**, Abbot of Glendalough (618)
- On Sunday 4<sup>th</sup>: **FEAST OF HOLY PENTECOST**  
**Saints Martha and Mary** of Bethany  
We wish **Bethany S** and **Daphne L** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**  
**Saint Petroc** of Padstow, Master Builder of the Faith in the West (6<sup>th</sup> C)  
**Saint Sophia** of Ainos (2ndC)  
We wish **Sophie G** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
- On Monday 5<sup>th</sup>: **DAY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**  
**Saint John of New Valamo** (1958)  
**Saint Boniface** (Wynfrith) of Crediton, Apostle to the Germans (754)
- On Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup>: **Holy Martyr Priscilla** of Rome (c305)  
We wish **Scilla W** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**  
**Holy Martyr Valeria** of Caesarea (c300)  
We wish **Matoushka Val** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
- On Friday 9<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Cyril of Alexandria** (444)  
**Saint Columba of Iona**, Enlightener of the Scots (597)
- On Saturday 10<sup>th</sup>: **Martyrs Alexander and Antonina** at Constantinople (c313)
- On Sunday 11<sup>th</sup>: **Sunday of All Saints**  
**Holy Apostles Bartholomew and Barnabas**  
**Saint Luke of Simferopol** (1961)
- On Monday 12<sup>th</sup>: BEGINNING OF THE APOSTLES' FAST
- On Saturday 17<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Nectan** of Hartland, North Devon (6thC)
- On Sunday 18<sup>th</sup>: **Feast of All Saints of Russia, of Britain, of Romania, of America, of Palestine.**
- On Monday 19<sup>th</sup>: **Holy Apostle Jude, the Lord's Brother**
- On Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Nicholas Kavalas** (1391)  
*Author of The Life in Christ and A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*
- On Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>: **Saint Alban**, First martyr of Britain (c209)
- On Friday 23<sup>rd</sup>: **Saint Mark of Ephesus** 'Pillar of Orthodoxy' (1445)
- On Saturday 24<sup>th</sup>: **The Nativity of the Holy, Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John**
- On Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>: **New Martyrs of the Turkish Yoke, New Martyrs and Confessors of Bulgaria**  
**Saint Brannoc** of Braunton (6thC)
- On Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup>: **Holy Myrrh-Bearer Joanna**  
**Saint Austell**, Hermit in Cornwall (6thC)
- On Thursday 29<sup>th</sup>: **Holy, Glorious and All-Praised Leaders of the Apostles, Peter and Paul**  
We wish **Pavlik F** and **Salem Murjaneh** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**  
We remember **Father Peter** and **Peter F** – **May their memory be eternal!**
- On Friday 30<sup>th</sup>: **Synaxis of the Twelve Apostles**

Anyone who believes forgiveness is a sign of weakness  
has obviously never tried it.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

## Fr Sergius Bulgakov on Despondency

*Be not despondent*, for there is no weakness or sin more deadly. Consider: the all-wise and all-marvellous God has, from the ages, elected you to exist. He has given you life, he has determined a time, a land, a people, those near to you, family, friends. He has endowed you with the gifts you need and those you can handle, and He desires only one thing from you: to love Him, to trust Him like a son does a Father. But you, fearful and despairing, see not a Father but only an evil torturer in the heavens. You are ungrateful because you do not see and do not want to see blessings. You do not want to recognize that there is no blessing greater than life, the gift of the Giver of Life. You are blindsided by trials, sins, calamities, you grow faint from your filth and the limitations you constantly rediscover in yourself. But consider that God, more clearly than you do, sees your destiny, and He knows not only this instant in which you are growing faint, but also the ages of ages. Renounce fear, which is the offspring of the devil, for the one who fears is not perfected in love [1 John 4:18]; cast away despondency, that death of the soul before death. Repent for your sins, but do not fear them, for boundless is the mercy of God. Fear the justice of God, but do not despair, for the scales of His justice also weigh all your creaturely weakness. Do not make peace with this sinful world, but know that it is upheld by God's hand, just as you are. Without this very moment the world would not exist, and the world – despite all its sins – is upheld by the all-knowing and all-forgiving love of God. So how could you, how dare you, be despondent?

Fr Sergius Bulgakov: diary entry for 27.X.1924  
Posted on *Eglise Locale en Europe Occidentale* 29/12/2022

## Memory Eternal - Christa Antonina Studd

It is with great sadness that we record the death of Christa Antonina on May 15<sup>th</sup> at Culm Vale Nursing Home in Cullompton. She was 83. Although ill health had meant she had not been able to join us in person in recent months, she will be sorely missed. We hope to publish a number of parishioners' reminiscences of Christa in our July issue.

## Noticeboard

Saturday June 3<sup>rd</sup>: Saturday of Souls Vespers 6pm  
Sunday 4<sup>th</sup>: **HOLY PENTECOST**  
Typika followed by Vespers with Kneeling Prayers 10.30am  
Friday 9<sup>th</sup>: Vespers 6pm  
Saturday 10<sup>th</sup>: Divine Liturgy 10.30am  
Saturday 17<sup>th</sup>: Vespers 6pm  
Sunday 18<sup>th</sup>: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost Typika 10.30am  
Friday 23<sup>rd</sup>: Vespers 6pm  
Saturday 24<sup>th</sup>: Divine Liturgy 10.30am *Bring and share meal at Belmont Hut*  
Saturday July 1<sup>st</sup>: Vespers 6pm  
Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup>: Typika 10.30am

[All services in Saint Anne's](#)

For services in the Romanian parish (Exeter and Newton Abbot) consult

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064673836911> or telephone Fr Julian on **07469 262827**.

Similarly for the Torquay parish either visit [https://www.facebook.com/standrewtorquay/?locale=en\\_GB](https://www.facebook.com/standrewtorquay/?locale=en_GB) or telephone Robert Skrivanos on **07971 316416**. For services in Plymouth visit [plymchurch.com](http://plymchurch.com)

Contributions for the July issue should reach the Editors at [martinolsson827@btinternet.com](mailto:martinolsson827@btinternet.com)  
or by post at *Little Linhay, Bondleigh, EX20 2AJ* by **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> June**, 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.*