



# Prophet Elias News

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



## To Love Fully is to Empty Oneself

Dr Rowan Williams examines Mother Maria Skobtsova's work on love of neighbour

IF we are to be tools in the hands of God for the transformation of the neighbour, the birth of Christ in them, love must be in the strictest sense disinterested. This resonates with the overall priority of dissolving the fictitious and dangerous role ascribed to the isolated ego with its own determined wants and goals. The love of neighbour is thus a radically kenotic affair: we are to struggle in our loving for the genuine well-being of the other, and so must struggle both with our own instinctive self-serving fantasies and also with the other's draw towards self-serving.

The key tension is that in order to love disinterestedly, without “mercenary” intent, we have to attend with all our energy to the particularity of the other: the last thing disinterested love can be is a blandly undifferentiated benevolence. Love bows down before the divine image in the other, before the unsearchable mystery of personal uniqueness. Any love that leaves untransformed the ego's approach to love as a job to be done, as an individual achievement, is bound to stop short of a truthful recognition of the divine image, and so will never engage with the reality of the other: it will more and more “de-realise” the other, and so will contribute to my own isolation from reality, my own de-realisation.

Thus a solidarity resting on sameness is bound to collapse into the logic of the unredeemed ego: it will seek to create a homogenised object for benevolence, the repeated, imitative “selves” of a standardised multitude, and in doing so will solidify the separation of the ego from its objects.

This is why it is essential to work on one's own “inner world”, scrutinising and monitoring it for signs of false inwardness, the powerful impulse to protect and quarantine the soul. The adoption of passionate partisan views and tactics is always a mark of such an impulse, which is why this sort of partisanship must be so firmly resisted — not that our love should be (in the usual sense) “dispassionate”, but it should be free from the urge to determine and dominate the other's reality. But in fact what Mother Maria is talking about is “dispassion” in the classical Greek Christian sense of freedom from self-regarding and self-serving impulse; when this is purged in the soul, we are prepared for the encounter with the fathomless other.

And this purgation is part of the “terror” that she points to in the obeying of the second great commandment, which is the terror appropriate when faced with the living God. It becomes increasingly clear why she so insists on the unity of love of God and love of neighbour, and so strongly underlines the inadequacy and ultimate deceptiveness of thinking about love of neighbour as a duty performed to illustrate a general obedience to divine commands.



‘However hard I try, I find it impossible to construct anything greater than these three words, ‘Love one another’ —only to the end, and without exceptions.’

Saint Maria of Paris  
Feastdays: March 31<sup>st</sup> and July 20<sup>th</sup>

Once again, we are reminded that the ego that has God as its desired object, the satisfaction of its individual longing and adoration, or the ego that is “passionate” about its own ascetical performance, is exactly the same ego as the one that has earthly and physical gratification as its object; what is necessary is the transfiguration of the desiring subject, which happens only, so she implies, when the “Marian” awareness of solidarity comes into focus. The true personhood of the other whom we love is generated and brought to birth by the kenotic event of our immersion in the Body of Christ, our being bound into solidarities far beyond what we could ever have chosen.

Living in this condition, we are constantly giving place, giving space to each other. It is not that we have to renew over and over again some individual act of accepting the crucifixion of our passions and fears; more that we have to learn the habits that will unblock the reality that is always already at work in us, the connectedness into which we have been baptised, which is a connectedness with the entire human world and (consequently) the entire world of time and matter in which we live and out of which we ourselves are born. And the active undertaking to think oneself into the “inner world” of the neighbour is the most serious element in our ascetical life; it is this which constitutes the active “adoption” of the neighbour, with the goal of opening up the life of Christ in that neighbour.

*Extract printed in Church Times, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023 from by [Looking East in Winter: Contemporary thought and the Eastern Christian tradition](#) by Rowan Williams, published by Bloomsbury Continuum (978-1-4729-8924-6)*

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### A Saint of Our Day

"Mother Maria is a saint of our day and for our day; a woman of flesh and blood possessed by the love of God, who stood face to face with the problems of this century."

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

Mother Maria's most important writings can be found in

**Mother Maria Skobtsova: Essential Writings (Modern Spiritual Masters)**

Published by Orbis Books (2002) ISBN 10: 1570754365 ISBN 13: 9781570754364

The story of her extraordinary life is movingly told in

**Pearl of Great Price: the life of Mother Maria Skobtsova, 1891-1945** by Fr Sergei Hackel

### Immortality is Memory Made Clear and Serene.

The immortal in man is .... connected with memory. The painful thing in human life is not only forgetfulness of what is precious and dear, loss of a memory; but also, and this is a still more painful thing, the impossibility of forgetting what was evil and grievous in the past. Immortality is memory made clear and serene. The most dreadful thing in life is the sense of irrevocability, of irreparability, of absolute loss. Human freedom can do nothing about this, and belief in natural immortality does not help. This is the point where the divine-human link is broken. It is Godforsakenness. It is only belief in the gracious power which comes from Christ which can help, for in Him the divine-human link is incarnate. Light may be kindled in the most inspissated darkness.

Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Divine and the Human*, tr. R. M. French (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1949)

*Cited by Dcn Brandon on Sunday of the Blind Man 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023*

### Father John Musther Documentary

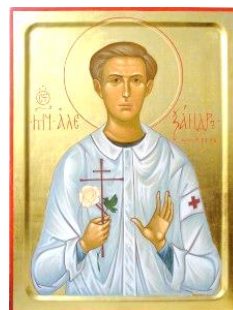
An article titled [Fr John Musther Documentary / Interview 2022](#) has been published on the Deanery website on 08/06/23. This is a documentary published by Alma Photo Studio. The interview is led and supported by Jenny Musther, Father John's wife. It's a tale of an extraordinary life condensed in a 15-minute video, which just touches upon the most important points of Father John's life. We are blessed to have lived and co-worshipped with him.

From <https://thyateira-deanery.uk/obituaries>

## This Month We Celebrate

- On Saturday July 1<sup>st</sup>: Wonderworking Unmercenaries **Cosmas and Damian** (3<sup>rd</sup>C)  
**Saints Julius and Aaron**, First Martyrs of Wales (c304)
- On Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup>: **Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco** (1966)  
We wish **Edward S** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
- On Monday 3<sup>rd</sup>: Translation of the relics of **Hieromartyr Philip**, Metropolitan of Moscow (1652)
- On Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Morwenna**, Hermit of Morwenstow, sister of Saint Nectan of Hartland (6thC)
- On Friday 7<sup>th</sup>: **Great Martyr Kyriaki** (c303)  
We wish **Kyriaki H** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
- On Saturday 8<sup>th</sup>: Great Martyr **Procopios of Caesarea** (303)
- On Monday 10<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Anthony of the Kyiv Caves**, Founder of monasticism in Rus (1073)
- On Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Sophrony of Essex** (1993)
- On Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Veronica** who was healed by Christ  
We wish **Veronica D** and **Veronika M** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
- On Thursday 13<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Alexander Schmorrell** of Munich (1943) \*
- On Saturday 15<sup>th</sup>: Holy Equal to the Apostles **Grand Prince Vladimir**, Enlightener of Rus (1015)  
**Saint Swithun**, Bishop and Wonderworker of Winchester (862)
- On Sunday 16<sup>th</sup>: Commemoration of the **Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils**
- On Monday 17<sup>th</sup>: 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 Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup>: Martyrs the Grand Duchess **Elizabeth** and the Nun **Barbara** (1918)  
We wish **Eliza S** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
- On Thursday 20<sup>th</sup>: **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 Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>: **Holy Myrrh-bearer and Equal to the Apostles Mary Magdalen**  
We wish **Margaret E, Mary S, Maddy S** and **Michelle G** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
- On Monday 24<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Christina** of Tyre (3rdC)  
We wish **Christine A, Christina S** and **Kirsty S** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
- On Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup>: **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 Thursday 27<sup>th</sup>: **Great Martyr and Healer Panteleimon** (305)
- On Friday 28<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Nicanor** of the Seventy Apostles  
We wish **Father Nicanor** a **Happy Feast, Happy Birthday** and **Many Years!**
- On Monday 31<sup>st</sup>: **Saint Joseph of Arimathaea**  
**Saint Germanus of Auxerre**, opponent of Pelagianism in Britain (448)  
**Saint Neot**, Hermit in Cornwall (c877)

\* The Holy Martyr **Alexander Schmorell (St. Alexander of Munich)** was a medical student during World War II and one of the founding members of the anti-Nazi group, the White Rose. Along with the other members of the White Rose, he tried to rally popular support amongst Germans to try to resist Hitler and the Nazi regime. He was arrested in February 1943, and was executed on July 13, 1943, at Stadelheim Prison in Munich. On 5 February 2012, he was glorified at the Cathedral of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia in Munich, Germany. He is commemorated by the Church on July 13.



## Noticeboard

Saturday July 1 <sup>st</sup> :	<i>Ss Cosmas and Damian</i>	Vespers	6pm
Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> :	<i>4<sup>th</sup> after Pentecost</i>	Typika	10.30am
Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> :	<i>Great Martyr Kyriaki</i>	Vespers	6pm
Saturday 8 <sup>th</sup> :	<i>Great Martyr Procopios</i>	Divine Liturgy	10.30am
Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> :	<i>Holy Grand Prince Vladimir</i>	Vespers	6pm
Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> :	<i>6<sup>th</sup> after Pentecost</i>	Typika	10.30am

### **Thursday 20<sup>th</sup>: HOLY GLORIOUS PROPHET ELIAS**

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>: *Holy Myrrhbearer Mary Magdalene* Vespers 6pm

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup>: 7<sup>th</sup> after Pentecost Celebration of the Feast of the Holy Prophet Elias  
Divine Liturgy 10.30am Followed by Bring and Share lunch**

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup>: Divine Liturgy 10.30am at Combe Martin – to be confirmed

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup>: *8<sup>th</sup> after Pentecost* Typika 10.30am

All services in Saint Anne's unless stated otherwise

Any changes to the above will be notified by email to those on the Friends and Members list, and by an announcement on the parish Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/OrthodoxParishOfTheHolyProphetElias>

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.

For the Torquay parish visit [https://www.facebook.com/standrewtorquay/?locale=en\\_GB](https://www.facebook.com/standrewtorquay/?locale=en_GB) or call Robert Skrivanos on 07971 316416.

For services in Plymouth visit [plymchurch.com](http://plymchurch.com)

## **Devon Faith and Belief Forum Event Satish Kumar on Ecology and Spirituality**

**Thursday July 6<sup>th</sup> at 6pm  
The Mint Methodist Church Centre  
Fore Street Exeter EX4 3AT**

Tickets (Free) from <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ecology-and-spirituality-tickets-630592267447>

**‘Nature is our teacher. We can learn forgiveness, generosity and equanimity from Nature. Nature is our true nationality.’**

Peace-pilgrim, life-long activist, and former monk, Satish Kumar has been inspiring global change for over 50 years. Now in his 80s, Satish has devoted his life to campaigning for ecological regeneration and social justice. He is a world-renown author and international speaker, founder of The Resurgence Trust and Editor Emeritus of *Resurgence & Ecologist* – a change-making magazine he edited for over 40 years.

## **Local Pilgrimage Route – The Saint Boniface Way**

From either the 1-day starting point of Newton St Cyres Church or the 2-day starting point of St Boniface's church and statue in Crediton, this is a sumptuous pilgrimage route through countryside and along the rivers Creedy and Exe to Exeter Cathedral. The 9-mile one-day route starts at the church of St Cyr and St Julitta in the village of Newton St Cyres, dedicated to the early church martyrs St Cyriac and St Julitta, put to death in 304 AD in Tarsus, Asia Minor. The church itself is a fine 15th-century building. Moving south and east towards Exeter, the route then takes in another two exquisite medieval churches, St Mary's in Upton Pyne, St Peter's in Brampford Speke, before passing an ancient stone cross on its way into Exeter city centre, where the magnificent and ancient cathedral waits to greet the modern-day pilgrim. The full route from Crediton is 15 miles.

[Click to download route/s in GPX file format for your smartphone's map app](#)

[Instructions for using a GPX file to show you the route on your smartphone](#)

*Cathedral News*

Contributions for the August issue should reach the Editors at [martinolsson827@btinternet.com](mailto:martinolsson827@btinternet.com) or by post at *Little Linhay, Bondleigh, EX20 2AJ* by **Monday 24th 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.*



## Father Brandon's Ordination

A number of us from St Anne's, including the whole Gallaher family, had the privilege and joy to be present at the ordination of deacon Brandon to the priesthood, which took place on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2023 in the Church of the Annunciation in Oxford. The service was led by His Grace Bishop Maximos (Pafilis) of Melitene with 5 priests - Frs Patrick and Trayan, Frs Ian and Seraphim and Fr Theodoros Polyviou - parish priest of The Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Transfiguration in Coventry.

For the last time Brandon led the people in prayer as deacon until the moment mid-liturgy when Frs Seraphim and Ian led him up to the bishop, at which point the deacon gave an account of his journey up to this momentous point in his life and then he was led into the altar, culminating with the bishop putting on him the priestly vestments announcing Axios at each point and the people responding loudly, with approval, and joyously Axios - he is worthy!



It was wonderful to greet and receive the blessing from our Father Brandon Anastasios. He was wearing the vestments made by Celia Olsson many, many years ago for Fr John

Congratulations!  
Many Years - Mnogay Leta - Khronia Pola!

Irina Scorer



After Fr Brandon's first Liturgy in St Anne's

## Father Brandon's Remit in Exeter

Before his ordination, Father Patrick wrote to the Parish Council to clarify Fr Brandon's position vis-à-vis Holy Prophet Elias Parish. 'We need to be clear that he will not 'belong to' our Deanery. He will be available, as far as his academic and other commitments allow him, to serve in the Devon parishes as he does at present. I am sure that he will want to do so whenever he can. He may also be required to serve elsewhere, and no pressure should be put on him by members of our parish. Under the current regime, he will not be allowed to hear confessions, so other arrangements will need to be made.'

## Safeguarding

Martin Olsson has given notice to the parish council that he plans to step down as a Parish Safeguarding Officer at the Parish AGM in November. Martin will be happy to discuss what is involved in this important - but not hugely time-consuming - duty with any parish member who feels they might be prepared to take it on.

## News of Ancel

Fr Trayan writes of his visit to Ancel on 29<sup>th</sup> May: 'We had a nice chat. Ancel is chairbound, and complains that he has lost his memory - but for 96 I think he was all right. His sons Rupert and Donald take turns to stay with him, and carers visit three times a day. Ancel said he misses the paper copies of the newsletter - he said he is struggling now with his tablet. Probably some of you know that he used to compose music but he said he can't play keyboards anymore because he doesn't have power in his fingers. We parted in good spirits.'

Ancel has since been readmitted to the RD&E Hospital following a fall. Fr Trayan and Fr Brandon visited him last week. Shusha reports that 'he is a lot weaker but still, despite a little confusion which he is aware of - quite chatty. He should be going to Tiverton hospital shortly for a while. His mobility of late has been zero, and he will need full time care on discharge.

## Free Entry to Exeter Cathedral for Exeter Students

To encourage more young people to come and visit the Cathedral we are offering free entry to students from Exeter College and the University of Exeter until the end of October, if they show a valid student ID card.

*Cathedral News*