Prophet Elias News

News and Views for the Orthodox Church of the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon
August 2024

For service times see Noticeboard on P4



THE TRANSFIGURATION
by Dr. Spiro Lazarou

Christ did not come simply to teach man but to transfigure him. To re-adorn human nature in light, divine light, the glory of the Father. This final purpose for man is revealed in Christ's transfiguration on the mount. This foretastes the glorious future visible Theophany. Indeed, ultimately the Church's work is to prepare us all for the vision of God that we are all going to have.

The ascent on the Mount of Transfiguration occurred during Christ's journey to Jerusalem after His final decision to endure death by crucifixion. The subject of His discussion with Moses and Elijah according to Luke was exactly the subject of His exodus or Passover, His martyric death. The final liberation of man from death would be accomplished through the defeat of death on the Cross and His glorious resurrection.

This transfiguration of man is accomplished through the Cross. The means by which man can make the uncreated divine light of transfiguration his own is by wholly embracing the Cross of Christ. It is in this way that the glory of God mystically permeates all of life and transfigures the whole world.

Additionally, Luke points out that the context of this ascent was prayer, for Jesus ascended to the mount to pray and while doing so He was transfigured. It was exactly at the moment of communing in the love of the Holy Trinity that all things brightened.

In the atmosphere of prayer, Christ the mystical light of transfiguration is revealed. Here the faithful gaze upon the light of His face, they sense the radiance of the uncreated energies of the Holy Spirit which fills their being and they commune with the mystery of love of the Holy Trinity. They sense their lives elevated to a new plane.

Peter was so moved by this vision that he wanted to permanently secure this event and as a practical man suggested the quick construction of dwellings. But he is cut off by the voice of the Father who tells them to listen to His son. Wonderful spiritual experiences seal our lives but their effects do not seem to last long. The hours of deep spiritual experience in worship are not given as an escape from the hardship of ministry and service, and our personal ascent to our own Cross on Golgotha. Their purpose is to strengthen our resolve and stabilize our steps and ascent there. They strengthen us against temptations by giving us a foretaste of the victory that awaits us so as to encourage our hearts for the battles in the continuous spiritual war that we are in.

We are given a foretaste of His glorious presence, but not so that we can stay in the good feelings of ecstasy, but so that when we are alone with Christ before the Caiaphases and Pilates of this world we will stand firm in our resolve to follow Him through the difficult battles of this ongoing war. Christ, in taking upon Himself human nature became what He was not, so that we might become what we are not; He became human that we might become divine. This is the nature of love.

Our whole life is an ascent. The passions as passive are the road without struggle, they are the down hill road of ease. But the life of love, which is the only truly creative life, is a life of struggle. He who does not wish to suffer pain does not wish to love. Love is suffering in the heart, a constant crucifixion of our own desires for the other, first the ultimate Other and through Him my neighbour. This crucifixion of self is not exhausted simply in doing but first in being. Being a witness of Truth we bare witness to the way of life of Christ as constant self offering, as constantly denying self and making the life of others our own – becoming who we are not so that they too can become who they are not.

Sermon posted 7 August 2022 on the website of Saints Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church Webster, MA (Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Boston) https://www.schwebster.org/sermons/sermon-archives/2022-sermons/the-transfiguration
Permission to reprint requested

Let Us Strive to Be Illumined

But let us not tire our attention with the furthermost interpretations of the words of the Gospel. We shall believe thus, as those same ones have taught us, who themselves were enlightened by the Lord Himself, insofar as they alone know this well: the Mysteries of God, in the words of a prophet, are known to God alone and His perpetual proximity. Let us, considering the Mystery of the Transfiguration of the Lord in accord with their teaching, strive to be illumined by this Light ourselves and encourage in ourselves love and striving towards the Unfading Glory and Beauty, purifying our spiritual eyes of worldly thoughts and refraining from perishable and quickly passing delights and beauty which darken the garb of the soul. Let us be freed from these by the illumination and knowledge of the incorporeal and ever-existing Light of our Saviour transfigured on Tabor.

From Saint Gregory Palamas – Sermon on the Transfiguration

Lord, it is good for us to be here.

Feast of the Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady



In Falling Asleep Thou Hast Not Forsaken the World

As with the other Feasts of the Mother of God, the texts for the Feast of the Dormition are based primarily on non-Biblical material…...Without insisting on the literal truth of every element in this account, Orthodox tradition is clear and unwavering in regard to the central point: the Holy Virgin underwent, as did her Son, a physical death, but her body, like His, was afterwards raised from the dead and she was taken up into heaven, in her body as well as in her soul. She has passed beyond death and judgement, and lives wholly in the Age to Come. The Resurrection of the Body, which all Christians await, has in her case been anticipated and is already an accomplished fact. That does not mean, however, that she is dislocated from the rest of humanity and placed in a wholly different category: for we all hope to share one day in that same glory of the Resurrection of the Body which she enjoys even now.

Indeed, so far from being separated, Our Lady remains always most intimately linked to mankind – linked through her urgent and unceasing intercession on our behalf. 'Lady, behold thy son … Behold thy mother' (John 19: 26-27). The Church has long seen, in these words of Our Lord from the Cross, the giving of Mary to a universal motherhood; she is mother not to John only, but to all the children of God. Dwelling in heaven with Jesus, her care as mother remains undiminished, and embraces the universe: 'In giving birth, O Theotokos, thou hast retained thy virginity, and in falling asleep thou hast not forsaken the world' (troparion of the feast). In heaven, as on earth, the Mother of God continues 'ever watchful in her prayers, and in her intercession lies unfailing hope' (kontakion of the feast).

Archimandrite Kallistos Ware: *The Festal Menaion* Faber and Faber, 1969

SAVE THIS DATE!

On Saturday September 21st our beloved Philip is to be ordained Deacon by HE Archbishop Nikitas at Saint Anne's.

More details will follow – meanwhile, ring-fence the date in your diaries!

Noticeboard

Saturday August 3rd: Vespers – Celebration of Saint Sidwell of Exeter 6pm

Monday 5th: Forefeast of the Transfiguration Vespers 6.0pm

Tuesday 6th: THE HOLY TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST
Divine Liturgy 10.30am, with blessing of fruits

Wednesday 14th: Forefeast of the Dormition Vespers 6.0pm

Thursday 15th: THE DORMITION OF OUR MOST HOLY LADY THE THEOTOKOS AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY
Divine Liturgy 10.30am
Bring and Share (preferably 'finger food') after the Liturgy in the Belmont Hut

Saturday 31st: Akathist for the new church year – 'Glory to God for All Things' 6.0pm
Sunday September 1st: 10th after Pentecost : Church New Year Typika 10.30am

All services in Saint Anne's unless stated otherwise

*For services in the Torquay parish either visit https://www.facebook.com/standrewtorquay/?locale=en_GB or telephone Robert Skrivanos on **07971 316416**. For services in Plymouth visit* plymchurch.com

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

This Month We Celebrate

On Thursday August 1st: ***Beginning of the Dormition Fast***
The Procession of the Honourable Wood of the Life-Giving Cross of the Lord

On Friday 2nd: **Saint Sidwell of Exeter** (7th Century)
We wish **all Exonian parishioners** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
Saint Basil the Blessed of Moscow, Fool for Christ's Sake (1552)

On Saturday 3rd: **Holy Myrrh-Bearer Salome**

On Monday 5th: **Saint John the Romanian** of Chozeba Monastery (Jerusalem 1960)

On Tuesday 6th: **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 Friday 9th: **The Apostle Matthias**

On Saturday 10th: Archdeacon **Martyr Lawrence of Rome** (258)

On Sunday 11th: **Saint Blane**, Bishop of Bute (6thC)
We wish **Father Alexander and all members of the Community of Saint Nicholas and Saint Blane**
in **Dunblane** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Tuesday 13th: **Saint Tikhon,** Wonderworker of Zadonsk and All Russia (1783)
Saint Benjamin, Metropolitan of Petrograd (1922) Martyr under the Bolshevik Yoke

On Thursday 15th: **DORMITION OF OUR MOST HOLY LADY THE MOTHER OF GOD AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY**

On Sunday 18th: **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 Thursday 22nd: **Saint Alexis** (Medvedkov) of Ugine (France, 1934)

On Friday 23rd: **Saint Irenaeus**, Bishop of Lyons (202)

On Saturday 24th: **Saint Kosmas** of Aetolia, Equal-to-the-Apostles (1779)

On Monday 26th: Martyrs **Adrian and Natalia** of Nicomedia (4thC)

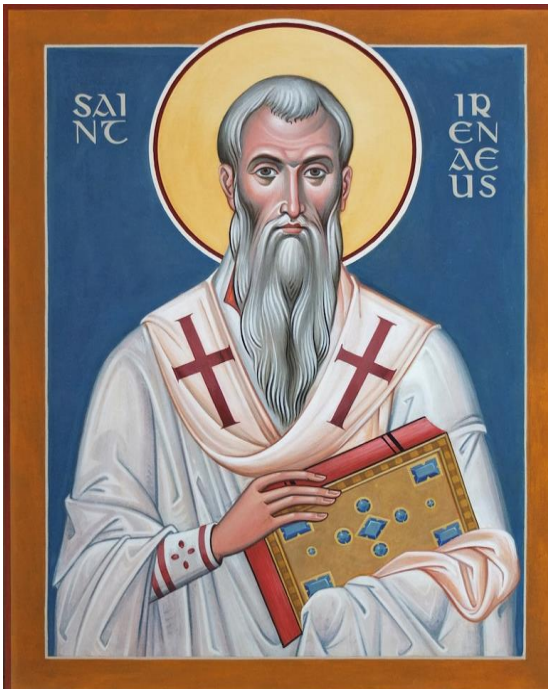
On Wednesday 28th: **The Prophetess Anna**, who met the Lord in the Temple
We wish **Anya K** and **Felicia F** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
We remember **Wendy Ann Robinson. May her Memory be Eternal!**

On Thursday 29th: **The Beheading of the Holy, Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John** (Fast Day)

On Friday 30th: **Saint Decuman** of Watchet in Somerset , Monk and Martyr (7th)

On Saturday 31st: **Saint Aidan**, first Bishop of Lindisfarne (651)
We remember **Aidan Cahill** – **May his Memory be Eternal!**

Saint Irenaeus of Lyon – 23rd August



St. Irenaeus of Lyon (born c. 120/140, died c. 200/203,) was the bishop of Lugdunum (Lyon), a leading Christian theologian of the 2nd century. His principle work *Adversus haereses* (*Against Heresies*), written about 180, was a refutation of gnosticism. In the course of his writings, Irenaeus advanced the development of an authoritative canon of Scriptures, the creed, and the authority of the episcopal office.

Though his exact birth date is unknown, Irenaeus was born of Greek parents in Asia Minor. As a child, he heard and saw St. Polycarp, the last known living connection with the Apostles, in Smyrna, before that aged Christian was martyred in 155. According to tradition, St. John the Apostle, as a very old man who had "seen the Lord", lived at Ephesus in the days when Polycarp was young. Thus, there were three generations from Jesus of Nazareth to Irenaeus of Lyon.

The era in which Irenaeus lived was a time of expansion and inner tensions in the church. In many cases Irenaeus acted as mediator between various contending factions. The churches of Asia Minor continued to celebrate Easter on the same date (the 14th of Nisan) as the Jews celebrated Passover, whereas the Roman church maintained that Easter should always be celebrated on a Sunday (the day of the Resurrection of Christ). Mediating between the parties, Irenaeus stated that differences in external factors, such as dates of festivals, need not be so serious as to destroy church unity.

All his known writings are devoted to the conflict with the gnostics. Irenaeus asserted in a positive manner the validity of the Hebrew Bible (the Christian Old Testament), which the gnostics denied. Though Irenaeus did not actually refer to two testaments, he prepared the way for this terminology. He asserted the validity of the two testaments at a time when concern for the unity and the difference between the two parts of the Bible was developing. Many works claiming scriptural authority, which included a large number by gnostics, flourished in the 2nd century. By his attacks on the gnostics, Irenaeus helped to diminish the importance of such works and to establish a canon of scriptures.

The development of the creed and the office of bishop also can be traced to his conflicts with the gnostics. On the basis of the New Testament alone, which is concerned with the salvation of humankind, the creed would not be expected to begin with an article about the creation of the world and humans. But, because the gnostics denied that the God revealed in the New Testament was the Creator, the first article of the creed was for polemical reasons directly connected with Genesis ("In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"). Irenaeus refers to the creed as a "Rule of Truth" used to combat heresy.

Gustaf Wingren

Source: Encyclopaedia Brittanica: *Saint Irenaeus | Biography, Works, Apologist, Theology, & Facts | Britannica*

Prophet Elias News *is the newsletter of the Parish of the Holy Prophet Elias, Devon, Deanery of Great Britain, Archdiocese of Thyateira (Ecumenical Patriarchate) - Archbishop: His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas (Lioulias)*

Rector: Fr Patrick Hodson – hodson44@btinternet.com Archpriests (retired) Fr John Marks, Fr Nikanor Wilkins
Serving priest: Fr Brandon Gallaher b.gallaher@exeter.ac.uk Tel: 07837 983433
(Fr Trayan Goranov can be contacted at otrayan@gmail.com Tel: 07800 644 599 to arrange confession)
Parish Secretary: Edward Skidelsky hpeliasdevon@gmail.com
Parish Warden: Philip Scorer philip.scorer@gmail.com Tel: 07812 170139

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 JAugust, 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.