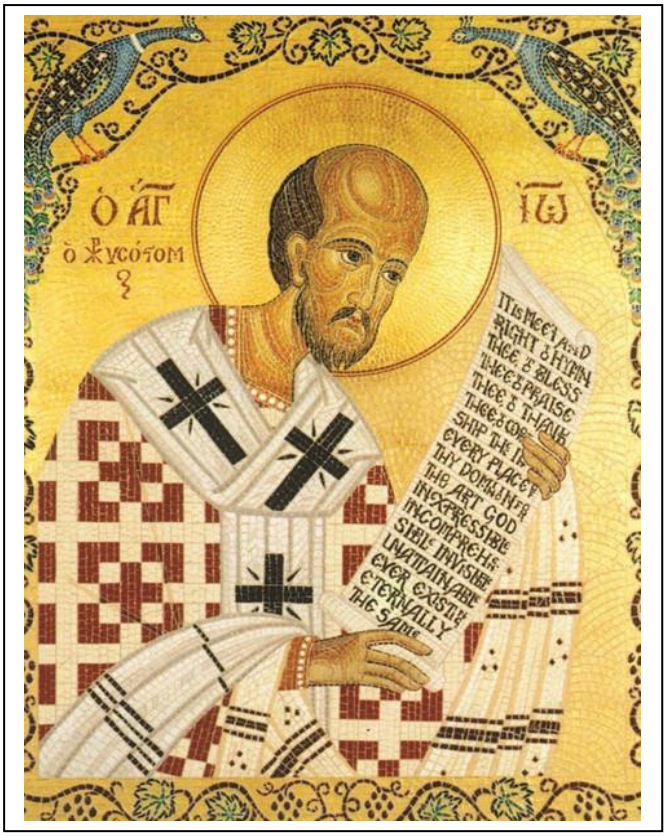
Prophet Elias News

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

For November and December service times see P7

Saint John Chrysostom – November 13th



Our father among the saints John Chrysostom (347-407), Archbishop of Constantinople, was a notable Christian bishop and preacher from the fourth and fifth centuries in Syria and Constantinople. He is famous for his eloquence in public speaking, his philanthropy, his denunciation of abuse of authority in the Church and in the Roman Empire of the time, and for the Divine Liturgy attributed to him. He had notable ascetic sensibilities. After his death he was named Chrysostom, which comes from the Greek Χρυσόστομος, "golden-mouthed." The Orthodox Church honours him as a saint, and counts him among the Three Holy Hierarchs together with Saints Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian.

He was born in Antioch of noble parents: his father, a high-ranking military officer, died soon after his birth and so he was brought up by his mother Anthusa. He was baptized in 370 and tonsured a reader. He began his education under a pagan teacher named Libanius, but went on to study theology under Diodore of Tarsus (one of the leaders of the later Antiochian School) while practising extreme asceticism. He was not satisfied, however, and became a hermit (circa 375) and remained so until poor health forced a return to Antioch.

He was then ordained a deacon in 381 by St. Meletius of Antioch, and was ordained a presbyter in 386 by Bishop Flavian I of Antioch. It seems this was the happiest period of his life. Over about twelve years, he gained much popularity for the eloquence of his public speaking. Notable are his insightful expositions of Bible passages and moral teaching. The most valuable of his works are his *Homilies* on various books of the Bible. He particularly emphasized almsgiving. He was also most concerned with the spiritual and temporal needs of the poor. He spoke out against abuse of wealth and personal property. In many respects, the following he amassed was no surprise. His straightforward understanding of the Scriptures (in contrast to the Alexandrian tendency towards allegorical interpretation) meant that the themes of his talks were eminently social, explaining the Christian's conduct in life.

In late October of 397, he was called (somewhat against his will) to be the bishop of Constantinople. He deplored the fact that Imperial court protocol would now assign to him access to privileges greater than the highest state officials. During his time as bishop he adamantly refused to host lavish entertainments. This meant he was popular with the common people, but unpopular with the wealthy and the clergy. His reforms of the clergy were also unpopular with these groups.

His time there was to be far less at ease than in Antioch. Theophilus, the Pope of Alexandria, wanted to bring Constantinople under his sway and opposed John's appointment to Constantinople. Being an opponent of Origen's teachings, he accused John of being too partial to the teachings of that master. Theophilus had disciplined four Egyptian monks (known as "the Tall Brothers") over their support of Origen's teachings. They fled to and were welcomed by John. He made another enemy in Aelia Eudoxia, the wife of the eastern Emperor Arcadius, who assumed (perhaps with justification) that his denunciations of extravagance in feminine dress were aimed at herself.

St. John was fearless when denouncing offences in high places. An alliance was soon formed against him by Eudoxia, Theophilus and other enemies of his. They held a synod in 403 to charge John, in which the accusation of Origenism was used against him. It resulted in his deposition and banishment. He was called back by Arcadius almost immediately, however, for the people of the city were very angry about his departure. Peace was shortlived. A silver statue of Eudoxia was erected near the cathedral of Hagia Sophia. John denounced the dedication ceremonies. He spoke against her in harsh terms: "Again Herodias rages; again she is confounded; again she demands the head of John on a charger" (an allusion to the events surrounding the death of John the Forerunner). Once again he was banished, this time to Caucasus in Georgia.

Pope Innocent I of Rome protested at this banishment, but to no avail. John wrote letters which still held great influence in Constantinople. As a result of this, he was further exiled to Pityus (on the eastern edge of the Black Sea). However, he never reached this destination, as he died during the journey. His final words were "Glory be to God for all things!"

Orthodox Wiki

There are abundant riches to be found in St John Chrysostom's Homilies and prayers. His Paschal Homily is one of the glories of Orthodox Liturgy, and he wrote one of my favourite prayers: 'Lord, deliver me from every ignorance and heedlessness; from littleness of soul and stony hardness of heart'. *However, we should not forget that he was a man of his time and background, and like many of the Fathers frequently expressed misogynistic and anti-Semitic views which are unacceptable to us today. The Church Fathers have a great deal to offer us, but their writings are not Holy Scripture, and we should not accept every word they said uncritically.* MO

Golden Sayings from Saint John Golden-Mouth

I do not despise anyone; even if he is only one, he is a human being, the living creature for whom God cares. Even if he is only one, he is a human being, for whom the heaven was stretched out, the sun appears, the moon changes, the air was poured out, the springs gush forth, the sea was spread out, the prophets were sent, the law was given – and for whom the only-begotten Son of God became man. My Master was slain and poured out His blood for this man. Shall I despise him?

When you are weary of praying, and do not receive, consider how often you have heard a poor man calling, and have not listened to him.

Do you fast? Then feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, visit the sick, do not forget the imprisoned, have pity on the tortured, comfort those who grieve and who weep, be merciful, humble, kind, calm, patient, sympathetic, forgiving, reverent, truthful and pious, so that God might accept your fasting and might plentifully grant you the fruits of repentance.

If you cannot find Christ in the beggar at the church door, you will not find Him in the chalice.

This is the rule of most perfect Christianity, its most exact definition, its highest point, namely, the seeking of the common good ... for nothing can so make a person an imitator of Christ as caring for neighbours.

What the soul is in the body, let Christians be in the world.

A man's readiness and commitment are not enough if he does not enjoy help from above as well; equally help from above is no benefit to us unless there is also commitment and readiness on our part.

Whether, therefore, we receive what we ask for, or do not receive it, let us still continue steadfast in prayer. For to fail in obtaining the desires of our heart, when God so wills it, is not worse than to receive it; for we know not, as He does, what is profitable to us.

Laughter has been implanted in our soul, that the soul may sometimes be refreshed.

This Month We Celebrate

On Friday November 1st: **Unmercenary Healers Cosmas and Damian** of Mesopotamia (3rdC)

On Sunday 3rd: **Saint Winifred of Holywell** (Treffynon) in North Wales (7thC)

On Wednesday 6th: **Saint Paul of Constantinople** (c350)
Saint Illtyd of Llanilltyd Fawr in South Wales (6thC)

On Friday 8th: **Synaxis of the Archangels Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Salathiel, Jegudiel, Barachiel and Jeremiel.**
We wish **Michail C and Mike L** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Saturday 9th: **Saint Nektarios of Pentapolis** (1920)

On Sunday 10th: **Saint Arsenios the Cappadocian** (1924)
We wish **Charlie, Sub-Deacon Arsenios,** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Monday 11th: **Saint Martin the Merciful,** Bishop of Tours (397)
We wish **Martin M** and **Martin O** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Wednesday 13th: **Saint John Chrysostom,** Archbishop of Constantinople (407)
We wish **William O** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Thursday 14th: **Holy Apostle Philip**
We wish Deacon **Philip** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
Saint Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessaloniki (1359)
We wish **Father Gregory Palamas** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Friday 15th: BEGINNING OF THE NATIVITY FAST
Saint Paisios Velichkovsky, Renewer of monasticism in Russia (1794)

On Saturday 16th: **Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew**
We wish **Hugh A** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Sunday 17th: **Saint Hilda,** Abbess of Whitby (680)

On Tuesday 19th: **Saint Philaret**, Metropolitan of Moscow (1867)
New Martyr Elias Fondaminsky, Co-worker with Saint Maria of Paris (1942)

On Wednesday 20th: **Saint Edmund,** King of East Anglia and Passionbearer (869)
New Martyr Cyril, Metropolitan of Kazan, Victim of the Bolshevik yoke (1937)

On Thursday 21st: FEAST OF THE ENTRY OF THE MOTHER OF GOD IN THE TEMPLE

On Friday 22nd: **Martyrs Cecilia, Valerian, Tiburtius and Maximus,** at Rome (c230)
We wish **Celia O** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Saturday 23rd: **Saint Columbanus** of Ireland, Abbot of Luxeuil in France and Bobbio in Italy (615)
Saint Alexander Nevsky (1263)

On Sunday 24th: **Great Martyr Catherine of Alexandria** (c310) (Russian use – Greek use 25th))
We wish **Catherine L** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Monday 25th: **Saint Clement of Ochrid,** Enlightener of the Bulgarians, founder of the first Christian university in Europe and Patron Saint of North Macedonia (916)

On Tuesday 26th: **Saint Stylianos of Paphlagonia,** Protector of children (4th – 6th C)

On Wednesday 27th: **Saint Feargal**, Bishop of Salzburg (784)

On Saturday 30th: **Holy Apostle Andrew the First Called**
We wish **Andreas A** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

The Irish Missionaries in Europe

As the Roman Empire fell, all through Europe barbarians descended on the Roman cities, looting artefacts and burning books. Back in Ireland, the light of classical civilization was kept alive in its monasteries, where the Irish took up the great labour of copying all of Western literature - everything they could lay their hands on. The Irish missionaries to Europe in the 6th to 8th centuries – among them Saint Columbanus (23rd) and Saint Feargal (27th) and their disciples - are credited with establishing more than a hundred monasteries throughout the continent, where they set up libraries and scriptoria to continue the work of scholarship.

Adapted from Thomas Cahill *How the Irish Saved Civilization:* Nan A. Talese, 1995

Saint Elias Fondaminsky of Paris – November 19th



Elias (Ilya) Isidorovich Fondaminsky was born in Moscow on February 17, 1880. He was a Jewish Russian author (writing under the pseudonym *Bunakov*) and political activist. From 1900 he studied philosophy in Germany and in the spring of 1902 was arrested for two months at the Russian border for transporting illegal literature into Russia. In 1903 Elias married Emily Gavronskiy (1882-1935), whose inclinations toward Orthodox Christianity almost certainly influenced him later in his life. In 1905 he became a member of the Moscow Committee of the S.R. (Socialist-Revolutionary Party). In 1906 he fled to Paris, but returned to Moscow in April 1917 and as a Commissar of the Provisional Government opposed the Bolsheviks. After emigrating to France in 1919, Fondaminsky became an influential newspaper editor (*Sovremennye Zapisky*, or *Contemporary Annals*, among others), author of philosophical essays, and in later years a much admired philanthropist, supporting Christian magazines and charity funds. Vladimir Nabokov declared that Fondaminsky "did more for Russian emigre literature than any other."

Maria Skobtsova came to Paris in 1923 with her husband and children and soon immersed herself in charitable work and in the Paris community of Russian émigrés and exiles. She soon befriended Elias Fondaminsky, who shared her politics and religious convictions. Of them their mutual friend Theodore Pianov said: "It is difficult to say who had the greater influence on whom, Mother Maria on him or him on Mother Maria." He played an active role in the founding of Maria Skobtsova's Orthodox Action, though the declining health of his wife prevented him from doing much active social work.

For many years he was haunted by Christ and drawn to the Orthodox Church. He regularly attended the French-language liturgies celebrated by Fr. Lev Gillet at the chapel adjacent to Mother Maria Skobtsova's house of hospitality on rue de Lourmel. He explained his hesitancy to be baptized on the grounds that he was unworthy, though another factor was loyalty to his wife, an unbaptized Christian who had died in 1935.

Fondaminsky was one of the distinguished people who gave occasional lectures at the Sunday afternoon gatherings at the house on rue de Lourmel (along with Berdyaev, Bulgakov, etc.). In 1940, in a discussion at Fondaminsky's apartment in Paris, Mother Maria Skobtsova spoke of her awareness that these were eschatological times. "Do you not feel that the end is already near, that it is at hand?"

Facing the Nazi occupation, Fondaminsky refused to leave Paris, saying he was willing to accept his destiny whatever it may be. On June 22, 1941 he was arrested by the German occupation authorities. Contained in the Royallieu-Compiègne camp, on September 20, 1941 he was finally baptized into Orthodoxy at the makeshift Orthodox chapel at the camp. Afterward he wrote to a friend that he was "ready for anything, whether life or death."
Following treatment of a gastric ulcer, he had the possibility to escape to the zone of France not under German occupation and from there could have escaped to the USA, but he decided it was better to share the fate of those who had no such opportunity, especially his "kinsmen according to the flesh." While most of those arrested, Russians by nationality, were freed, Fondaminsky was left as a Jew in the camp. In 1942 he was sent to a camp in Drancy, and then to Auschwitz, where he was killed on November 19, 1942.

The theologian George Fedotov writes: "In his last days he wished to live with the Christians and die with the Jews."

"It is out of dough like this that saints are made," commented Mother Maria, weeping as she read his last letter. In 1945 she would share in his fate and later be canonized with him by the Church.

Source: Mystagogy Research Center
https://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2017/11/saint-elias-fondaminsky-of-paris-1942.html

Deacon Philip's Address on the Occasion of his Ordination at Saint Anne's on September 21st

Your eminence, Vladyka Nikitas, thank you for visiting us today, for your paternal care of our parishes and communities and for ordaining me today. You are always welcome.

I have been asked to say a few words about the path that has led me to be ordained.

As many of you may know, in my professional life I work restoring and conserving historic buildings, predominantly churches.

The book that Michelle read the Epistle from today has an opening chapter in which a church is defined as ' A place and time which has been sanctified, and here we stand! However, Saint Paul says in Corinthians 3.16 "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?"

I will use an analogy, for which I apologise to my children who have suffered hearing my terrible analogies.
In which case let me begin constructing!

My corner stones are Peter and Irina, my parents, their lives firmly established within the church but clearly visible to all who pass by or visit as solid, supporting, permanent, loving, integral to the church but also outward looking. The twin columns at the doorway, my brother and sister, an Atlas and Caryatid if you like, showing the way forward, always older and wiser. Surrounding them, the arcading, supporting and adorning, all my extended family both here, afar and of blessed memory.

Above the arcading, the tracery window, intertwining and joyfully complex, my children Bethany, Otto and Eliza. And uniting the tracery, the stained glass filling the spaces, and illuminating the interior with ever changing light, my wife Alice.

The pillars of the church, supporting the nave vaulting: The clergy who have been and still are part of my life:
Bishop Anthony, who gave the blessing to Archimandrite Barnabas, both of blessed memory, to begin his mission in Devon, and who baptised me, Fr Nicanor who was at my baptism and serves with us still. Fr John Marks who grew our parish and cared for us all and now lies ill at home, Fr Patrick a friend, Parish priest and Dean , Fr Trayan who stepped in and served us in a time of need, Fr Brandon who guides and teaches us now, Fr Alexander, a life together shared in the time out of time that are the children's camps, Fr Gregory, Papas to many, Fr Benedict, with us here today after many years.

Fr Mischa Fortunato, Fr John Lee, Fr Nicholas Behr and Bishop Kallistos, of blessed memory, Bishop Basil, Fr John Behr, Fr Stephan, Fr Stephan, Fr Antonias, Fr Justine, Fr Julian, Bishop Sigrist, , Fr Stavros, Fr George and many more - and of course my father Peter of blessed memory. And Vladyka Nikitas.

And who buttresses and supports these pillars from the aisles? Irina, Dawn, Val, Mary, Michelle, Patsy, Elizabeth, Shanta, Claudia, Kate and Mariamna, Anne and Rachel of blessed memory.

The solid walls, built block by block, enclosing, giving support and protection are the parishioners, each one an integral and essential part of the body of the church. For those who bear fruit and do good works in this holy and venerable house, for those that labour in its service and for those who sing!

Each part built on the foundation which is the Orthodox Church And the foundations are built on the solid rock that is our faith in God.

And always welcome the visitors and friends from and all our brothers and sisters in Christ from other churches and parishes. Especially St James church. Welcome.

We recently attended a wedding and will be at another next week. The union in love for each other gives us all the gift of joy. I was reminded, by Alice, to retain that joy in the ministry which has been gifted to me.

So with love and joy in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, I humbly thank you all.

Mozart, Tavener and Copland – November 2nd

The **Exeter Bach Choir** - including several of our parishioners - **and Orchestra** will perform on
Saturday 2nd November at **7.30** at **Saint David's Church**: **Mozart – Requiem** and **Ave Verum Corpus**,
John Tavener – Song for Athene and **Aaron Copland – Appalachian Spring**
Conductor - Jonathan Lucas Wood Professional Soloists

Tickets £20 (£22 at the door), Students and U18 £10, Children U16 £1, available at
https://exeterbachchoir.co.uk/events/mozart-requiem/

Music withdraws our minds from earthly cogitations, lifts up our spirits into heaven, makes them light and celestial. Saint John Chrysostom

Sunday November 3rd – Parish Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting is your chance to have your say in the running of the parish. Please make every effort to attend. The meeting will follow a bring and share lunch at Saint James' Hall after Divine Liturgy. The meeting is open to all, but only registered members of the parish may vote.

War Horse Concert with Michael Morpurgo

Exeter Cathedral Wednesday 13 November 2024 7 – 8.30pm

We are delighted to welcome renowned author Michael Morpurgo to Exeter Cathedral, to read an abridged version of his world-famous children's war novel, *War Horse*. Musician Ben Murray will accompany Michael's reading with music and songs from the theatre production based on the novel, originally performed at the National Theatre, London.

One of Michael Morpurgo's most beloved books, *War Horse* is written from the perspective of a young farm horse, Joey. Set during the First World War, the story follows Joey's experience of being taken from the fields of Devon to the Western Front, encountering a variety of characters along the way. Joey is sold to the British Army and thrust into the midst of war. On the battlefield, he charges with his officer towards the enemy, witnessing the horror of the frontline. But even in the desolation of the trenches, Joey's courage touches the soldiers around him.
This performance is suitable for audiences aged nine or older.

Tickets:
Adults: From £15 Child: From £5 Book your ticket

From *Cathedral Life*

Good News from Torquay

On Sunday September 22nd, the day after Deacon Philip's ordination, Archbishop Nikitas presided at Divine Liturgy at Saint Andrew's Church in Torquay, where he tonsured Charlie Arsenios as Sub-Deacon to assist Father Trayan. We wish Charlie and his family Many Years!

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)
Deacon: Dcn Philip Scorer philip.scorer@gmail.com Tel: 07812 170139
Parish Secretary: Edward Skidelsky hpeliasdevon@gmail.com
Parish Warden: To be announced

Contributions for the December issue should reach the Editors at martinolsson827@btinternet.com *or by post at Little Linhay, Bondleigh, EX20 2AJ by Friday 22nd November, 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.

Note from the Editors

It is with some regret that we have to tell you that the December issue of Prophet Elias News will be the last under our editorship. You will continue to receive regular information about services and other parish events, though what form this will take has yet to be decided.

SERVICES NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2024

November

2 Sat	Vespers 6.0pm
3 Sun	19th after Pentecost (Luke 5) Divine Liturgy 10.30am, followed by Bring & Share Lunch and **Parish Annual General Meeting** (at St James's Hall)
9 Sat	Vespers 6.0pm
10 Sun	20th after Pentecost (Luke 8) : Remembrance Sunday Divine Liturgy 10.30am, with Panikhida for those Fallen in War
15 Fri	*Beginning of the Nativity Fast*
16 Sat	Vespers 6.0pm
17 Sun	21st after Pentecost (Luke 9) Divine Liturgy 10.30am, with Panikhida for Road Crash victims
23 Sat	Vespers 6.0pm
24 Sun	22nd after Pentecost (Luke 13) : Afterfeast of the Entry of the Mother of God Typika 10.30am
30 Sat	Vespers 6.0pm

December

1 Sun	23rd after Pentecost (Luke 14) Divine Liturgy 10.30am
7 Sat	Vespers 6.0pm
8 Sun	24th after Pentecost (Luke 10) : Eve of the Conception of the Mother of God Divine Liturgy 10.30am, followed by Bring & Share Lunch (at St James's Hall)
14 Sat	Vespers 6.0pm
15 Sun	25th after Pentecost (Luke 11) : Holy Forefathers Divine Liturgy 10.30am
21 Sat	Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ Vespers 6.0pm
22 Sun	26th after Pentecost : Ancestors of Christ Divine Liturgy 10.30am
24 Tues	**Eve of the Nativity of Christ** **Vigil 6.0pm**
25 Wed	**Nativity according to the flesh of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ** **Divine Liturgy 10.30am**
28 Sat	Vespers 6.0pm
29 Sun	30th after Pentecost 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 https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064673836911 or telephone Fr Julian on **07469 262827**.*