

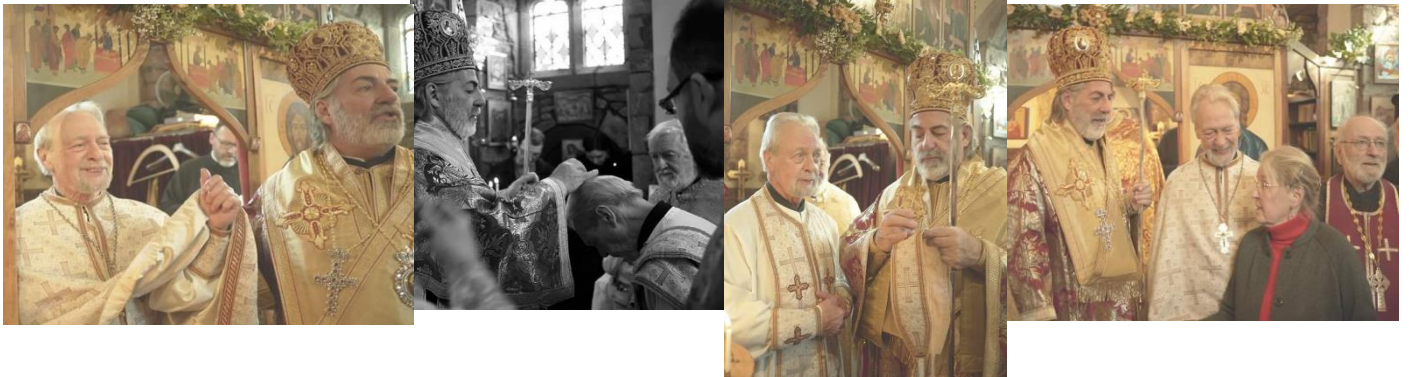


Prophet Elias News

*News and events from the Orthodox Church of the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon
March 2020*



The Ordination of Fr Peter Saturday, 1st February at St Anne's



On February 1st, the Eve of the lovely Feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple, Protodeacon Peter Scorer was ordained to the priesthood by His Eminence Nikitas of Thyateira during Divine Liturgy at Saint Anne's church in Exeter.

Those of you who worship at Saint Anne's will know how small it is: nonetheless around 100 people managed to squeeze in – parishioners past and present, and well-wishers from around the country and beyond. (In addition, messages of love and support had poured in from Russia, Greece, France, the USA, Canada, Germany, Sweden, Uganda...). Until the Gospel reading Protodeacon Peter led us in prayer for the last time, then was himself led into the altar where Vladyka Nikitas vested him while we acclaimed lustily at each stage AXIOS! HE IS WORTHY! AXIOS! Our beloved Deacon Peter became our beloved Father Peter. When he spoke to us for the first time as our Priest, he reflected on his change of role:

“In all these 47 years that I have been a deacon, I have stood on this side of the holy screen, and I have led you in prayer. I have always loved that task because I felt I was above all a part of the community, working with this community, leading you towards the holy altar. Now I ask you all for your prayers because I will be standing in front of that holy altar and will be bringing, mercifully, I hope, the grace of God to you.”

After the service the Archbishop's party joined us for a splendid feast in the upper room of the Exeter FC headquarters across the road from Saint Anne's, paid for by the generosity of a parish member who for health reasons was unable to be there in person but whose contribution to the day was hugely appreciated.

The ordination was by its nature a joyful occasion, but for many of Father Peter's parishioners it was not without a tinge of sadness. As Deacon he had faithfully served us - in the fullest sense - for 47 years: almost since the beginnings of our community in Willand in 1967. Not only did he help to steer us through some difficult times, but he was a notable example to the wider Orthodox community of the importance of the diaconal role in parish life. For both his long service as Deacon and for accepting to be our Priest, we owe him a huge debt of gratitude – as we do to his Matushka Irina and all his family for their unstinting support over the years. We also thank Vladyka Nikitas for coming all the way to Devon to ordain him. And lastly but by no means least we thank Father Nikanor, now rapidly approaching his 90th birthday, for celebrating the Divine Liturgy for us week after week when we had no other priest.

The service can be seen on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/hrkWHt32FP0>

Aidan Cahill

23rd January 1947 – 10th February 2020

We are very sad to have to announce the death on Monday 10 February of our Parish Warden and close friend Aidan Cahill. Our condolences and prayers go out to his wife Josephine and his daughter Anna.

During his studies as a young student at the Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium) Aidan first encountered Orthodoxy at the Abbey of Chevetogne, part of which followed the Eastern rite. Following his studies at the School of Slavonic and East European Languages in London, and after studying in Minsk (Belarus) and teaching in Germany, he was appointed lecturer in the Linguistics department at Exeter University.

It was shortly after his arrival in Exeter that I got to know him. His first visit to our parish was in 1979. A close friend of his, a monk from Chevetogne, Father Daniel, had come to visit him in Exeter. At that time Aidan was not a regular church goer, but Fr Daniel gave him instructions to go to the nearest Orthodox Church, which happened to be in Combe Martin. Aidan came into our parish at a very early stage in its development, and had for all these years been an active and dedicated member of our parish. He was always a lovely and enthusiastic participant in all our parish events. He will be sorely missed. May his memory be eternal!

Fr Peter



Aidan Cahill

Panikhida and Funeral

Several panikhidas were sung for Aidan during the week following his death, most notably on the evening before his funeral, when he lay in his open coffin in the centre of St Anne's. The extraordinary words and music seemed to mingle with the incense and the light of our candles, and because we knew that the coffin would be closed for the funeral, we were each able to take all the time we needed to say our goodbye to our dear friend with a kiss.

Aidan's funeral, celebrated by four priests and a deacon, took place at St James' Church on Friday 21st February, attended by many parish members, Aidan's brothers and nephews and nieces, former University colleagues and other friends. Many commented on how moved they were by the beauty and profundity of the service, in these days when so many funerals seem to gloss over the real tragedy of death. Most of those present followed in convoy to Heavitree Higher Cemetery for the interment, after which we regrouped in St James' Hall to share our memories of Aidan over an excellent spread provided by the Scorer girls. Many people commented on the absence of Aidan, our wine steward for many years, as being only one of so many ways in which he will be missed.

May God grant to him the home-country of his heart's desire, making him again a citizen of Paradise.

Baptism

Makara Olivia Rose on 15th February at St Anne's. Parents: Sean and Andreea Morgan. Sponsors: Corina Popovics and Dumitru Popovics.

Many Years!

Children's Summer Camp 2020 26th July – 8th August

For further details and application form on www.thyateira-deanery.uk and from Naomi Schubert naomi_marks@hotmail.com

Exeter Student Orthodox Society

On 13th February, 2020, the Exeter Student Orthodox Society, under the leadership of Daniel Li, held its first meeting for over a year. Two speakers, Father Peter and Deacon Brandon, were invited to share their thoughts on the suitably general and introductory question: “What is Orthodox Christianity?”

A decent audience of about 15 students and lecturers had no sooner assembled in the advertised university room than we were evicted by the night porter. I had failed to make the proper booking, but Antonios Basoukos saved the day by offering to host us in his office, to which we all promptly decamped, clutching bottles of wine and bags of crisps.

Deacon Brandon spoke first. He suggested that Orthodoxy is distinguished from other Christian traditions by its “pre-modern” character. Having been spared, by accidents of history, from the various waves of rationalising reform which swept over Christianity in the West, it has preserved in tact the spiritual and liturgical wealth of the early Church. Next spoke Father Peter. He began, not with history or theology, but with a description of the physical layout of an Orthodox Church, showing how it embodies, in all its aspects, a vision of God and his relationship with man. Christianity, as we conceive it, is not a theory or a moral demand. It is made real in worship and prayer.

After these two talks things devolved into a free-flowing discussion. Our ejection from our appointed venue had perhaps been fortuitous, for it gave our meeting the air of a spontaneous “happening” in which everyone felt free to speak from the heart. Fr Peter’s wife Irina spoke of the profound drama of the liturgy, especially the Passion Week liturgy, which she compared to the civic dramas of ancient Greece. Antonios spoke of the sense of belonging which envelopes all celebrants of an Orthodox liturgy, whether or not they sign up to all the various points of belief. And many other interesting things were said, which I haven’t space to record here.

We hope that this will be the first of many such exhilarating meetings over the year to come.

Edward Skidelsky

News from Combe Martin Sts Symeon & Anna

A pattern has now been established that there is a Liturgy on the second Sunday of the month with Fr Trayan celebrating. On 9th February Fr Peter served his first Liturgy in Combe Martin. This was a joyous occasion and a bit like completing a circle. The chapel of Sts Symeon & Anna was where Fr Peter started serving as deacon to this parish 47 years ago.



Extraordinary Clergy Laity Meeting London -29th February

Clergy and Parish Representatives attended this meeting at Thyateira House with Archbishop Nikitas and Archimandrite Nephon Tsimalis in attendance. Most of the meeting was taken up with discussion of the new deanery statutes which we need now that we are a deanery within the Archdiocese of Great Britain and Thyateira.

At the beginning of the meeting Archbishop Nikitas told us that 2020 was to be dedicated to the youth and gave out some information on forthcoming youth events (which has been forwarded to everyone on the mailing list). He also recommended some Lenten reading including Great Lent by Alexander Schmemmann (*see more details in Library Corner*) and an Orthodox Study Bible.

**Deanery Festival and Conference
22nd to 25th May 2020**

For further details and booking forms
www.thyateira-deanery.uk

Library Corner – Lenten Reading

Fr Thomas Hopko's **The Lenten Spring** (SVS Press 1983) is designed as a companion for the journey to Holy Week and Pascha, with a 3- or 4-page reflection for each of the forty days. These are based on the liturgical texts proper to the season, not all of which will be familiar even to regular worshippers. Thoroughly recommended if you can make the necessary commitment, and providing rich and nourishing fare to fill the space created by cutting back on excess food and frivolity.

Fr Alexander Schmemmann was Fr Hopko's father-in-law, and Dean of St Vladimir's Seminary; his **Great Lent** (SVS 1969/1974) is subtitled 'Journey to Pascha'. Two of the five chapters deal with the journey itself; the others discuss such topics as the Liturgy of the Presanctified, fasting, the daily Prayer of St Ephraim (a very helpful commentary on this), and how to make sense of Lent in our modern secular society.

I hope to write more fully about Fr Schmemmann's **For the Life of the World** (SVS 1963/1973) another time, but if you don't have a copy this might be a good time to buy and read it.

Any of these should be readily obtainable via Abebooks or Amazon. If you can't get hold of them this way I would be happy to lend my own copies – on the strict understanding that they are returned at the latest by Thomas Sunday!

H.A.

Reporting Hate Incidents

One very unpleasant consequence of the decision for Britain to leave the European Union has been a steep increase in hate incidents against people who were not born here. People have been shouted at for speaking their own language, or asked 'Why are you still here?' or told to 'Go home.' These are examples of Hate Incidents. If this sort of behaviour is accompanied by threats, then they become Hate Crimes.

Exeter City Council and Devon and Cornwall Police want to know when incidents like this happen here. If you are in any way made to feel uncomfortable in this country, or if you witness someone else being abused simply because they are 'foreign', please

report it. You can contact the Police on 101 (or by SMS on 67101), or you can tell Father Peter or Deacon Brandon, or Naomi or myself, and we will pass the information on. We can do this without using your name if you prefer.

It is important that the authorities know how much of this unacceptable behaviour is happening.

Martin Olsson
(martinolsson827@btinternet.com)
Parish Safeguarding

The Need for Joy

The source of false religion is the inability to rejoice, or, rather, the refusal of joy, whereas joy is absolutely essential because it is without any doubt the fruit of God's presence. One cannot know that God exists and not rejoice. Only in relation to joy are the fear of God and humility correct, genuine, fruitful. Outside of joy, they become demonic, the deepest distortion of any religious experience. A religion of fear. Religion of pseudo-humility. Religion of guilt: They are all temptations, traps – very strong indeed, not only in the world, but inside the Church. Somehow "religious" people often look on joy with suspicion.

The first, the main source of everything is "my soul rejoices in the Lord..." The fear of sin does not save from sin. Joy in the Lord saves. A feeling of guilt or moralism does not liberate from the world and its temptations. Joy is the foundation of freedom, where we are called to stand. Where, how, when has this tonality of Christianity become distorted, dull – or rather, where, how, why have Christians become deaf to Joy? How, when and why, instead of freeing suffering people, did the Church come to sadistically intimidate and frighten them?

From "The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemmann, 1973-1983"

The calendar of services for March and April are available on www.orthodoxdevon.org and a few at the back of St Anne's.

Please note times of the extra services during Great Lent, Holy Week and Pascha.