



Prophet Elias News

News in the time of self –isolation for the Orthodox Church of
the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon

26thth July 2020



In this issue we celebrate
Father Nicanor's Nameday and Birthday

On Tuesday 28th July he will be

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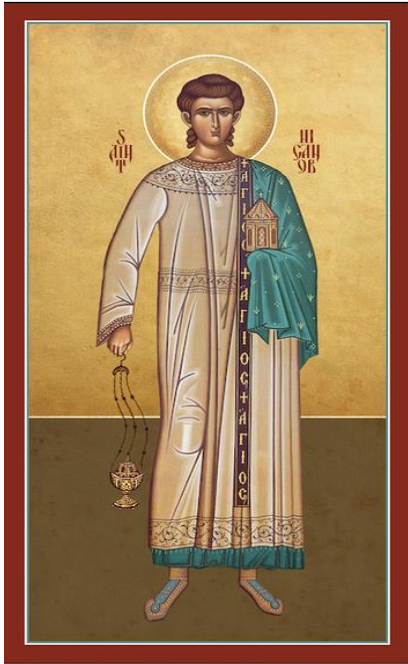
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HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DEAR FATHER, HAPPY FEAST
AND MANY YEARS!

Saint Nicanor of the Seventy Apostles



We know very few details about Saint Nicanor's life. Even the date of his martyrdom is uncertain. One early tradition has it that he was martyred, with many others, at the same time as Saint Stephen, another that he became a missionary in Cyprus where he was martyred around 76 AD under the Emperor Vespasian.

What we do know from Acts 6: 1-6 is that he was one of the seven men 'full of the Spirit and wisdom' who were chosen from among all the disciples to 'serve (Greek: *diakonein*) at tables' – that is, to oversee the distribution of food to widows. From this role they took the title *daikonos*, meaning servant.

His name is also included in all the early lists of the Seventy Apostles commissioned by Christ to go 'two by two ahead of Him to every town and place where He was about to go.' (*Luke 10: 1-23*)

Troparion

Holy Apostle Nicanor of the Seventy,
entreat the merciful God to grant our souls
forgiveness of our transgressions.

Kontakion

The Church ever sees you as a shining star, O Apostle Nicanor;
and your miracles have manifested great enlightenment.
Therefore we cry out to Christ:
'Save those who with faith honour Thine Apostle,
O Most Merciful One.'

Father Peter on The Role of the Deacon

Both Father Nicanor and Father Peter served our parish for many years as deacons: both, in fact, expected to continue in this service for the rest of their lives. Circumstance has led both to serve in another capacity, as priests, for which we are hugely grateful to them both. But their change of role has for some of us brought an element of sadness that an important element is missing from the liturgical life of the parish. In this article published in the Feuillet of our former Exarchate, Father Peter explores the nature of that important element. He first outlines the development of the diaconate from the earliest times to the present. At first, deacons were appointed to administer the charitable work of the Church – to 'serve at the tables' – to free the Apostles to give themselves to the ministry of the word. Later they increasingly took on a liturgical role, assisting in the administration of the sacraments, until eventually this became their sole function. Very often in the Church today ordination to the diaconate is seen only as a necessary short step on the way to ordination as a priest. But Fr Peter argues that there is a deeper significance to the role of deacon:

The deacon is buried as a layman, but at the same time he is in his liturgical role continuously moving between the space occupied by the laity – the narthex – and the space occupied by the senior clergy – the sanctuary. He moves between the fallen world and the Kingdom of God. On behalf of the people he gives the instruction to the priest at the start of the Liturgy, ‘It is time for the Lord to act, Father, give the Blessing’. He leads the people in prayer in the litanies, telling them what to pray for. He draws their attention to those important moments in the Liturgy with his commands of ‘Stand’, ‘Attend’. At the small entrance he carries the book of the Gospels out of the sanctuary to the people, and it is the deacon who proclaims the Word of God. He brings the elements for the Eucharist from the people to the priest, who in turn offers them to God, and it is the deacon who brings the Holy Gifts from the Holy Table to the people.

The deacon is a servant at the Table of our Lord. The elements which he places on the table are bread and wine, and it is this transfigured bread which he brings to the people. It is no accident that the ministry to the poor and hungry is here transformed into a ministry for those hungry for the Word of God, thirsting for the water of Life.

At the same time, it is precisely this ministry, this service at the table of God which must find expression in true charity, in love for those in need. In a mysterious way the deacon represents a eucharistic concept of charity, and is an icon of Christ as the suffering servant. There is a reminder of this in the ordination of the deacon, when the bishop prays: ‘Vouchsafe unto him the grace which Thou didst grant unto Stephen, Thy First Martyr’.

Our beloved Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh preached a sermon on the theme of the diaconate on the day of my ordination over forty years ago:

“.....The first deacons were appointed to express the compassionate love of the Church. The Church is charity, the Church is love, and nothing more. And if it becomes something else, it ceases to be the Church in all its fullness. And this love must be acute, it must be deep, it must be personal, concrete. Already in the first centuries of Christian life, when the Church was all aquiver with love, it chose people with a deep heart, a living heart, men of prayer, to make them its instruments of love amongst those who were poor, who had been touched by misfortune, cast down by grief.

..... This love, which is the task of the deacon, was later applied by the Church in a special way: it joined the deacon to the celebration of its sacraments. In this role he protects the prayer of the priest and at the same leads the faithful in prayer. It is he who gives you the subject of your prayer. In response to the petitions he pronounces you repeat ‘Lord, have mercy’, or put yourselves in the hands of God saying ‘To Thee, O Lord’. Or in confessing the truth of the Church, you respond with ‘Amen’. This is a great love: step by step the deacon leads us into the mystery of the liturgy, he draws us into its depths, depths which you could not reach alone in your spiritual lives.”

Notice – Virtual Pilgrimages

The Orthodox Fellowship of St John the Baptist is presenting a series of 'virtual pilgrimages' to monasteries on Thursday evenings from 30th July. To register, go to:
<https://forerunner.org.uk/2020/07/09/online-series-on-monasteries/>

Father Nicanor – In it from the Beginning

It is no exaggeration to say that were it not for Father Nicanor our parish would not exist. It was he who told Archimandrite Barnabas that there was a property for sale in Willand that could be a suitable site for the monastery Fr Barnabas was determined to set up. So it was that, fifty three years ago now, the community was born which was in time to become the Orthodox Parish of the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon.

The story of how young Norman Wilkins discovered Orthodoxy is told elsewhere in this issue. He began to attend the Liturgy at Ennismore Gardens on a weekly basis, riding up from Devon to London on his motorbike, and was in due course received by Metropolitan Anthony, who put him in touch with Fr Barnabas. After a period of regular correspondence, he found the property at Willand and told Fr Barnabas about it.

Fr Nicanor recalls:

On the day Fr Barnabas arrived in Willand, (31st July 1967) we unloaded the furniture van. The iconostasis had been loaded last, so we were able to take it straightaway and erect it in the stable, which we swept out and cleaned up. That evening at 6pm Fr Barnabas celebrated Vespers and Mattins. The services continued from that moment and the monastic life was established. I used to visit and assist at the Monastery three days a week.

On 2nd August 1968 (Holy Prophet Elias feast day O.S.) Bishop Anthony with Archbishop Anthony of Minsk consecrated the monastery church, and during the Liturgy Norman was ordained deacon, taking the name of Nicanor – one of the original seven deacons of the Church, whose feast day (28th July) coincided with the new deacon's birthday.

After a quarter of a century of faithful service as a deacon, Father Nicanor was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Basil of Sergievo on 3rd October 1993. He was honoured with the title Archpriest by Archbishop Job of Telemessos at the celebration of our Patronal Feast on July 20th 2014, and in 2018 Archbishop Jean of Charioupolis granted him the right to celebrate the Liturgy with the Royal Doors open up until the Lord's Prayer.

No outline of Father Nicanor's life of service to our parish would be complete without paying tribute to his wife Val, his loyal and patient companion throughout. Just as our parish would not have come into being without Father Nicanor, it is equally certain that he could not have achieved what he has without Val's support through their seventy years of marriage.

I became an Orthodox because I didn't have an umbrella!

Excerpts from an interview with Father Nicanor on July 1st 2001 by Vassilis Dimitrakis and Konstantina Dogani, published in ΠΑΡΕΜΒΟΛΗ, the magazine of the Greek Christian Student's Union, under the title: Έγινα Ορθόδοξος γιατί δεν είχα ομπρέλα! The original article can be found at: <http://www.oodegr.com/oode/ierapostoli/empeiries/agglikanos1.htm>

Christ is a God of surprises. His ways of appearing to us and inviting us to love and follow Him are unique.

When we were in Exeter for our postgraduate studies in 1999, more than any experience in the city we were happy to be part of was the existence of the Orthodox parish of Saint Anna. At that time we could not imagine its existence, or our encounter with British Orthodox believers and priests. We felt like members of the same family from the first moments!

We were also impressed by the eldest priest of the parish, father Nikanor Wilkins. He was always a humble, modest and sweet person, with a permanent smile on his face. We were wondering what his journey of becoming an orthodox Christian and a priest of God was. When he told us his story we gave it the title: "I became an Orthodox because I did not have an umbrella".

"I was in Paris. It was raining and I had to go somewhere to stay dry. I saw a door near me and went in. As it was raining, I couldn't tell it was the outside of a church; I just saw the door and went in. If it hadn't been raining, I wouldn't have gone in! Opening the outside door, I tripped and fell against another door, before entering the church. As I didn't want to disturb anyone, I sat back in the corner and watched. As I gained more confidence I moved further in, trying to see what was going on there. I saw the icons, and the crosses, and thought that it must be a church. Then I wondered if it was a Synagogue, because I had never seen people wearing vestments in such a beautiful way or heard such beautiful singing. I really liked the whole visual impression of the service, with the choir, the incense and the vestments, and did not want to leave. I heard the choir singing in a completely different language from my own. It was not even in French! And I wondered, what language do they speak here? It was Slavonic. Then I just sat and looked at the icons. If anyone had told me then that in eight years time I would do the same, as a Deacon, I would not have believed them. All the time I was in the church, watching the way the procession was unfolding in front of me, with the order of priests and believers, I felt that I was in Heaven. Then I thought: "If there is a God" - because I was wondering until then if he really existed – "this is the way he should be worshipped".

Since then, in our parish, they say that "Nikanor entered the church to protect himself from the rain from heaven, and he found himself in Heaven!". I always say to anyone who comes to the Orthodox Church for the first time: "Come into to the church, walk to the middle of the church and you will see the gates of Paradise in front of you!"

Before I became an Orthodox, I was a believer, in the English sense of the word: God was always there! I knew I could pray when I wanted to. As I came from a military family, I had the mentality that "If God is good enough for the Royal Navy, that is good enough for me"! That was the extent of my theology!

Back in England I heard that there was an orthodox bishop in London named Anthony Bloom, but I did not pursue things. Then one day I was watching a movie about the French Revolution on TV. At that time the television schedule ended at midnight and the BBC used to invite someone to give the "epilogue" of the day. The "epilogue" that night was some prayers presented by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, of the Russian Orthodox Church. I was about to turn off the TV, but I stumbled on the carpet in front of it and I did not turn it off. Listening to the prayers I was surprised and sat down to watch the rest. Then the images from the church in Paris came into my mind!

I did not have his address, but I wrote him a letter saying, "I heard you on TV last week and I am interested in becoming Orthodox. Could I meet you at some point?". I wrote on the envelope "Bishop Anthony Bloom, Russian Church, London". I knew nothing else. Neither address nor a post code. I thought that there should not be many similar churches in London! He responded to me and I met him for an entire afternoon. He later suggested I should get in touch with a priest [*Father Barnabas, who was to found the monastery at Willand*]. I communicated with this priest by correspondence about issues regarding the Orthodox faith. In other words, we had something like courses on orthodoxy through correspondence! Something like catechism. We continued this communication for some time and one Easter I became an Orthodox, then a few years later I became a deacon ... and a few years after that, a priest! ".

‘A Priest Like No Other’



If I have found favour in your sight,
do not pass by your servant... without
staying a while with me.
Genesis 18:3

Loving greetings to
Father Nicanor for your
amazing celebrations today.
I am glad that with God's
grace & strength you still
manage to soldier on to
serve at 90 years!
Christa Antonia

“He carries a smile and love
to everyone”

Dionisius Agius

Greetings and best
wishes from us to Fr
Nicanor for his
Nameday and
birthday.

Luke and Veronica
[Dawson]

“Dear Fr Nicanor,

It's hard to believe that it's fully 53 years since having read in the local paper of the arrival in this area of Orthodox monks I hot-footed it over to Willand to check them out. The monks (Fr Barnabas and Postulant Frank, later to become Brother Petroc) were doing their slightly impractical best to weather-proof the then open-sided barn, already in use as their chapel. Providing much-needed muscle and expertise was young and vigorous Subdeacon Norman Wilkins, without whose practical skills and moral support — and those of Val, behind the scenes — monastic life at Willand would never have got off the ground. Neither, of course, would our parish.

*Happy memories, Happy feast, Happy birthday, and Many Years!
Hugh”*

As a latecomer to the parish, I do not have any memories or incidents from Fr Nicanor's younger days to recount, though since I have been around I have enjoyed many very pleasant exchanges with him. So could you kindly just include in your missive my warm and admiring good wishes? Thank you.

[Mother] Sarah

I would like to offer my best wishes to Father Nicanor on his 90th birthday. My favourite memory of him happened during a Sunday Matins and Liturgy service.

Towards the end of the morning he was taken unwell and lay on the bench at the back of St. Anne's. I chatted to him and he came out with a phrase that illustrated his great sense of humour, fun and acceptance. He said,

“Ah, when I was young and a prince among men this wouldn't have happened!”

It is a phrase my children will no doubt get used to.

Eddie (Anthony) [Blenkinsopp]

Dear Fr. Nicanor,
We wish happy birthday,
all the best and let God
bless you and help you
with all you're doing for
His glory!

Mariela, Martin, Adam,
Dalia, Mia.

Please, count me in with the greetings. Did he say at the last year's birthday to stop singing many years to him once he crosses the 90th? Thus, I shall sing heartily "God grant him not many years, just some years and only the good ones". So, there, Winnie The Pooh himself could not put it any better. Send him my love, will you?

Anna McLoughlin

"Dear Father Nicanor
On Your 90th Birthday and
Nameday we wish you all
the best, but most of all
great health and God's
blessing.

Sylvia, Paul, Gloria and
Olivia from Taunton"

Dear father Nicanor

You can't deny the special bond between us 😊

Always after Eucharistie you never forgot to keep a generous piece of bread for me and I did the same for you, for exchange, in my whole 11 years of attending Liturgy at the Saint Anne and Holy Prophet Elias parish. This was meant to say by us - I love you!

And I do!

Thank you for your love and kindness!

Thank you for your prayers and everything you have done for us!

Have a wonderful Birthday and be always under Saint Nicanor's protection and God's blessing!

With love,
Manuela

Please include me in the birthday greetings to Fr. Nicanor from us all....I've known him for at least forty years and couldn't have met a kinder or a more gentle man!

Ancel

I would be grateful if you include my name at the list! I always remember him and especially his kindness! I can't forget his full of love reaction after the terroristic attack at the school in Beslan in Russia. He was crying and he couldn't believe that he was alive and safe and the children were dead. That's an example of a true love. May have his blessing!
With love in Christ,
Ioannis Gougoulas

"I shall introduce you to a priest like no other priest you will ever meet", Bishop Anthony warned his visitor as he introduced him to Father Nicanor.

I certainly felt this during our one-and-only telephone conversation. As soon as I said who I was he laid into me with a torrent of invective I was quite unable to stop, aimed it seems at a poor mechanic in Tiverton also called Tony Roberts. And a certain conservative Anglican on a visit to St Anne's should have thought twice before expanding upon the eloquence and general superiority of the Book of Common Prayer, although, for his part, Father Nicanor might have given the impression that he was grateful for this tutorial, keen to learn something he had not perhaps heard before. He certainly stood stock still, following every nuanced ingratiation, eyes characteristically wide, before flooring the young man with a philosopher's left hook: "the Book of Common Prayer has as much authority in here as the Highway Code!"

Happy 90th Birthday, Father Nicanor, and Many Years!
From Tony and Sophia!

Which reminds me of another such occasion: An earnest visitor asked for an explanation of the precise liturgical significance of the bread distributed after the Liturgy. Father Nicanor's response? 'Just you get on and eat it.' A very Nicanorian take on John 1: 46: 'Come and see.'

Martin O

Yes, of course you can include my name!
Father Nicanor was the very first priest I met when I first came to the church, at a Vespers service! :-)
Michail [Chatzakis]

Dear Fr Nikanor

I remember with gratitude your many years as a deacon and later as a priest. You have been assiduous in your life of service, then latterly you were called out of honourable retirement to fill in the gap at St Anne's. You ably supported Fr John Marks through the years.

Although we knew him at different times, we are both profited from the influence of Fr Barnabas. I never knew him at Willand, but used to stay in his Newtown monastery after I had moved to Torquay. His depth of human understanding supported so many people on their Christian pilgrimage.

And now you have willingly stood aside to support Fr Peter as the newly-ordained priest for Exeter.

I wish you well for your anniversary and am grateful for your friendship.

Father Gregory Palamas

Was the Patriarch of Romania seen in Devon?

There are some clergy who have the wonderful gift of bringing out the best in people – a gift so valuable to a priest, and one that is often unnoticed by the priest who has been blessed from on High in this way.

I believe that our dearly loved Father Archpriest Nicanor is one of the servants of the Lord who has this gift, and I'm sure it will have been a source of blessing to many people over his decades of faithful service in the Lord's Vineyard. Such priests are fully human, welcoming, caring and warm. Usually, they also have a good sense of humour, as indeed is particularly necessary for such kind and approachable people.

I first met Father Nicanor over 50 years ago, when he served as a deacon at the chapel of St Elias Monastery, Willand, alongside Archimandrite Barnabas. That was indeed, a very lovely chapel which had been consecrated by two of the most distinguished hierarchs of the Russian Church – His Eminence Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh and His Eminence, Archbishop Anthony of Minsk, later Metropolitan of Leningrad. During his visit, Archbishop Anthony of Minsk had – as I understand - awarded Father Nicanor the dignity of being entitled to wear a kamilavka* and had given him a kamilavka as a gift. It was a very fine purple one at that, and Father Nicanor used to wear it with great dignity. I hope it will feature in his 90th birthday photos!

However, Father Nicanor himself would probably never have imagined just how dignified he looked wearing the aforementioned kamilavka, until he and Father Barnabas had gone on a journey somewhere and having arrived at their destination, were sitting on a bench enjoying the weather and the view. Father Barnabas sat in monastic garb which could possibly have been of some vintage, and was wearing a pectoral Cross given him by the Patriarch of Romania. It was a simple and beautiful metal Cross with a blue enamel design.

Indeed it was so beautiful that a lady who was walking that way, approached the venerable Archimandrite – himself every bit as warm and approachable as Father Nicanor his deacon who sat alongside him. She was obviously very struck by the beauty of the lovely Romanian Cross and made an observation to that effect to Father Barnabas. How could the dear Archimandrite respond, other than by explaining the provenance of the Cross he was wearing? *'It was a gift'*, he observed, *'from the Patriarch of Romania'*. The lady obviously realised that the Patriarch of Romania must be a person of very great dignity and distinction. Accordingly, she turned towards Father Deacon Nicanor, wearing his distinguished kamilavka, and taking him to be the Patriarch of Romania, and bowing to him, said how honoured she was to meet him.

It was indeed an honour for her to meet him, as we his friends from all periods of his life well understand – and not only are we honoured but also greatly blessed to know this faithful servant of the Lord. I join in thanking the Lord for allowing us Father Nicanor's friendship and for his years of unwavering dedicated ministry. May the Lord preserve Father Archpriest Nicanor and allow us to have him in our midst for years to come, and through God's mercy, for him and us to survive these challenging times so that we may be further blessed by being in Father Nicanor's joyful and loving company.

Father Archpriest Nicanor, [Многая лета!](#)

Tad Deiniol, Cymru

**kamilavka - a cylindrical clerical hat, often red or purple in colour – see photo page.*

(Fr Nicanor has on occasion reported that after this incident Fr Barnabas told him 'I think you need not wear that hat again, Deacon Nicanor.' Ed.)

I know that there are several people whose first encounter with Father Nicanor was very similar to my own. It was at Saturday Vespers in Saint Anne's – our first ever visit to an Orthodox church. There were not many people there, the singing was perhaps a little scratchy at times, and I felt immediately and utterly at home. I was particularly happy, as well as intrigued, to find that the service was led by an Englishman – and apparently a Devonian, at that. (It was only much later that I learnt that he was, in fact, from Pompey [= *Portsmouth*])

After the service, Deacon - as he was then - Nicanor introduced himself and Val ('my diakonissa') with typical warm expansiveness. He asked if we were Orthodox, and when we said 'No' he replied with the genial bluntness which is so characteristic of him, 'The correct answer to that question is "Not yet".' In our case, as with so many other nervous first comers, he was absolutely right.

Throughout the entire history of our parish, whether for 25 years as a deacon, or for 27 years now (and counting) as a priest, he has been to our community a true *diakonos*. 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.' (*Luke 19: 17*)

Martin O

A few thoughts on
Fr Nicanor from
Joanna:

That he is always there, whether in the background – I have a photo of James' baptism (over 30 years ago!) where he is standing, a beardless deacon, behind Fr John but fully part of the proceedings, the flash reflecting off his glasses – or in the foreground, regularly reading the Psalms at the start of Matins in his inimitable accent. In the car-park would be his latest somewhat elderly car, restored by his superlative welding skills.

On a few occasions more recently, after he had finally given up driving and I have taken him back to Tiverton, I have been regaled with tales of how he used to go all the way up to the cathedral in London by motorbike (!); how he was of the firm opinion that anyone driving the road through the quarries up to Combe Martin deserves a halo; and how he used to take a holiday by the River Usk in South Wales every summer in order to visit Fr Barnabas, who had retired to a monastery/ hermitage somewhere in the vicinity.

Of course you are going to put me. Here are my words for him:

"Happy anniversary, dear brother in Christ! I will never forget your support for me in St. Anne's chapel when I needed to stay outside the Holy Altar. God give you salvation! Kissing your right hand, Fr. Trayan"

Please count Michelle and I in! We don't feel 5 years counts long enough for giving anecdotes but do want to send our congratulations/loving greetings!

ABG [*Deacon Brandon*]

We want to wish him all the best for his birthday and his name's day and just to tell him a big thank you for all these years of service. He is very dear in our hearts and we appreciate all his efforts for our parish. May God always bless him with His grace. Love ,
Christina [*Spanou*] and family.

Fr Nicanor, you have been such a wonderful, constant and reassuring part of church life. You bring such joy to the Parish. We wish you many years more and hope your wicked sense of humour never fades.

Happy Birthday & Many Years, Alice, Philip and family.

I don't know if it's appropriate, but one story I remember is his wife Val saying to him once "You'll be a bishop over my dead body!"

Ian Bromelow

'Father Nicanor – one of the sterling sort.'

Daphne

I have been trying to remember and recount an anecdote or story about Fr Nicanor. How can I choose from all the times he made me smile or laugh or point out a clear and simple truth? He has been a constant in my parish life (literally all of my life) and to pick a moment to define him eludes me as none could encompass the nature of this wonderful man of integrity and faith. Thank you dear Nicanor x

Best Regards
Philip Scorer

Thank you so much for your kind offer to include me in the tribute to a wonderful, genuine spiritual guide who has brought me and so many other people comfort and inspiration over so many years.

Felicia [France]

"In the precious time Zoe and I spent in Exeter (2005-2008) I was received by Fr Nicanor and baptised at St Anne's on Great Saturday 2006; we were married by Fr John that summer. When I think of Fr Nicanor I immediately think of his gentleness, humility and, equally, the strength and sincerity of his faith. I remember him saying, of the church, 'this could be your *home*' and he did so much to make that the case. Like so many people I was lucky enough to meet in the parish he will always be an example to me of that spiritual generosity and active compassion that characterises true Christianity."

Luke [Kennard]

Fr Nicanor is the simplest and humblest of all priests I have ever met. Serving under him at the altar was a most precious spiritual experience. I shall always retain the fondest memories of him. May we all have his blessing and prayers now that we are blessed to have him with us and I hope that he will continue to remember us even when he serves the liturgy in Heavenly Jerusalem.

Andreas Antonopoulos

Apart from church a lot of my memories of Nicanor have to do with cars. One time my car developed a puncture on the way home to Tiverton from Vespers in Exeter. I pulled into a layby wondering what to do next and who should come along but Dcn Nicanor who sorted out my problems. My vehicular Guardian Angel.

On another occasion I was able to help him. His motorbike had broken down near South Molton on the way to the Vigil in Combe Martin. Obviously we couldn't leave him there so with a bit of everybody squeezing up: Dcn Nicanor, Joanna, her daughter Irene, Emma, me and our Labrador, Ferdy, we set off up the Bray valley arriving in Combe Martin in time for the Vigil. Not quite sure what happened for the return journey, but he obviously got home because he's here with us now.

I spent a highly enjoyable and entertaining morning outside my house in Tiverton with Fr Nicanor trying to sort out what was basically a terminally dead car. At that time I lived down an unmade road near the leat and people used it to walk to the fields. Whilst we were trying to get the engine and whatever out Dcn Nicanor regaled me with stories of Portsmouth (a town I knew a little having lived in Hampshire as a child), and any amount of people walked by, everyone of whom Dcn Nicanor knew – I think I met more Tivertonians that morning than I met in all the time I lived there.

And a memory excluding a car: A few months after Emma and I started coming to services in the parish we went to the Patronal Service of Sts Symeon and Anna in Combe Martin. The meal after the Liturgy was held in the St John's Ambulance hall in the village and whilst we were clearing up afterwards, Dcn Nicanor appeared from the broom cupboard dancing around the floor – with a skeleton!

Celia

Dear Nicanor
Felicitations on reaching 90! Here's to the next decade!

Lots of love
Emma xx

My favourite Nicanor quote: "I don't like servin' in Combe Martin cos I knocks things over."

Tony Hearn

Thank you dear Fr Nicanor for being a lovely parish priest, for entertaining us and caring for us all. Many Years!

Love Nom, Rob and Lily

My first encounter with Fr Nicanor is lost in the mists of time – late 1970s? Early '80s? Certainly while he was still deacon, and I had the feeling that he was already a parish institution, known to the parish children simply as 'Deacon'. Later in the 1980s when I was at St Basil's House in London, we were pleased to be able to have him to stay a few times when he came to up for Diocesan Assembly or clergy meetings. Having his company was like echoes of home amidst the big city, and I hope he felt the same way. Certainly he would introduce me for ever after as his 'London landlady' - not entirely sure that I relished the picture conjured up, but there was no getting away from it.

While we were living overseas and would make periodic summer trips to Devon, my husband also met Fr Nicanor on many of our visits. George always enjoyed chatting to him, but was especially impressed by tales – second-hand, I think – of Fr Nicanor's resourcefulness in recycling cars or parts thereof that more timid souls might have consigned to, or left at, the breaker's yard. Probably the tales grew in his imagination. I don't know whether Fr Nicanor's ears were burning; but many was the time when our camping trips took us along deserted back roads of rural North America, and we would see some rusting remains of a vehicle in a farm yard. Without fail, I knew then that George was going to exclaim, 'There's a project for Fr Nicanor!'

Many years

Elizabeth Theokritoff

Yes, please give my best wishes. Father Nicanor always greeted me by name, and asked me how I was, and so did his wife, too. They are very special people. Congratulations, Father. Bojidar

Father Nikanor, you once didn't have an umbrella to protect yourself from the rain but finally God's grace covered you for an eternity! As Saint John Chrysostom said "**Glory to God, for everything**"!

Thank you very much for your ministry and your love
May God bless you!

Happy Birthday from Vassilis & Konstantina, from Thessaloniki Greece!

See also Vassilis' and Konstantina's article on Fr Nicanor – P 4 above

To my dearest brother in Christ, my mentor in the diaconate and priesthood, my loyal friend,

After our arrival as a family in Exeter in 1968, you were the very first to make it possible for us to join you and Fr Barnabas in worship in the St Elias monastery in Willand Old Village. Before we had a car of our own, you would come down to Exeter every Sunday and take our family of four (soon to be five) to the Liturgy, and bring us back home.

For over 50 years you have presented an exemplary standard of constancy, of loyalty to the community you serve. As our parish expanded, your ordination to the priesthood made it possible for us to have regular services in both our churches.

As a fellow deacon you showed me an example of humility, and then as a priest whom I was privileged to serve as a deacon, I saw a man of perfect obedience, a man deeply loved by all those whom you met, whom you blessed with your loving smile.

May this day, the worldly ninetieth anniversary of your birth, the anniversary of your rebirth in the Orthodox Church with the name of St Nikanor whose feast we celebrate with you, be a day of joy to you and Val, a day of rejoicing for all your friends.

A long life, peace, salvation and furtherance in all good things, grant O Lord, to your servants, the priest Nikanor and Valery, and grant them many, many years!

Priest Peter and Irina

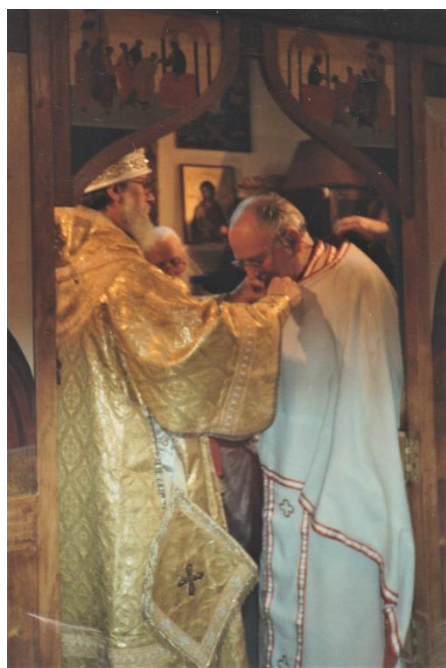
HAPPY 90th BIRTHDAY, FATHER NICANOR
with Loving Greetings and Congratulations from

Ancel	Andreas	Anna C
Anna McL	Anya	Bojidar
Dcn Brandon & Michelle	Celia	Christa
Christina (Spanou) & Family		Daphne
Tad [<i>Father</i>] Deiniol	Dionisius (Agius)	Dragan, Alison and Alexander
Eddie (Blenkinsopp)	Edward S	Elizabeth (Theokritoff)
Emma G-L	Felicia (France)	Fr Gregory Palamas & Elizabeth
Helen O	Hugh	Ian (Bromelow)
Isaac, Agnes & Owain O	Ioannis (Gougoulas)	Fr John and Dawn
John (Thomas)	Josephine (Cahill)	Lamprini
Luke, Zoe, Edward & Moses		Manuela
Luke & Veronica (Dawson)	Martin O	Mariela, Martin, Adam, Dalia & Mia
Michail (Chatzakis)	Nadya	Nom Robert and Lily
Pam (Arnold)	Fr Patrick (Hodson)	Fr Peter & Irina
Philip, Alice, Bethany, Otto & Eliza		Radmila, Anna & Daniel
Ralph	Mother Sarah	Scilla
Seraphim	Sylvia, Paul, Gloria & Olivia (Bogacz-Pietrzak)	
Shusha	Tony & Kate (Hearn)	Tony & Sophia
Thomas, Kirsty, Mary & Maddy		Fr Trayan
William O	Yelena Gedge & Family	

And to finish off our tribute to our beloved Fr Nicanor an array of photographs contributed by various members of the parish.



Note the aforementioned kamilavka



Some memories from Fr Nicanor's ordination to the priesthood by Bishop Basil.



