



# Prophet Elias News

News in the time of self – isolation for the Orthodox Church  
of the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon  
27th September 2020

## 1<sup>st</sup> October – Feast of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God (Pokrov)



The Feast of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God celebrates a vision seen by Saint Andrew the Fool in Christ and his disciple Saint Epiphanius in the church at Blachernae in Constantinople, at a time in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century when the city was threatened by barbarian invasion. In the vision Andrew saw the Mother of God praying in the centre of the church, which she covered with her veil, so protecting the people. With her were John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, and all the prophets and apostles and saints. The revelation was that the Mother of God with the whole company of saints was praying for the Church on earth. The vision took place on the feast of Saint Romanos the Melodist, who is seen in the icon in his diaconal vestments in front of the iconostasis. I chose this icon to illustrate the Feast because, although it is a little faded, it beautifully represents the fullness of the Church both on earth and in heaven as Saint Andrew saw it.

### Fr Thomas Hopko: The Protecting Veil of the Holy Theotokos

This Feast is a great festival of the fact that the heavenly Church, the assembly of all the saints, led by Christ's mother, Mary, are constantly present, interceding for us, praying with us, connected to us, and that when we go to church and when we celebrate the liturgical offices of the Church and constitute the Church on earth, gathered by God himself and Christ himself, by the power of the Holy Spirit, then *we enter into* this glorification of the angels. Of course, the angels are on the icon, too, with all of the holy people. We are in communion with them, they are in communion with us, and together we constitute the *Ekklesia*, the great Assembly, the Church of the New Covenant.

It is a principle of Orthodox spiritual tradition. It is a kind of a norm. I would almost say it's kind of a law, a rule, that what we experience in church, what we *do* when we go to church, is supposed to be actualized every moment of our life, with every breath that we take. It's in the Church that the grace and the vision and the truth of God, the very presence of God is given to us. You might use the adverb "objectively." You go there and God is there, because the Liturgy is where *God* acts, where *God* is showing himself as the head of the Church in his officially gathered people. Of course, for Orthodox, that means a gathering headed by a bishop or by a presbyter assigned by the bishop, where it is not simply a gathering of people or people coming to pray or a prayer service, but it's actually the constitution of the Church of Christ on earth in space and time *where* the Church of God, worshipping God, glorifying God, communing with God through Christ, risen and glorified, actually experiences this communion of the age to come, together with Christ's mother, Mary, and all of the saints.

So the rule would be, so to speak, that we should actualize the gifts given to us in church and *as* Church in every day, every moment of our life: every day of our life, every second of every minute of every hour of every day of our life. That means, first of all, that we assemble as Church; we gather as Church. That means that we have to always be aware, as the early Christian saying goes, that “one Christian is no Christian.” Christianity is not a matter of individuals accepting Jesus as their personal Saviour. It’s not an individual matter at all; it’s a matter of community. It’s a covenanted community. It’s the New Covenant, the New Covenant in Christ’s blood. It’s a gathering of people, the faithful people who *keep* the faith truly and properly, the faith once and for all delivered to the saints, and who accept the Gospel as the Gospel is actually given, which is God’s Gospel, not the gospel according to men, as St. Paul said in Galatians.

So the first thing that we remember is that we are members, one of another. We are members of Christ, constituting his body, which is the Church. We’re not alone. And we should never feel lonely. A Christian should never be lonely. If we feel lonely, it means that we forget that we’re members of the people of God, that we’re fellow citizens with the saints, as it says in the Ephesian letter in the New Testament, that we have access to God through the Son of God, Jesus, raised and glorified by the power of the Holy Spirit that is in all of the saints of all times and all places. And we’re a member—each one of us is a member of that community. We are all members of Christ’s body, so we gather as Church.

Extract from a Podcast of October 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 in the Series *Speaking the Truth with Love*  
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### **We Are Members One of Another**

In Fr Thomas Hopko’s talk on the significance of this Feast (*see above*) he emphasises again and again that as a community we are the Church, that we are members one of another. He also emphasises that as the Church we gather together in communion to celebrate the Liturgy, because that is where ‘the very presence of God is given to us’. This is difficult for us in our present situation. We have lost our beloved priest, Father Peter, while social distancing regulations mean that it is in any case impossible for now for us to all meet together in Saint Anne’s. We are exploring possible ways of arranging for a visiting priest to celebrate the Liturgy in another venue, but even if we can, numbers attending will have to be limited, so that it cannot be a true meeting of the parish. In these circumstances there is a very real danger that ‘the sheep of the flock will be scattered’ (*Matthew 26: 31*) if we do not take active steps to hold together, and to this end I would like to offer a suggestion. If each one of us were to make a point of contacting three or four other parish members each week, whether by social app, email, phone or letter – perhaps including somebody we don’t know very well – it might go some way to reassure us all that even while we cannot meet together physically, still, in Fr Thomas’ words ‘we are members, one of another. We are members of Christ, constituting his body, which is the Church’.

And of course we must continue to hold one another in our hearts and in our prayers.

Martin Olsson

### **This Week We Celebrate**

On Thursday October 1<sup>st</sup>: **The Protecting Veil of Our Most Holy Lady the Mother of God**

**Saint Romanos the Melodist (6<sup>th</sup> C)**

On Friday October 2<sup>nd</sup>: **Saints Cyprian, Justinia and Theokistos of Nicomedia (249)**

**We wish Father Daniel and all the faithful of Saint Cyprian's Parish in Uganda  
a Happy Feast and Many Years!**

### **Pokrov in Moscow**

When I was studying in Moscow in the autumn of 1991 I lived with a Russian hostess who was slightly intrigued that I was Orthodox. Within easy distance of her flat was the church outside the walls of the Petrovskii monastery where o. Ioan / Russian John served (long standing members of the parish may remember his visits to St Anne's). My hostess told me that on the feast of Pokrov the first snow would fall as a protecting veil. That September the weather was beautiful with warm sunny days and I found it hard to believe snow could fall on 1st October, but I hadn't accounted for the fact that the Church was still old calendar. Sure enough 14th October arrived and the weather changed - mostly rain but there were a few drops of sleet.

Celia Olsson

### **Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh: On Prayer for the Departed**

**Extract from a Sermon given on September 2nd, 1989**

Whenever someone dear to us departs this earthly life and enters into eternity, we pray for God's mercy, indeed for God's love to enfold the person and bring him into the eternity of joy which is in God. Every Saturday, as on certain other occasions, we pray regularly for the departed, but on Saturdays in a special context - we pray also to the Mother of God and sing her glory. And it is not by chance or in vain that the two prayers are intertwined.

When we pray for the departed, we testify thereby that they have not lived in vain on earth, that they have, while they were on earth, kindled in our hearts a flame, a flame of gratitude, of reverence, of love; this flame may be small or great; it may be nothing more than the flickering light of a candle, but it can also be like the burning bush, shining with all the glory of the love of God, of His divine presence. We testify, when we pray for the departed, that we have received from them a message, a message of truth, of faith, of hope, of joy; that they have been for us a way to God, that they have opened to us a door which leads into eternal life, because life eternal consists in knowing the living God, and we pray to Him indeed, because He is not the God of the dead but the God of those who live. And if our love can be undying, how much more can we say that the love of God in Christ is stronger than anything, than death indeed, because in Christ death has been defeated, death has been harrowed, life has gushed forth like a torrent from the tomb of the Resurrection.

And this is why we turn to the Mother of God, both in prayer and in veneration, rejoicing that She is one of us, a Woman among women, and yet - a Woman like none for the greatness, the perfection of her gift of self to God, of her transparency to God, for her suppleness in the creative hands of God. Indeed, it is because She could believe unreservedly, heroically, that the Incarnation was made possible! She is truly the Mother of Life, but not as the first Eve, the mother of all those who live on earth and are doomed one day to depart this life. No, She is the Mother of Life because She has brought into the world Life Eternal, God Himself become man, the Son of God Who in Her, but also through Her, has become the Son of man.

### **Readers' Corner**

Here are some timely suggestions from Elizabeth Theokritoff:

'This is the link to a beautiful akathist for the departed, which I used daily for a couple of years after George's death: <https://akathistcollections.blogspot.com/2011/11/akathist-to-jesus-christ-for-loved-one.html>

I am also attaching a passage from a remarkable book that I helped translate: complete e-book available from: <https://www.world-of-digitals.com/metropolitan-of-mesogaia-and-lavreotiki-nikolaos-when-god-is-not-there-ebook-epub>

The chapter is quite long and perhaps not easy to excerpt, but the book is well worth recommending anyway to anyone faced with sickness, death, bereavement...'

[We hope to offer some excerpts in our next issue. *Ed.* ]

**Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.**

## Tributes to Father Peter

*Tributes and memories have been pouring in to Peter's family from all over the world, and continue to do so. A single 'tribute edition' of this newsletter would be quite impracticable, but we hope to print a selection with each of the next few issues. Here are two tributes, one from Irina's niece Boulia, one from Fr Deiniol in North Wales, who knew the Scorers, the Marks and Fr Nicanor at Willand when the foundations of our parish were being laid there by Fr Barnabas.*

### From Boulia

Late last night, my beloved "Cousin # 1" Thomas messaged me to share that his papa, my uncle Peter Scorer, had finally passed away. This was sad news that I'd been waiting for. Only one week earlier, after almost 2 weeks in the hospital, he had been given a diagnosis and a prognosis of days, perhaps a few weeks. It was only a week that he was granted to spend his final days in the wonderful, cozy family headquarters in Exeter, surrounded by his closest kin, enveloped in their love. My aunt and cousins, with their children, and Peter's cousins, and a few near friends who are adopted family, read to him, sang to him, held him close, and accompanied him for every second of his last earthly hours. It seems to me a truly exemplary "Christian ending to life" such as we Orthodox pray for at every divine liturgy.

If you ever met my uncle, you understand without explanation why his departure from our midst is sad. He was so wise and gentle and fun and compassionate and loving and musical and insightful and diligent and smart and humble and warm and friendly and, gosh, just wonderful. And how simply delicious was everything he ever cooked!!! And, oh yes, he was a devoted servant of God, faithfully serving as a deacon for more than forty years until his ordination to the priesthood just seven months ago. But he was much, much more than that. Like lots of people, he and his wife – my mother's sister Irina – built a loving family. And of course, there is a special closeness with Peter's cousins, Sergey, Pavlik and Nika, and an extraordinary bond with the Marks family, my dear Naomi and her parents.

You see, together with Father John Marks and his wife Dawn, since the early 1970s, under the wise and graceful omophorion of Bishop Anthony of Sourouzh in London, Peter, in true partnership with Irina and the Marks, built a lasting and loving community of faith in Devon. This Orthodox community is based not on limiting ethnic boundaries (although naturally influenced by our family's Russian heritage), but on limitless Christian love. That warm, welcoming community flourishes today as the Parish of St. Elias at St. Anne's church in Exeter (where my daughter was baptized), and I mourn for them, too, as they shall be bereft at the loss of Peter's loving and selfless leadership.

And there's more! Besides the family, besides the always welcoming home, besides the parish, there is the CAMP. Hundreds of children over the years (myself included) had the marvelous experience of a rustic countryside as the setting for a camp at which worship was essential but not fanatical. It was SO WONDERFUL, and Peter and Irina (with the likes of fr. Michael Fortunatto and fr. Alec Fostiropoulos) made it happen, year in and year out.

Then of course, there is the scholarly legacy of his dedication to his spiritual fathers and mentors, Bishop Anthony and fr. Alexander Schmemmann, as well as to his grandfather, the Russian philosopher Semyon Frank. In later years, he travelled to Russia so many times to share his knowledge and insights, and I know that the intellectual community knows that Professor Father Peter was a unique treasure.

If ever there were someone whom I felt sure would be welcomed to a place among the saints, it is our darling, extraordinary, sweet, loving, irrepressible, irreplaceable Peter. His memory is a blessing; may it be eternal.

## From Tad (Father) Deiniol in Blaenau Ffestiniog

Please accept my appreciation of your thoughtfulness in letting me know about the falling-asleep of my dear friend and colleague, Father Peter Scorer. This is a great loss.

I had heard of his illness and he had been regularly in my prayers. Upon reading the news, I went to our small church and prayed for the repose of his soul.

He was a wonderful person – he had a brilliant intellect, a true and deep love of the life of the church which could only have been based on a deep love of our Lord, and a spirit of devotion and service in every sphere in which he held responsibility – family, Church, University.

The diverse contribution he was able to make to church life on so many levels was unique and invaluable. I am so glad that Father John and Dawn were able to be with Fr. Peter on Sunday and that Fr. Nicanor was there on Monday. Please remember me to these my dear colleagues and their families and convey my sympathy to them too and to your community.

How deeply moving to read of Fr. Peter's feeling of *'a great sense of peace and of release, and a feeling of being lifted up with his whole community enfolded in the love of Christ'*. How poignant and profound, and what a blessed conclusion to a life of unstinting and generous service to God, to the Kingdom of God and to society.

I first met Fr. Peter in Willand, and thereafter was always glad to have the opportunity to have his company. From Ennismore Gardens, I knew his lovely mother and grandmother and loved the opportunity to converse with them.

May the servant of God, the priest Peter rest in peace and may his memory be eternal and may our All-merciful Saviour both welcome him to His embrace and comfort the family and the Church family in this great loss. I thank the Lord for the life and service of His good and faithful servant.

## Father Peter's Funeral



*Father Peter was laid to rest at Exeter Higher Cemetery on Friday 18th September 2020. Covid-19 regulations made it impossible for the funeral service to be held at Saint Anne's, so it was decided in the light of a forecast of good weather that the entire ceremony should take place at the cemetery close to the grave. Even so, attendance had to be limited to 30 people only, and all those who were there were aware that they were representing the many, many friends and colleagues who could not be present.*

The weather was perfect. We met the hearse by the gates, and processed singing Sviati Bozhe to an open space surrounded by trees, chosen for the service near to the grave. One of the children remarked 'Oh - it's

just like camp', and certainly the whole service had that atmosphere of informal reverence so characteristic of that hugely important part of Peter's life. Father Patrick officiated, assisted by Father Nicanor and Deacon Brandon; the family choir sang beautifully. Before the coffin was closed, Father Nicanor spoke for all of us: 'I want to say something, but I don't really know what I can say' and then, after a long pause 'All I can say is – I have lost a beautiful friend.' At the interment, we bypassed the undertaker's little box and threw clods of real Exeter red soil onto the simple wicker coffin. And before we left, the choir sang the beautiful hymn of the Prodigal Son: 'Make haste to open unto me Thy fatherly embrace.'



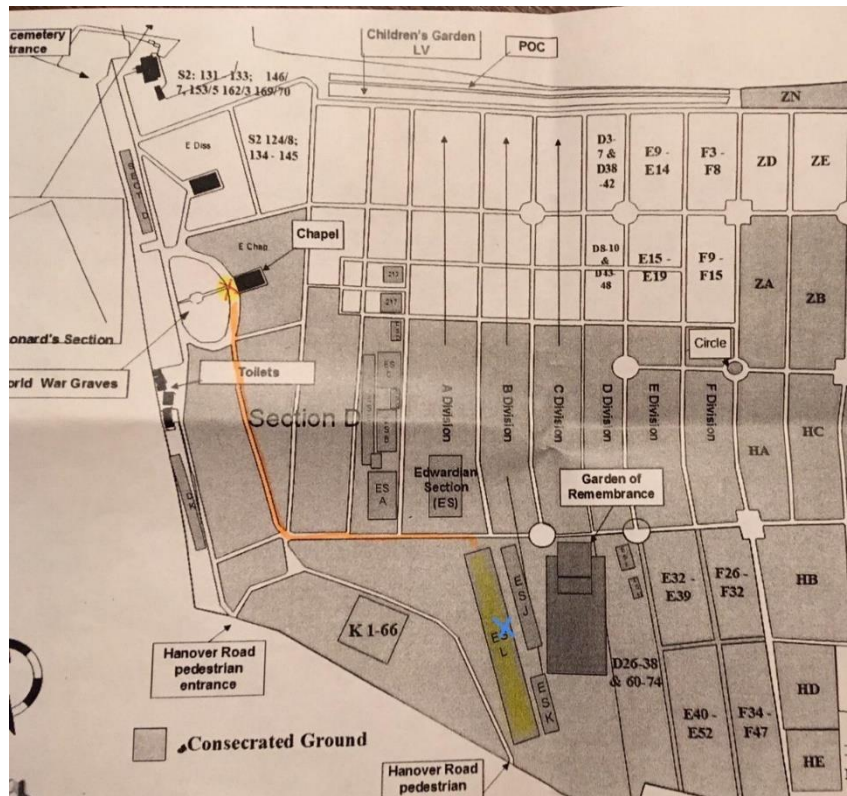
**O Thou who rulest over souls and bodies, in whose hand is our breath, Thou consolation of the afflicted: in the land of the just give rest unto Thy servant whom Thou hast taken from us.**

## Exeter Higher Cemetery Location

For the many people who will want to visit Fr Peter's grave, here is a map of the cemetery with the grave site marked (the blue cross). Aidan's grave is nearby, identified by a wooden Russian-style cross.

The main entrance to the cemetery (top left on the map) is from Saint Mark's Avenue, which joins Pinhoe Road next to St Mark's Church. For those who use SatNav the postcode is EX1 2PX.

You can park on the road just inside the main entrance.



## Donations to Saint Cyprian's Parish in Uganda

Many of you have already had the opportunity to make a contribution in Father Peter's memory to support the work of Father Daniel in Saint Cyprian's parish. For those who would still like to contribute, see the next page for details.



Deacon Peter with Fr Daniel – October 2012



Fr Daniel distributing sweets – a VERY rare treat



In a classroom built with our help



A classroom still waiting for an upgrade

**UGANDA DONATIONS**  
**TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF ST CYPRIAN'S PARISH IN UGANDA**

We can accept donations by bank transfer or cheque.

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- ***Please include the following information.***

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Bank:                   **Lloyds Bank, Barnstaple, Devon**  
Sort Code:              **30-90-49**  
Account Number:       **00169223**

**When making bank transfers please include the reference 'Uganda', and your name if possible.**

***Option B – Cheque***

- ***Please write "Uganda" on the back of the cheque and post to:***

The Treasurer  
Orthodox Parish of the Holy Prophet Elias  
55 Regents Park  
Exeter  
EX1 2NZ

If you have any difficulties please do not hesitate to contact our treasurer,

Alice Scorer

[alicescorer@gmail.com](mailto:alicescorer@gmail.com)

01392 277699 or 07858 063250