



Prophet Elias News

News in the time of self –isolation for the Orthodox Church of
the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon
1st November 2020



Metropolitan Anthony: The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16: 19-31)

As with every one of Christ's parables of the judgement, today's parable has got a very simple aspect and at the same time should be reflected on a deeper level.

The simple aspect is this: you have had on earth all that was good, Lazarus has had nothing; he therefore receives in eternity all the goods which he has lacked on earth and you are deprived of them. But this is not the real and deeper meaning of it. Who is this rich man? It is a man who not only possessed all that the earth could give him; it is a man who craved for nothing else. All he wanted, all he needed was material wealth, a good standing among men, reverence, admiration, the slavish obedience of those who were under him.

Lazarus possessed nothing; but from the parable we see that he did not complain, he received what the rich man needed not; he ate the crumbs from his table. But — he had a living soul; perhaps did he crave for more: who doesn't want to have a roof, who doesn't want to have the security of food? But he received what was given with gratitude.

And when they died, what did they take with them? The rich man had nothing to take because he had never had any concern for anything that the earth couldn't give. Lazarus had always longed for more than the earth could give: for justice, for peace, for love, for compassion, for human brotherhood — for all those things which make the human being human. The rich man was in the condition which is described in one of the prophecies: Israel has grown fat with wealth and has forgotten God... The poor man could do no such thing; he was too poor to be rooted into the earth — he was free.

Now, this applies to all of us; because we all of us possess within ourselves both the rich man and Lazarus. On the one hand, how much we have, how rich we are, how secure, how opulent. On the other hand, if we are here [in church], it means that there is another dimension within our soul that longs for something else. But the question has to be asked: if we had to choose — what we would choose? What do we really treasure? Is it security, which the earth so far has given us — or is it the vastness, the depth of understanding, communion with God, love of our neighbour, compassion — so many other things which the Gospel has taught us?

And this is where the parable refers not only to two men of the past, it refers to us personally: who am I, — or if you prefer, more fairly — who predominates in me? Am I more like the rich man, so rooted into the earth that the things of God, the things of the spirit, the things of eternity, or simply, what is truly human, comes second — or am I one of those for whom what it is to be human matters more than anything?

And then, there is another thing in the parable. The rich man, seeing himself devoid of all, of every thing, turns to Abraham and says, 'Send Lazarus to my brothers who are still on earth to give them a warning, that they may not come to this place of torment..' And Christ says, 'Even if one came back from the dead, if they have not listened to what has been revealed in the past, they will not believe, they will perish in their sin...'

How tragically that echoes with the situation of people who stood as a milling crowd around the Cross on which Christ was dying. In that crowd there were those who, together with the High Priest and the Pharisees who had condemned Christ, were saying: 'Descend now from the Cross — and we shall believe...' How many thought: 'If He only did that, we could believe without taking any risk, believe with security, safely; believe and follow One Who had already won His victory; but can we, can we possibly believe and follow One Who now, defeated, reviled, rejected, hangs on the Cross between two criminals? We can't...'

Where do we stand? Are we prepared to believe Christ's word? Are we prepared, captured by the beauty, the unutterable beauty of Christ's personality, to follow Him at all risk? And the risk, we know, is great: we will be reviled, we will be laughed at, we will be strangers, people will think that we are tramps on earth, not that we are pilgrims of Heaven. But are we prepared to do this?

We must give thought to these two aspects of the parable; because otherwise it is irrelevant, it has nothing to do with us — and yet, so much it has!

Let us think of it, deeply, standing judgement before it. God does not judge us in order to condemn. God presents us with reality and asks of us only one thing: Respond to reality! Do not accept a world which is a mirage! Do not accept yourself while you remain a mirage: be real, and then you will be children of the Kingdom.

And what can be greater: to be brothers and sisters of Christ, sons and daughters of the Living God; and messengers — messengers of God on earth. Can we hope for anything greater? And yet — this is what is offered to each and all of us! What a wonder, what a joy! How can we turn away from this?

Sermon preached on 5th November 1989. Copyright: The Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh Foundation

This Week We Celebrate

On Sunday November 1st:

The **Holy Unmercenary Wonderworkers Cosmas and Damian**
and **Saint Theodota** their mother (3rd C)

On Tuesday November 3rd: **Saint Winifred of Holywell (Trefynnon)** (7th C)

We wish **Win Palmer** a **Happy Feast and Many Years!**

On Friday November 6th: **Saint Paul the Confessor of Constantinople** (c350)

A relic of Saint Paul is sown into the Antimension given to the parish by Metropolitan Anthony.

Saints Cosmas and Damian of Mesopotamia

A few weeks ago Elizabeth suggested the website orthodoxpebbles.com as an educational resource for Orthodox children. I took this entry verbatim from Orthodox Pebbles to give an idea of their tone, which from what I have seen is never condescending. Ed.

Saints Cosmas and Damian were brothers and lived in Asia Minor in the beginning of the 3rd century AD. They were raised in the Orthodox faith by their mother Theodota, who is also a saint of the Church, commemorated on the same day.

Cosmas and Damian lived a life of prayer and purity, studied medicine and became very skilled physicians. Through their faith and prayer they received the gift of healing both the body and soul. They healed the most grave illnesses, and even healed animals. They had made a vow never to receive money or gifts from their patients and that is the reason they are called ‘unmercenary’.

Saints Cosmas and Damian the Holy Unmercenarys of Asia Minor* are one of three pairs of Unmercenarys with the same names: there are also the Saints Cosmas and Damian of Arabia (October 17) and the Saints Cosmas and Damian of Rome (July 1).

Saints Cosmas and Damian are the Patron Saints of physicians, and of married couples.

*Sometimes referred to as ‘of Mesopotamia’, where they died.



Dives and Lazarus

Folk renderings of biblical stories often introduce small details to make the story more immediate. I love the way that in the ballad version of *Dives and Lazarus*, the poor man's very helplessness transforms punitive violence into compassion:

Then Dives sent out his merry men, To whip poor Lazarus away;
They had no power to strike a stroke, But flung their whips away.
Then Dives sent out his hungry dogs, To bite him as he lay;
They had no power to bite at all, But licked his sores away.

PAC Meeting

The Parish Advisory Council met on 24th October to review our situation.

Alice provided a summary of our financial position, and it was agreed that she should draft a letter to parishioners pointing out the need to increase our income (See below Page 5)

It was agreed that Saturday Vespers at Saint Anne's should resume from 7th November, subject to strict compliance with Covid-19 regulations for public gatherings (See below)

We are discussing with the Central Exeter Church of England parish the possibility of using St Stephen's Church in the High Street (the one with the archway) for celebration of the Liturgy. Some dates have been suggested, and we have sent an urgent appeal to the clergy of our Deanery for a visiting priest to celebrate on one or more of those dates.

The Parish Annual General Meeting would normally be held in November. It was decided following our Dean Father Patrick's suggestion that in the present circumstances it would be better to defer until the Spring. If any parishioner has an issue they feel requires urgent action, please contact Hugh Allen our secretary, who will bring the matter to the attention of the PAC.

Saturday Vespers at Saint Anne's

The PAC have decided that Vespers will be celebrated at St Anne's from next Saturday, 7th November, always provided that there is no tightening of the current Covid-19 restrictions. Because this will be a public event we will need to observe strictly the Covid-19 regulations for public worship, including

- thorough hand sanitizing before entering the building
- social distancing of at least one metre plus (except for 'bubbles')
- the wearing facemasks or visors
- maintaining through air flow – this means that the church door will need to remain open: **WRAP UP WARMLY!**
- No touching of icons – or of one another. Candles will be available: some people like to kiss a candle to honour the icon

We estimate that St Anne's can accommodate 12-15 people observing social distancing. This is well above the number who have regularly attended in 'normal' times, but it may very occasionally happen that one or two people will need to stand outside.

Keeping in Touch

A few weeks ago I suggested that we might all make a special point of keeping in touch with one another while we aren't able to meet and socialize on Sundays. Equally, if you personally feel isolated and would like someone to ring, write, or message you, please don't hesitate to say so. If you're not sure who to ask, you can contact me on 01837 82796, email martinolsson827@btinternet.com, or Hugh on 01884 258031, email hpeliasdevon@gmail.com..

'We, though many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.' *Romans 12: 5*

Olga Sedakova: Memories of Petya

Благодарю Тебя за снег,
за солнце на Твоем снегу,
за то, что весь мне данный век
благодарить Тебя могу.

I thank You for the snow
For the sunlight on Your snow
For being able to thank You
For my entire long life.

Передо мной не куст, а храм,
храм Твоего КУСТА В СНЕГУ,
и в нем, припав к Твоим ногам,
я быть счастливей не могу.

I see not the bush but the temple,
The temple of Your BUSH IN THE SNOW
And, falling at Your feet in it,
I couldn't be happier.

Leonid Aronzon, 1969

Petya (Father Peter Scorer) especially loved this poem by Leonid Aronzon. He "copied the words" as soon as I read them to him the first time. It describes his life. This is how he saw people, things, plants, animals. Not a cat, but a temple of Your cat. For Aronzon himself, it appears to be a sudden epiphany, "seized by sudden tenderness." For Petya, it was his whole life. Whoever has seen this gratitude and this happiness in his eyes has seen much. Once I caught such a glance at the graduation party at the University of Exeter, where he was at that time the head of the Slavic Department: he was looking after his departing students. They no longer saw how he was looking at them.

Sometimes there was also a very attentive participation in this look - participation, not compassion. So he stood and looked at my dying cat Charles in Azarovka. The cat was dying for a long time, and Petya arrived probably on the penultimate day of his life.

"I have noticed," he said, standing over the cat, "that the dying creature, be it a human or an animal, is surrounded by expectation. Such a great (showed with his hands) expectation. I've seen a lot of this."

"Waiting for what?" I asked.

"Probably the final consent."

We were friends with him and with Irina for many years. We met for the first time in Moscow, at the still semi-secret house meetings with Vladyka Anthony. Petya at that time accompanied him as a deacon. When he looked at me and smiled, I began to look around for whomever it was, so familiar and dear to him. It couldn't be me. And asked whether he mistook me for someone else. No, he said, you are Olya, I know. Since then we have visited each other so many times. Me in Exeter and London, they in Moscow and Azarovka. I can see him now in my garden, at this or that tree, completely delighting in each one. How good and simple everything was with him. And it is clear that there are no things in which we will seriously diverge.

Thank God that he died surrounded by family and friends, who sang for him when he was surrounded by this great expectation.

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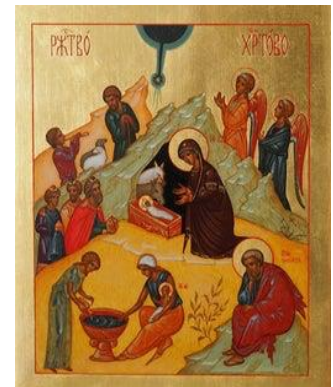
ST GREGORY'S FOUNDATION CHRISTMAS CARDS

Over the years members of our parish have been very generous in supporting SGF by buying their Christmas cards. This small charity supports disadvantaged families and young people in the former Soviet Union, and profit from the sale of cards is a significant part of its income.

For obvious reasons we aren't able this year to order cards for sale in church, but they can be ordered direct through the St Gregory's website:

<https://stgregorysfoundation.org.uk>

which also gives information about the charity and its activities and the opportunity to subscribe to its newsletter.



Hugh Allen

The Orthodox Parish of the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon

Report from the treasurer

After making the recent appeal for financial support I was asked to further explain why regular contributions are so important to the parish. This report goes some way to explaining our current financial situation.

Income - A large part of our regular income comes from the collection plate. Due to the current cessation of services we are not receiving these payments which averaged £100 per week. This is clearly a large loss. We are thus currently solely reliant on donations by regular standing order, through which we receive £134 per month, giving us a

- **Total income of £1608 per annum.**

Outgoings – Current outgoings are slightly reduced as at present we have few clergy expenses and/or travel expenses to reimburse. Our contributions to the deanery have recently been paid to date, in full, and since they are based on % of income, our next contribution will be smaller. However, our secretarial costs have increased significantly in order to keep in touch with as many as possible, while we continue to have a number of fixed costs (listed per annum).

- £1500 - St Anne's Chapel Rent
- £588 - Electricity *
- £378 - Insurance
- £200 - Printing and postage costs

- **Total Outgoings - £2666 per annum**

*Electricity costs are presumably lower for the year overall, but we currently pay a fixed amount which has yet to be adjusted for reduced use.

These figures suggest a current **deficit of over £1000 per annum** (before dues to the deanery).

We all remain hopeful that we will be able to hold at least some services before too long. However, until we do so and until these are a regular event, without the support of regular standing orders the deficit will remain. Please think about what you can afford to pay. Even very small regular amounts are helpful.

With love to you all,
Alice Scorer - Treasurer

The Gospel reading for the Feast of Saints Cosmas and Damian - St Matthew 10: 1, 5-8

Jesus sent out his twelve disciples, with the instructions: 'Do not go on any heathen roads, nor into Samaritan towns, but go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure the lepers, drive out devils. You have received freely: give freely.'