



Prophet Elias News

**News in the time of self-isolation for the Orthodox Church of
the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon
22nd November 2020**



Metropolitan Anthony on The Parable of the Foolish Rich Man (Luke 12: 16-21)

The end of today's Gospel reading is a warning about something that we should all be aware of all the time - that death is at our elbow, and that much, very much, of what we do will perish with us as unnecessary, mortal.

Does this mean that Christ's warning about the closeness of death should frighten us and deprive us of creative strength? No, on the contrary; the Fathers used to say, "keep a constant memory of death" not in the sense that we should be afraid of death and live under its constant shadow, but rather because nothing but the awareness of the fact that life is short, that it may end at any moment, can give to every moment its final meaning, and to the whole of life the feeling that we must hurry to do good, that we must hurry to live in such a way that at whatever moment death overtakes us, it will be a moment of triumphant life. We would live with such depth, so intensely, if only this awareness were with us constantly. If we were to know that the words that I am now speaking to you were the last, how differently would I say them, and how differently would you listen!

If we were to feel that the person we were talking to might be dead within a few minutes, how careful we should be that our words and actions in relation to him should be the culmination of all the love and care of which we are capable, that they should be the triumph of everything that is best and highest in our relationship.

The reason that we live so badly, utter so many empty words, rotten words, dead words, commit so many actions that afterwards burn in our soul like wounds, is that we live as though this life was merely a rough draft of the life we will one day be living, when we have had time to shape the draft into the final story. But that is not how things work; death comes and the draft remains rough, his life has not been lived, just blotted, and there remains regret for the person who could have been great, but turned out shallow and insignificant.

That is what today's Gospel is about, not that we should be afraid of death, but that, knowing that it can come at any moment, every moment must be perfect, every word must be a word of life, filled with the Spirit, fit to enter eternity. And every action of ours in relation to each one of us should be such as to give life and express the fullness and depth and strength of the love and reverence which we should feel for each other and for all. Let us consider this, and then if we can act upon it, every word and every action will acquire the dimension of eternity and shine with its light.

Sermon preached on 30th November 1980. Copyright: The Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh Foundation

This Week We Celebrate

On Saturday 21st November: **The Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple**

On Monday 23rd: Saints **Cecilia, Valerian, Tiburtius** and **Maximus** at Rome (209)
We wish **Celia** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Tuesday 24th: Saint **Columbanus**, Abbot of Bangor, Luxeuil and Bobbio (615)
Saint **Alexander Nevsky** (1263)

On Wednesday 25th: Great Martyr **Catherine** of Alexandria (313)
We wish **Catherine L** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Thursday 25th: Saint **Kliment** of Ohrid, Enlightener of the Bulgarians (916)

On Friday 26th: Saint **Stylian** of Paphlagonia, Protector of Children (c620)

From a Sermon on the Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple by Saint Gregory Palamas

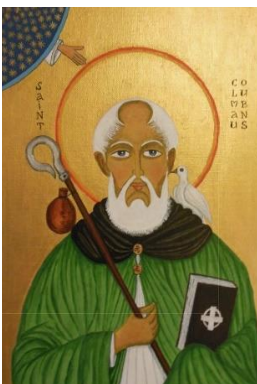
We who understand the salvation begun for our sake through the Most Holy Virgin, give Her thanks and praise according to our ability. And truly, if the grateful woman (of whom the Gospel tells us), after hearing the saving words of the Lord, blessed and thanked His Mother, raising her voice above the din of the crowd and saying to Christ, ““Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps Thou hast sucked”” (*Lk. 11:27*), then we who have the words of eternal life written out for us, and not only the words, but also the miracles and the Passion, and the raising of our nature from death, and its ascent from earth to Heaven, and the promise of immortal life and unfailing salvation, then how shall we not unceasingly hymn and bless the Mother of the Author of our Salvation and the Giver of Life, celebrating Her conception and birth, and now Her Entry into the Holy of Holies?

Now, brethren, let us remove ourselves from earthly to celestial things. Let us change our path from the flesh to the spirit. Let us change our desire from temporal things to those that endure. Let us scorn fleshly delights, which serve as allurements for the soul and soon pass away. Let us desire spiritual gifts, which remain undiminished. Let us turn our reason and our attention from earthly concerns and raise them to the inaccessible places of Heaven, to the Holy of Holies, where the Mother of God now resides.

Today let us, the faithful, dance for joy, singing to the Lord with psalms and hymns, venerating His hallowed Tabernacle, the living Ark, that contained the Word who cannot be contained. For she, a young child in the flesh, is offered in wondrous fashion to the Lord, and with rejoicing Zacharias the great High Priest receives her in the dwelling place of God.

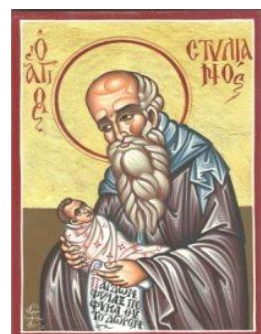
From Great Vespers for the Feast

Saint Kliment of Ohrid was a disciple of Saints Cyril and Methodius, and with Saint Naum (December 23rd) established the Ohrid Literary School in 886. Together they played an important part in the development of the Cyrillic script, and built up what became effectively the first Christian university in Europe.



Saint Columbanus was one of the most notable of the large number of Irish missionary monks who revitalised the Christian faith on the European mainland after the collapse of the western Roman empire. At the age of 50, having been for many years the respected Abbot of Bangor in Leinster, he travelled widely through Western Europe, establishing several important monasteries including those at Luxeuil in France and Bobbio in Italy. A prolific writer, he is the first person we know of to refer to the inhabitants of our continent as ‘Europeans’. He is the first Irish poet some of whose work survives, and is also – though I have been unable to discover quite why – the patron saint of motorcyclists.

Saint Stylianos of Paphlagonia dedicated much of his long life to the care of children, both providing for orphans and advising and supporting parents who came to ask his help. He always refused payment for his services, saying that he had already been paid with the serenity of the Holy Spirit. In his icon he looks down at a swaddled child in his arms. He was famous for his smiling cheerfulness, and there are examples of icons portraying him with a smile on his face.



Reflections on Two of Christ's Healing Miracles

Metropolitan Anthony's sermon on the Healing of Jairus' Daughter, such a well-known story, provided (as always) much food for thought. I was reminded of two other insights provided by different people over the years. At first it seems strange that the story is 'interrupted' by the healing of the woman with the issue of blood (ie unclean). But the two healings are linked. One person pointed out that the child is 12 years old, on the verge of puberty, and the woman has suffered bleeding for 12 years – twelve of course being a very significant number for the Jews. The other (I think on *Thought for the Day*) pointed out that the woman approaches secretly but is healed publicly, whereas Jairus appears publicly but his daughter is raised from the dead in private; an interesting observation.

Joanna

A Motorcycle for Father Daniel

It seems now like an age ago, but some of you may remember that early in the year we collected for a new motorcycle for Father Daniel in Uganda. Communications with Fr Daniel are very slow, particularly now that under Uganda's strict Covid-19 precautions he rarely goes to Kampala to collect his mail, but he wrote to me on 30th September, (before he had received news of Fr Peter's death) with a copy of the receipt for his new machine and this photo:*



Fr Daniel wrote: Thank you so much for the communication and love towards us. Also for the financial contribution that keeps us moving on. I bought the motorcycle and I am sorry for the delay in writing. I have not been going to town due to carrying out preventive Covid measures.

The church has just opened again. Till now we have been conducting prayers from home. The school has opened up for one class only – candidate class [for O Level]. Most of the teachers are still at home. Most of the parents are now very poor and so are the teachers. There is a great setback in many areas of life..

May the ever good Lord bless you. Fr Daniel Kaddu

May Saint Columbanus, patron of motorcyclists, watch over him and keep him safe.

M O

** Covid-19 precautions in Uganda were introduced early and have been very strictly enforced. It has made everyday life difficult for everyone, but it has kept the incidence of disease very low - so far there have been only 16,000 confirmed cases and 145 deaths (UK 1,370,000 and 52,000).*

What Does the Future Hold for Our Parish?

Several people have been asking, very reasonably, what sort of future our parish can look forward to. The short answer is, 'We don't know': indeed, at the moment we none of us know what sort of future we can look forward to. Covid-19 has wrought havoc with the best laid plans everywhere in the world, and nothing can be seen as certain. However, we have been working on the following provisional arrangements for services in the coming weeks:

- 1) We are hugely grateful to Fr Trayan for serving 'livestreamed' liturgies from Saint Anne's at 10.30 on each Sunday during the current lockdown, with help from Deacon Brandon and a minimal choir of four. Please note that we are not allowed to make these services open to parish members: they are for live streaming purposes only. *
- 2) We have obtained agreement in principle for our use of St Stephen's Church in Exeter High Street on some Sundays. Father Trayan has been given permission to come to serve the Liturgy there for us on one Sunday each month in the New Year. He hopes that one of these can be 10th January for a celebration of Theophany.
- 3) Father Patrick, our Dean, is well aware of our situation and is anxious to do all he can to support us. We very much hope that a priest from the Deanery will be able to come on December 27th (also to Saint Stephen's) to celebrate the Nativity with us.
- 4) We plan when the present lockdown is over to keep to our plan to celebrate Vespers at Saint Anne's on Saturday evenings for the smaller number of people who usually attend. To ensure we can maintain social distancing, it would be helpful if people wanting to come could let me know in advance.

Please bear in mind that all these arrangements are provisional and could change at short notice at any time.

In the longer term, of course, our great need is for a priest, or a suitable candidate for ordination. If anyone knows of such person who might be persuaded to come and live in Exeter – please let Father Patrick (hodson44@btinternet.com) or a member of the parish council know, so that we can start persuading!

Martin Olsson

* However, the current regulations do allow for individuals or families to enter churches for private prayer. If anyone would like to come to St Anne's to light a candle for the Feast of the Mother of God, we can arrange for the church to be open between 12 noon and 2pm either on Saturday 21st or on Sunday 22nd.

If you would like to come, please let me know in advance (martinolsson827@btinternet.com or **01837 82796**) to agree on a time. To protect the residents in the cottages we cannot allow a queue to build up in the courtyard.

Columbanus the Poet

The island of Ireland lies at the far end of Ocean,
and there awaits the setting of the sun, while the world turns
and light descends into the sea in the western shadows.
Here the huge mountains of waves, wild coloured
with their snaking locks, crash everywhere into the caves;
here their blue backs suddenly reveal a cloak's trim,
as they strike the white foamy seashore, the final curve of the land,
and forbid this coast, though we know it well,
to release a small questing boat into the salt-swell.

From a Hiberno-Latin poem by St Columbanus describing his travels found in Jonas
of Bobbio's *Vita Columbani* I.2.

