



# Prophet Elias News

**News in the time of self –isolation for the Orthodox Church of  
the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon  
6<sup>th</sup> December 2020**



## **Metropolitan Anthony on Miracles Performed by Christ on the Sabbath**

Time and again we read in the Gospel of the anger which the Lord Jesus Christ provoked by performing an act of mercy, a miracle of healing on a Sabbath day. And we cannot help asking ourselves a question: Why did He do it so constantly, so persistently, with such insistence? Could it be to challenge those who surrounded Him? Could it be to provoke them? Could it be simply a pedagogical action?

I believe that there is a great deal more in His action. The Lord created the world in six days; on the seventh day He rested of His toils and labours. But what happened to the world then? The seventh day was the day when the world came into the hands of man to be brought to its fulfilment and to its completeness. The seventh day, the Sabbath of the Lord, is the day of man. The whole of human history falls in that day. But God did not leave man to work alone, as the Lord Jesus Christ says in the Gospel, as reported by Saint John, "My Father still works, He shows His works to His Son for Him to fulfil them". And in another passage He teaches us, He tells us that His judgment is true because it is not His judgment; He hears the words of the Father and that is the judgment He pronounces.

And so, history is the day of man, but man is called to be guided by the wisdom, by the love of God. It is because we are so often seeking for our own ways, it is because we do not ask ourselves what is God's way in one situation or the other that the world has become so ugly, and so frightening, and so tragic. There is a Hebrew poem that describes the misery of this world into which man does not bring the love of God; it says, "Man has ceased to believe in God and love has departed this world. Men have hanged themselves in forests, have drowned themselves in lakes, in rivers. Heaven is no longer mirrored in the lakes, in the woods; the bird does no longer sing songs of paradise, and the Prophet himself on his pedestal has become a mere statue."

Is this not what we have become? Not statues, but so much like the wife of Lot who turned back and who became a statue of salt. We have remained salt and yet we are petrified, immobile, we do not fulfil on earth this function of ours. And Christ shows us, by working His miracles, His acts of love and of compassion on Sabbath day, time and again, He Who is the only true man, the only man who is in total, ultimate oneness with God, what our part should be: to take on the history of mankind, take every situation in which we or others find themselves, and carry them on our shoulders in an act of mercy and of love. A Western writer has said that a Christian is the one to whom God has committed the care of His world and of other people. Are we discharging this basic central commission of ours? Do we care? We may care with tenderness, we may care sternly, but we must care. And then, this seventh day when God in His mercy and love has committed this world to our care, still can become the day of the Lord. And the City of man which is being built without God, which so often is like the Tower of Babel, may still unfold and attain the greatness and the holiness of the City of God in which the Lord Jesus Christ, true God but also true Man, is called to be a citizen, the heart of it, but also one of us.

Is not this call great enough? Is not God's faith in us sufficiently inspiring? Are we going to defeat His hope, to reject His love for ourselves or for others? Or are we going to learn from the ways in which Christ fulfils His human vocation in the day of the Lord? Shall we not learn from Him and together with Him build the world which God has dreamed, has willed and is still loving in his distress and so often in our betrayal of Him!

Let us learn to love one another actively, bear one another's burdens, listen to the Living God when He speaks, listen with all our energy, look into His ways and be those who fulfil His will and bring the world to the perfect beauty He has willed for it!

## Noticeboard

### Services

Our warmest thanks go to Fr Trayan, Deacon Brandon and the 'skeleton choir' for the celebrations of the Liturgy livestreamed from Saint Anne's in recent weeks; also to Daniel for his expertise in overcoming the technical problems.

Now that churches are again open for public services, Father Trayan has returned to serving Sunday liturgies at Torquay and Plymouth. Services in Holy Prophet Elias parish during December and into January will be:

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December 6pm: Vespers (Eve of Saint Nicholas) at Saint Anne's

**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 6.30 pm:** Vespers (Eve of the Patronal Feast) at Saint Anne's

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December 6pm: Vespers at Saint Anne's

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December 6pm: Vespers at Saint Anne's

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 6.30 pm:** Vigil (Eve of Christmas Eve) at Saint Anne's

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> December 6pm: Vespers at Saint Anne's

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> December 10.30 am: Divine Liturgy (Parish celebration of the Nativity)**  
**Service to be held at Saint Stephen's Church, Exeter High Street.**

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 6pm: Vespers at Saint Anne's

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> January 6.30pm:** Vigil (Eve of Theophany) at Saint Anne's

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January 10.30 am: Divine Liturgy (Parish celebration of Theophany)**  
**Service to be held at Saint Stephen's Church, Exeter High Street.**

**Please bear in mind that Saint Anne's is very small and that social distancing rules mean that space at Vespers is necessarily limited.**

### Confessions

Father Gregory Palamas will be available to hear confessions at Saint Anne's on **Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December** between **11.30am and 1.30pm**.

Fr Trayan is available to hear confessions on **Sunday evenings** and **Mondays**. Please contact him to arrange a time, on **07800 644 599** or by email at [otrayan@gmail.com](mailto:otrayan@gmail.com) or on WhatsApp.

### Saints and Places: This Week's Virtual Visit

The Orthodox Fellowship of Saint John the Baptist virtual visit this week is to explore the **Corfu** of **Saint Spyridon**. The visit will take place on Monday December 7<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. To register go to:

<https://forerunner.org.uk/winter-series-2020-21>

### 'Creation of an Icon' Broadcast

**Sunday, 2.45 p.m. on Radio 4: Aidan Hart, 'Creation of an Icon'.**

This series was first broadcast in December 2018. You can listen to earlier episodes at:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000117x/episodes/player>

## This Week We Celebrate

On Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December:

**Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker**, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia (345)  
We wish **Nicholas S** and **Scott M** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December:

**The Conception of the Most Holy Mother of God by the Righteous Anna**  
We wish **Anna C**, **Anna W** and all who worship at **St Anne's Church**  
a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December:

**Saint Spyridon the Wonderworker** (348) Patron Saint of Corfu (See Noticeboard)

## Online Seminar to Celebrate Father Peter's Memory

On Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December at 4pm (7pm Moscow time) the Metropolitan Anthony Spiritual Heritage Foundation will host an online seminar dedicated to the memory of Fr Peter Scorer under the title: *A Man Whom We Admired*. The Seminar can be visited live in Russian on the Friends of the Foundation YouTube or via Zoom in simultaneous translation into English (sound only) – go to:

<https://antsur.ru/en/a-man-whom-we-admired/>

and choose either the Zoom or the YouTube option.

## Snippets from CTAX (Christians together Across Exeter)

### ANNUAL CHARITY CHRISTMAS CARD SHOP

Exeter's annual charity Christmas card shop will open after lockdown ends, moving from its usual location in Cathedral Close to 6 Paris Street. The shop has raised £250,000 in the past three years in Exeter. More info here: [www.devonlive.com/news/devon-news/exeters-annual-charity-christmas-card-4730591](http://www.devonlive.com/news/devon-news/exeters-annual-charity-christmas-card-4730591)

### REFUGEE SUPPORT DEVON

Refugee Support Devon (RSD) are urgently seeking funds to support refugees and their families as they cope with the challenges of settling into new lives far from their original homes in countries ravaged by war and instability.

£10 – pays for a vital medical prescription for those who are destitute

£20 – tops up a mobile phone to enable essential communication with solicitors, other agencies and family

£50 - helps fund travel to attend an immigration hearing or legal appointment

Go to [refugeesupportdevon.org.uk](http://refugeesupportdevon.org.uk) for more info and to give.

## Your Christmas Greetings

We will happily publish any messages of Christmas Greetings to the parish in our next two issues (December 13<sup>th</sup> and December 20<sup>th</sup>). The deadline for inclusion in each issue is noon on the previous Wednesday (9<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup>). Send your message to [martinolsson827@btinternet.com](mailto:martinolsson827@btinternet.com) or to

**Newsletter, Little Linhay, Bondleigh, North Tawton EX20 2AJ**

The Giver of every good and perfect gift has called upon us to imitate His giving, by Grace, through Faith – and this is not from ourselves.

Saint Nicholas of Myra

## Saint Nicholas of Myra

Our father among the saints **Nicholas of Myra**, Wonder-worker, was the archbishop of Myra in southern Asia Minor in the fourth century, known especially for his care for the poor. He is also the basis for the Santa Claus legends and imagery which accompany Christmas celebrations in much of the world, derived from the Dutch celebration of his feast day as the patron saint of sailors (Sinterklaas).

While widely honoured and venerated, not only in the Orthodox Church, but throughout most Christian groups, little is known historically of the life of Nicholas. He is known to have been archbishop of Myra and he may have participated in the Council of Nicea in 325. In addition to being honoured as the patron saint of several countries, notably Greece and Russia, and of many cities, he is the patron of many occupational groups, most notably of sea-farers. St. Nicholas is commemorated by the Church on December 6, and also on May 9 (the transfer of his relics) and on July 29 (his nativity).

Source: Orthodox Wiki



Lorenzetti, Ambrogio: *Saving Myra from Famine* c1330

‘During a famine in Myra, Bishop Nicholas worked hard to find grain to feed the people. He learned that ships bound for Alexandria with cargoes of wheat had anchored near Myra. The good bishop asked the captain to sell him some of the grain from each ship to relieve the people’s suffering. The captain said he could not because the cargo was “meted out and measured.” He must deliver all of it and would have to answer for any shortage. Nicholas assured the captain there would be no problems when the grain was delivered. Finally, reluctantly, the captain agreed to take one hundred bushels of grain from each ship. The grain was unloaded and the ships continued on their way.

When they arrived in Alexandria and the grain was unloaded, it weighed exactly the same as when it was put on board. Back in Myra, Saint Nicholas distributed grain to everyone in Lycia and no one went hungry. The grain lasted for two years, until the famine ended. There was even enough grain to provide seed corn for a good harvest.’

Source: [www.stnicholascentre.org](http://www.stnicholascentre.org)

### From the Akathist Hymn to Saint Nicholas

#### Oikos 8

Thou art truly a helper to all, O God-bearing Nicholas,  
and thou hast gathered together all that flee unto thee,  
for thou art a deliverer, a nourisher, and a quick healer for all on earth,  
moving all to cry out thus in praise to thee:

Rejoice, source of all kinds of healing!  
Rejoice, helper of those that suffer cruelly!  
Rejoice, dawn shining for prodigals in the night of sin!  
Rejoice, heaven-sent dew for those in the heat of labours!  
Rejoice, thou who givest prosperity to those that need it!  
Rejoice, thou who preparest an abundance for those that ask!  
Rejoice, thou who often forestaltest requests!  
Rejoice, thou who restorest strength to the aged and gray-headed!  
Rejoice, convicter of many who have strayed from the true way!  
Rejoice, faithful steward of the mysteries of God!  
Rejoice, for through thee we conquer envy!  
Rejoice, for through thee we lead a moral life!  
Rejoice, O Nicholas, Great Wonderworker!

#### Activities for the Children

There are some excellent print-off activity sheets about Saint Nicholas at:

<https://orthodoxpebbles.com/saints/st-nicholas>

