



Prophet Elias News

**News in the time of self – isolation for the Orthodox Church
of the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon
14th January 2021**



Sunday of the Canaanite Woman - Matthew 15: 21-28

In this encounter the disciples reveal their impurity of heart by condemning the Canaanite Woman, saying “Send her away”. They did as their upbringing taught them. The woman was not only acting improperly by approaching the Lord as she did, she was a Gentile and doubly to be avoided. And when Jesus made his famous reply, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” the disciples must have been overjoyed! His next remark I am sure sent them into paroxysms of delight. “It is not fair to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”

In this Jesus sought to reveal two things: one tragic and one divine. He made an example of both the disciples and the Woman; the disciples for their cruelty and lack of faith and the Woman for her humility and spiritual beauty. Her reply echoes forever as an example of pure love, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.” “Then Jesus answered her, ‘O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.’” You see, the only thing that matters is humility. It doesn’t matter who or what you are, or what you have done, humility opens the floodgates of divine grace.

What lesson is here for us? This Gospel points to the way of life that pleases God. Not the way of the disciples, dictated by fear, bigotry and hatred. The way of the Canaanite Woman pleases Jesus, the way of extreme humility and love. In her there is not one ounce of self-interest. Her ego has been destroyed. The great enemies of ego are faith and love. She approaches the Lord without regard for social convention, begs him for help, accepts his rebuke with a display of unprecedented faith, calls herself a dog (a great insult in Middle Eastern culture) and this Jewish man she names “Master”.

How can we know we are on the right track? Humility and love. It is simple, “They will know we are Christians by our love.” But it must be humility and love in its most radical form extending even to our enemies, to those who abuse us and wish us harm, which is no small task.

It has been said by some that our community is, perhaps, a little too welcoming, a little too friendly. But how can a community following the example of Christ be too friendly? We could not possibly “out - friendly” Jesus who died for all of us “while we were yet sinners”. I reject the idea of exclusion just as Jesus did, who broke down walls every time he spoke to a woman, or ate in the house of sinners, or saved an adulterous woman from death, or reached out his hand to heal on the Sabbath Day, or told a parable featuring a Gentile, or touched an unclean leper, or drank water from Jacob’s well from the hand of a Samaritan who was also a woman, who healed the favourite servant of the Centurion, who spoke out against the pride of the self-righteous religious, who challenged the Pharisees and stood up for those they condemned. He was the One who lifted Zacchaeus, cared for this Canaanite Woman, healed the woman with the issue of blood and the Blind Man on the road to Jericho, forgave Peter after he betrayed Him, restored the Apostles who forsook Him in the garden, encouraged the sorrowing Thomas who was honest enough to express his doubts, elevated Paul the murderer of Christians and asked God’s forgiveness for all those who contributed to His crucifixion and those of us who still do. The truth, the bottom line, is that if we are not people-friendly to a fault then we are not God-friendly to a fault.

We are to lift one another up, not tear one another down. The Lord warns us not to try and separate the wheat from the tares. He tells us not to extinguish a smouldering reed. We must be very careful that in our zeal we do not place barriers between ourselves and God by causing others to suffer.

Extract from a sermon preached on 10th February 2008 by Fr Anthony Hughes, St Mary Orthodox Church, Cambridge, Mass. Reprinted with permission: full text at

www.stmaryorthodoxchurch.org/orthodoxy/sermons/2008/canaanitewoman

Metropolitan Georges [Khodr] of Lebanon: A Call to Christians

[Father Anthony suggests that Christ's response to the Canaanite woman was also meant as a lesson to his disciples that it was not for them to judge who will and who will not be saved. That lesson is just as relevant to us today, as Metropolitan Georges points out in this extract from an important article originally published in Lissan-ul-Hal, January 14th 1968: 'To Christians of My Nation'. This article, translated by Archpriest Alexis Vinogradov, appears in a collection of talks and essays titled L'Appel de l'Esprit, Église et Société, les Editions Cerf, Paris 2001. Ed.]

You are bearers of a great vocation, you are a leaven of salvation. This is so on account of the One whose name you bear, and in whom you have been baptized. You are mistaken, however, in thinking that others can make no progress, as if labels had some meaning in themselves; as if Christ could not, with or without the aid of water, baptize in God anyone to whom he would grant his grace. Certainly, all comes from the Saviour whom you worship: all truth, all purity, all greatness, all that is ideal. There is nothing good in this world that is not in some manner upheld by Christ. But the Lord acts wherever he pleases and you have no say in limiting his work. He promised to shower you with his gifts, but he never told you that you would be the sole beneficiaries. I admonish you: do not be more regal than your King, him who can "from mere stones, raise up children for Abraham" (Mt.3:9).

This Week We Celebrate

On Sunday January 14th: **SUNDAY OF THE CANAANITE WOMAN**

Epistle: Corinthians 6: 16b-18, 7: 1 Gospel: Matthew 15: 21-28

Rest of **Saint Cyril**, Equal-to-the-Apostles and teacher of the Slavs ((869)

On Monday 15th: **Saint Anthimos of Chios** (1960)

Apostle Onesimos of the Seventy, disciple of St Paul (c109)

On Wednesday 17th: **Great Martyr Theodore the Recruit (c306)**

We wish **Bojidar** and **Teodor** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

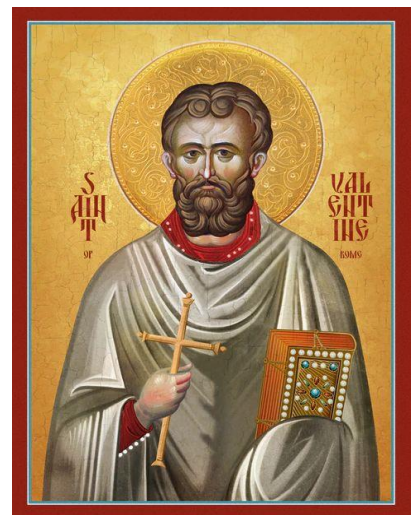
Saint Finan, Bishop of Lindisfarne (661)

Saint Mariamni, sister of the Apostle Philip

On Thursday 18th: **Saint Colman**, Bishop of Lindisfarne (676)

14th February - Saint(s) Valentine

Although the name of Valentine does not appear on 14th February in any Orthodox calendar I have seen, it is a name shared by two well-authenticated martyrs of the 3rd century – Saint Valentine the Presbyter of Rome and Saint Valentine Bishop of Terni, both of whom suffered martyrdom under Claudius II in around 270. Because they shared the same name, were contemporaries, resided near each other in central Italy, and ultimately, shared similar fates, the two Valentines' personal histories became conflated over the centuries, producing inconsistencies and puzzlement in many accounts of their lives. What most sources indicate, however, is that Bishop Valentine was renowned during his lifetime as a healer of the sick and blind, while Valentine the Presbyter would be remembered as a courageous steward of marriage, since in defiance of an imperial edict, he continued to unite and bless Christian couples who were legally barred from marrying. Intriguingly, the relics of St Valentine the Presbyter over the years made their way from Rome via Mytilene to the chapel of the Roman Catholic Community of Ss Francis and Clare in Athens.



Source: goarch.org

Noticeboard

Services:

Sunday February 14th: Sunday of the Canaanite Woman

Matins and Divine Liturgy: Plymouth 9.30 Torquay 10.30

Saturday 20th – Vigil at St Anne's 6pm

Sunday 21st: Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee

Matins and Divine Liturgy: Plymouth 9.30 Torquay 9.30

Please remember that face coverings must be worn and social distancing be observed at all services.

Week of 22nd to 27th – Fast-free week

Father Peter

On Friday 1st February, Ian Bromelow posted on Facebook: "My godfather and former university tutor [Peter Scorer] was ordained to the priesthood one year ago today, after many years' distinguished service as a deacon. Sadly, he did not live to greet this first anniversary. May his memory be eternal and a blessing."

I was astounded. Was it really only a year ago that we all celebrated Peter's ordination together (with Aidan supervising the bar as ever), and looked forward so positively to a peaceful and secure future for our small community? It is indeed the case that man proposes, but God disposes.

By coincidence, the day after Ian's posting we received the issue of the Orthodox quarterly *The Wheel* including as its editorial a lovely Eulogy for Father Peter by Inga Leonova. With her permission we are sending it as a separate attachment with this issue.

Ian has subsequently informed us that his mother, Joyce, died in the early hours of Saturday 6th February. May her memory be eternal! Our thoughts and prayers go out to Ian and his brothers, Colin and Andrew.

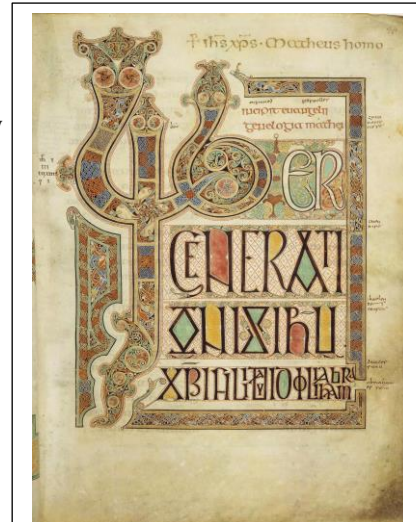


February 2nd - Candlemas at Home

The Holy Island of Lindisfarne

Lindisfarne is considered the cradle of Christianity in Northern Britain. King Oswald had become a Christian while exiled amongst the Scots. After he returned and defeated the Mercians at the battle of Hefenfeld in 634AD, he established Christianity as the "state" religion of Northumberland. He invited monks from Ireland under the energetic Aidan to set up a monastery on the island of Lindisfarne. This led to two centuries of veritable northern enlightenment. Saint Aidan was followed by a series of charismatic bishops including Saint Finan (February 17th), St Colman (February 18th) and most famously Saint Cuthbert. The Priory of Lindisfarne was central to the Golden Age of Northumbria, overseeing the writing and illuminating of the famous Lindisfarne Gospels as well as sending out missionaries to many parts of northern Europe. The sacking of the priory in 793 is generally regarded as the beginning of the age of Viking activity in Western Europe. In 883 the monks abandoned Lindisfarne following further Viking raids and moved to Chester-le-Street near Durham, taking the body of Saint Cuthbert with them.

Source: angelcynnreenactmentsociety.org.uk



OFSJB STUDY WEEKEND 26th-27th February – via ZOOM
THE PSALMS: PRAYERBOOK OF THE CHURCH

Orthodox Fellowship of St John the Baptist (<https://forerunner.org.uk/>)
Study weekend, 26-27 Feb 2021: ‘The Psalms: Prayerbook of the Church’
Hosted by the Parish of St John the Theologian, Cambridge
via Zoom. **Free and open to all:** please publicise!

To register, please go to

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ofsjb-study-weekend-the-psalms-prayerbook-of-the-church-tickets-138411324999>

Programme:

Friday 6.30 – 8.00 p.m.

Introduction and opening prayers: Fr Dragos Herescu (Parish of St John the Theologian/IOCS, Cambridge)
Fr Ian Graham (Holy Trinity Parish, Oxford): *Introduction to the Book of Psalms*

8.00-9.00 Open conversation. Evening prayers

Saturday 9.30-11.00 Fr Raphael Armour (Parish of St Ephraim, Cambridge): *The Psalms in liturgical life*

11.30-- 1.00 Dr Elizabeth Theokritoff (IOCS, Cambridge):

‘The Lord has sent deliverance to His people’: reading Christ’s work through the Psalms

1.45-2.30 p.m. Round Table: Meeting the Orthodox community in Cambridge

2.45 - 4.15 Fr Maximos (Constas) of Simonopetra (Holy Cross School of Theology, Brookline, Massachusetts): *Praying the Psalms in monastic life, and the commentaries of Elder Aemilianos of Simonopetra**

Saturday 5.00 p.m. Vespers from St Clement’s church (Orthodox parish of St Ephraim) (English)

Sunday 11.00 a.m. Divine Liturgy from St Giles Church, Cambridge (Orthodox Parish of St John the Theologian) (Romanian and English)

* Elder Aimilianos, *Psalms and the Life of Faith*, tr. Fr Maximos (Constas), can be read on line at:
https://www.academia.edu/10981780/Elder_Aimilianos_Psalms_and_the_Life_of_Faith

The Introduction and Chapter 1 can be downloaded from:
https://www.academia.edu/10374119/Elder_Aimilianos_Psalms_and_the_Life_of_Faith_Introduction_and_Chapter_1_

St. Anthimos Of Chios, Greece (1869-1960)

‘This venerable holy father is not renowned due to his scholarly activities, teaching or preaching, or his high position in the Church, but for his deep faith, his simple love of God, his powerful prayers of intercession before the icon of the Mother of God “of Good Help” and the resultant healings, his gift as a spiritual father to all who came to him for counsel, and his deep humility and asceticism during his 91 years on earth.

After many years living an ascetic life as a hermit in his home village, he was appointed chaplain of a leper hospital. Not complaining about a “bad assignment,” St. Anthimos blossomed where he was planted. Within a short time he had transformed a place of physical and spiritual misery and hopelessness into an image of paradise. He visited all the sick, tended to the worst afflicted with his own hands, and, through his love, humility, and good counsel, returned many lost souls to God, a number of whom became monastics.

Countless people from the outside came to the elder, and received physical, emotional and spiritual healing by his prayers, words and example. He finally gave up his soul to God on February 15, 1960, at the age of 91. He was mourned by the whole island of Chios.’

Extract from an article by Sister Ioanna, St. Innocent Monastic Community, Redford, Michigan www.stinnocentmonastery.com