



Prophet Elias News

**News in the time of self – isolation for the Orthodox Church of
the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon
7th February 2021**



Some Reflections on the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25: 14-30)

‘The talents in the parable denote the totality of all the good things given by God to man. Material talents - these are wealth, favourable living conditions, social status and good health. Talents of the soul - these are a lucid mind, a good memory, various abilities in the arts and crafts, the gift of eloquence, courage, sensitivity, compassion and many other qualities which are placed in us by the Creator. To this we shall add the gift of prayer, the gift of exhortation, the gift of just governance. There are many gifts - you cannot enumerate them all. The Lord gives all these gifts to His followers for their own use and for the benefit of others.

The cross of one's life, those conditions which surround us in life are also a talent, are also something which we must make use of, which we must cause to multiply and increase. And no matter how difficult those conditions might be through which the life of a Christian passes, whatever dark clouds might gather over him, he always comes out a victor, if he is able to remain faithful to God until the end of his earthly sojourn, not in word only, but also in deed. And this means to continually increase the talents given us by God.’

Archpriest Victor Potapov, Russian Orthodox Church of Saint John the Baptist, Washington DC (stjohndc.org)

‘The way this passage lays claim to my senses is in the aspect of our Orthodox faith as the living out of our Chrismation. A priest from my youth once remarked that Holy Chrismation is like a Rite of Ordination into the priesthood of the Body of Christ. Just as we have Priests who minister to us the Holy Mysteries, so the Chrismated are priests who, by their behaviour and example, minister the living presence of Christ God to the world outside the church within which we work and live. Except for Monastics, we spend more time with the unchurched than with the Church, so, unless our faith goes beyond the dome, unless we take the living Christ with us to the world where the need is so desperate, then in a sense, we are burying our talent in the ground. We must live as Orthodox Christians 100 percent of the time and not be afraid to take the risk of sharing it with others. We should not keep it to ourselves! Let our light so shine!’

Posted by Maria Janine Taylor Bryant 10/06/2008 - Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church, McKinney, Texas
[16th Sunday – The Parable of the Talents « Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church](#)

I remember a sermon on the Parable of the Talents – possibly one of Fr John’s, or Father Peter’s, but I’m not sure – which concentrated on the servants’ views of their master - that is, their views of God. The servant who was given the one talent had a distorted view: he saw his God as unfair, harsh and vengeful: *I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid.*’ (Matthew 25: 24,25) He failed to understand, in the words of M. Anthony’s sermon, that ‘the fact that we possess nothing which is our own, and are nothing except by an act of Divine Love, is truly blessedness.’ It was this distorted view of God that made it impossible for him to respond creatively to the opportunity he had been given; it was his inability to respond creatively that was his downfall.

Martin O

Metropolitan Anthony on The Calling of Man

After some of my last sermons, I was told that I cast a feeling of darkness, of sadness in what I say; that I always insist on the fact that we are called to such greatness, such holiness, and that we betray our calling. And by doing this we betray the millions of people who need not only words of Christ, but a revelation of the fact that Christ has called people like us to Himself, and has transfigured them, so that in a gift of self, of love they bring not only a message but a vision of what Christ has willed for all mankind - indeed for all creation. I will to-day say a few words about this.

First of all - yes, it is true; when I preach a sermon I speak of myself. I speak of how I respond to the word of Christ, and I feel that I stand before God, and most of the time I stand condemned, but I am not projecting this on to anyone in the church. So many are faithful, so many have changed their lives since they met the Gospel of Christ and entered into this mysterious communion of prayer and sacrament which we find in the Church. But if you ask me what to do in order to grow into this communion with Christ, into the joy of being at one with Him, I will say two things.

To begin with, you remember the first of the Beatitudes: Blessed are the poor in spirit - theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. And the poor in spirit are those who at the very core of their being, with all their awareness understand that whatever they are, whatever they possess, is a gift of God. We exist only because we have been called into existence in an act of Divine Love; and not only of Divine Love - God has entrusted us life. He has trusted us enough to call us into being in order to become one day His companions of eternity. The fact that we possess nothing which is our own, and are nothing except by an act of Divine Love, is truly blessedness, because if anything was our own, it would be taken away from our love relationship with God and with one another. So, indeed, we are blissful, we can rejoice, but we can also be deeply, infinitely grateful to God for what He has done to us by loving us into existence, by entrusting life and the destiny of the world to us, by hoping all things from us, because He hopes against hope, as it were, until our life has come to an end, He still hopes that we will be His own.

And so, if we concentrate on this, if we respond to God's love and hope and trust by true gratitude, if we try to make our life into an act of gratitude that will give God joy, that will show Him that it is not in vain that He has done all this, we shall be very close to living worthy of God. It may not appear outwardly to be spectacularly different, but this gratitude of ours, this joy, this sense of possessing already the blessedness which will expand and flower into eternity, will be an inspiration for us.

The second thing which I want to mention is that when we read the Scriptures, when we read the writings of spiritual fathers, we must concentrate not on what accuses us of our unworthiness, but concentrate on what our heart responds to, on what our mind takes in with joy. Because, if my heart responds to any word of Christ, if my mind is illumined by His words, if my will is stirred into action, it means that God and I - yes, I, unworthy as I am - am akin to Him, that I am already in His image, that He is my like and I am His like.

Let us then live worthily - not of things which we do not yet understand, but of those things which are already reality within our hearts, within our minds, within our lives. If we start at this point, then however sad we may be that these points are few, that we are imperfect even in who we already are potentially, we may rejoice that this is a beginning and that we can grow further and further into the depths of our communion with God.

So, let us read the Scriptures, let us live by the Beatitudes with gratitude and joy, knowing that we already belong to this realm and it is enough for us to consider that the aim of our Christian life is to give Christ the joy of our salvation, and for us to work our salvation also with joy.

Sermon preached by Metropolitan Anthony on 21st May 1995

This Week We Celebrate

On Sunday February 7th: **SUNDAY OF THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS**

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 6: 1-10 Gospel: Matthew 25: 14-30

The New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia (1917-1991)

On Tuesday 9th: **New Martyrs Fr Dimitri Klepinin** (1944), **Elias (Ilya) Fondaminsky** (1942) and **George (Yuri) Skobstov** (1944) – co-workers with Saint Maria of Paris

On Wednesday 10th: **Hieromartyr Haralambos**, Bishop of Magnesia in Thessaly (202)

On Thursday 11th: **Hieromartyr Blaise**, Bishop of Sebaste (c316)
Saint Caedmon of Whitby – the first English poet. (c680)
Empress Theodora, Restorer of the Icons (c867)

The **New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia** were Orthodox Faithful who suffered during the Soviet period (1917 to 1991) for their faith.

Immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Church under the leadership of Patriarch Alexei II began glorifying some of the New Martyrs, beginning with the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev, and Metropolitan Benjamin of Petrograd in 1992. In 2000, the All-Russian Council glorified Tsar Nicholas II and his family, as well as many other New Martyrs. More names continue to be added to list of New Martyrs.

The Russian Church celebrates the feast of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia on the Sunday nearest January 25th (February 7th n.s.) -- the date of Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev's martyrdom (the first Hieromartyr of the Bolshevik Yoke).



Source: Orthodox Wiki

The Co-Workers of Saint Maria of Paris

In 1939 **Fr Dimitri Klepinin** was appointed dean of the community that had grown up around Mother Maria at the rue Lourmel in Paris. During the German occupation he was active in the resistance efforts of Orthodox Action, the organization founded by Mother Maria. The small group of people at the rue Lourmel centre collected parcels for prisoners and found hideouts for those suffering persecution. At one time an entire Jewish family was given shelter in Fr. Dimitri's bedroom.

In February of 1943 Fr Dimitri was arrested for issuing false baptismal certificates to Jews. During his interrogation, when asked why he helped Jews, he held up his pectoral cross, saying: 'Do you recognise this Jew?' On 9th February 1944, a year to the day after his arrest, he died of pleurisy in the concentration camp at Dora, a sub-camp of Buchenwald. Mother Maria's son **Yuri Skobstov** died at the same camp shortly afterwards.

Fr Dimitri, like Mother Maria, is included at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial as one of the 'Righteous Among the Nations.'

Elias (Ilya) Fondaminsky was a Russian Jewish émigré intellectual who was drawn towards Orthodoxy and was a regular contributor to the religious and philosophical discussions that were a characteristic of life at rue Lourmel. A mutual friend remarked, "It is difficult to say who had the greater influence on whom, Mother Maria on him or he on Mother Maria."

Ilya was among the first wave of Russians arrested by the Nazis in 1941, and after many years as a catechumen was received into Orthodoxy at the internment camp of Compiègne. He was sent to Auschwitz where he died on 19th November 1942. On hearing of his death, Mother Maria said "It is out of dough like this that saints are made."

Source: In Communion – Website of the Orthodox Peace Fellowship

Saint Caedmon – the First English Poet

His story is known from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, which tells how Caedmon, an illiterate herdsman, retired from company one night in shame because he could not comply with the demand made of each guest to sing. Then in a dream a stranger appeared commanding him to sing of "the beginning of things," and the herdsman found himself uttering "verses which he had never heard." When Caedmon awoke he related his dream to the farm bailiff under whom he worked, who took him to Hilda, Abbess of Whitby. Hilda believed that Caedmon was divinely inspired and proposed that he should render into verse a portion of sacred history, which the monks explained. By the following morning he had fulfilled the task. At the request of the abbess he became an inmate of the monastery, where he continued to compose vernacular poetry on religious themes. Its unvarying aim was to turn men from sin to righteousness. In spite of all the poetic renderings that Caedmon supposedly made, however, it is only the original dream hymn of nine historically precious, but poetically uninspired, lines, composed about 670-680, that can be attributed to him with confidence.

Nū scylun hergan hefaenrīcaes Uard,
metudæs maecti end his mōdgīdanc,
uerc Uuldurfadur,
suē hē uundra gihwaes, ēci dryctin ōr
āstelidæ
hē ærist scōp aelda barnum
heben til hrōfe, hāleg scepēn.
Thā middungeard moncynnæs Uard,
eci Dryctin, æfter tīadæ
firum foldu, Frēa allmectig.

Now [we] must honour the guardian of heaven,
the might of the architect, and his purpose,
the work of the father of glory,
as he, the eternal lord, established the beginning of
wonders;
he first created for the children of men
heaven as a roof, the holy creator
Then the guardian of mankind,
the eternal lord, afterwards appointed the middle earth,
the lands for men, the Lord almighty.

News from CTAX – Christians Together Across Exeter

EMERGENCY GRANTS

If you or someone you know has lost income and are struggling to pay for basic household essentials, money is available via small emergency grants to people in financial hardship as a result of COVID-19. More info here:

www.devon.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/document/support-for-people-and-families/

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

With the news that schools will remain closed into March, this is even more timely than ever: laptops and tablets are available from the DfE to support children who do not already have access to a device for remote learning. Parents, carers and pupils can contact their school who can request one on their behalf.

EXETER FOOD PROJECT

The Exeter Food Project was started in the spring in response to the coronavirus pandemic, and has continued to help the community. More info here: www.devonlive.com/news/devon-news/39-exeter-families-fed-needed-4852473

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO HELP AT VACCINATION CENTRES

With coronavirus (COVID-19) mass vaccination centres now open in Exeter and Plymouth, volunteers are needed to help manage patient flow and direct people.

The volunteering itself is flexible – shifts are four hours long and there is no minimum commitment. Volunteers can choose their shifts and work more than one shift in a row if they want to. The times of the shifts are 8.00am to 12 noon, 12 noon to 4.00pm and 4.00pm to 8.00pm, seven days per week.

To register, fill in a simple application form online: <https://ourplymouth.co.uk/volunteer-opportunity/covid-19-vaccination-program-volunteers-needed> (the link says Plymouth, but it is for the Exeter centre as well)

Addendum - February Programme Plymouth and Torquay



Gregory Carpenter <frgregorypalamas@gmail.com>

To: Carpenter Elizabeth elizabeth.carpenter@hotmail.co.uk;

03/02/21 10:51

1

From Fr Gregory-Palamas

“The Archbishop has allowed us to reopen the churches, but has emphasised that no adult may enter without wearing a mask. Please serve social distance, but do not fear to stay away, unless you have medical problems. The attached programme for the month could be abandoned quickly, if the conditions in Devon deteriorate.

BEWARE of conspiracy theories which abound on the Internet; instead ensure that you receive a vaccination when invited.”

Orthodox Christian Services in South Devon February 2021

G = Fr Grgory-Palamás T = Fr Trayan

			Plymouth	Torquay
Sun07-Feb	Sunday of Talents των ταλαντων	T	09:30G	09:30
Sun14-Feb	Canaanite Woman της Χαναμαίας	G	09:30T	10:30
Sun21-Feb	Publican & Pharisee Τελώνου και Φαρισαίου	T	09:30G	09:30
Sun28-Feb	Prodigal Son Του Ασώτου	G	10:30T	10:30

From Fr Gregory
frgregorypalamas@gmail.com
www.plymchurch.com