



# Prophet Elias News

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



## **Sunday of the Expulsion of Adam from Paradise - Forgiveness Sunday**

### **On Accepting Forgiveness**

All too often forgiveness is offered, but we recoil from it: to our pride forgiveness sounds like an ultimate humiliation, and we try to eschew it by putting on false humility: 'I cannot forgive myself for what I have done, how could I accept to be forgiven. I appreciate your goodness, but my conscience is too exacting, too sensitive for me to take advantage of your kindness', and it is words like 'kindness' we would use, to make the gift which is proffered as insignificant as possible and our refusal as frustrating as we possibly can for our generous friend. Of course, we cannot, we should never forgive ourselves! It would be monstrous if we could; it would simply mean that we take very, very lightly the blow which we have dealt, the wound which we have inflicted, the pain, the misery, the hurt which we have caused. (And, alas! we do this whenever we are impatient at the sight of someone whom we have hurt and who seems to be pained 'beyond measure'. 'How long are you going to sulk? oh, stop crying! Have I not already said to you that I am sorry; what else do you want?' Such phrases mean, if translated into plain speech: 'I have forgiven myself long ago; how much longer am I going to wait for you to forgive me?'). God forbid that we should ever be able to forgive ourselves, but we must learn both never to allow this to happen and also to accept, to receive the free gift of another's pardon. To refuse to do so is tantamount to saying, 'I do not really believe that love blots out all sins, neither do I trust in your love.' We must consent to be forgiven by an act of daring faith and generous hope, welcome the gift humbly, as a miracle which love alone, love human and love divine, can work, and forever be grateful for its gratuity, its restoring, healing, reintegrating power.

One should not expect to be forgiven because one has changed for the better; neither should one make such change a condition for forgiving other people; it is only because one is forgiven, because one is loved, that one can begin to change, not the other way round. And this we should never forget, although we always do. Also we must never confuse forgiving with forgetting, or imagine that these two things go together. Not only do they not belong together, but they are mutually exclusive. To wipe out the past has little to do with constructive, imaginative, fruitful forgiveness; the only thing that must go, be erased from the past, is its venom; the bitterness, the resentment, the estrangement; but not the memory.

True forgiveness begins at the moment when the victim of injustice, of cruelty, of slander accepts the offender as he is, for no other reason than the fact that he has come back, like the Prodigal Son whose father asked no questions, made no claims, set no conditions for his reintegration into the household. God's forgiveness is ours from the moment when God takes upon himself the burden and all the consequences of our fall, when the Son of God becomes the Man of Sorrows (Isaiah 52-53). It is emphatically not when we become a Saint! God has already granted forgiveness when he has said: 'I am ready to die for you: I love you.' This is also where forgiveness begins between human persons. If in a family crisis the offender simply comes back, too proud or too shy, or perhaps too cramped by fear, to say much, his redemption begins at the very moment when his family say to him: 'But we never ceased to love you; let go of your fear; we still love you — oh, the pain of it! now that you are back we shall all be healed.' And this, the person who is *right* can do and should do, because it is so much easier for him to do than for the person who is in the wrong; also because those who are right share with the offenders the responsibility of the rift, of the quarrel and must atone for it also. Theirs must be the first steps towards reconciliation. I remember a man of some standing who once came to see me and told me that a friend of his who claimed no small spiritual achievements had offended him: 'Who should go and make his peace with the other?' he asked. 'I cannot answer your question', I replied, 'as I cannot possibly set myself as a judge between you, but one thing is certain to me: the meanest of the two of you will wait for the other to make the move.' The great man said no word, but went forthwith to make his peace with his friend. Vanity had done what neither humility, nor wisdom, nor even simple friendship had been able to achieve. How sad . . . How different was the generous, loving, free forgiveness which the Father granted his Prodigal Son!

## A Breakthrough of the Kingdom

Lent is the liberation from our enslavement to sin, from the prison of 'this world'. And the Gospel lesson of this Sunday (Matthew 6: 14-21) sets the conditions for that *liberation*. The first one is *fasting* – the refusal to accept the desires and urges of our fallen nature as normal, the effort to free ourselves from the dictatorship of flesh and matter over the spirit. To be effective, however, our fasting must not be hypocritical, a 'showing off'. We must 'appear not unto men to fast but to our Father who is in secret'. The second condition is *forgiveness* – 'If you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you.' The triumph of sin, the main sign of its rule over the world, is division, opposition, separation, hatred. Therefore, the first break through this fortress of sin is forgiveness, the return to unity, solidarity, love. To forgive is to put between me and my 'enemy' the radiant forgiveness of God himself. To forgive is to reject the hopeless 'dead-ends' of human relations and to refer them to Christ. Forgiveness is truly a 'breakthrough' of the Kingdom into this sinful and fallen world.

From Alexander Schmemmann: *Great Lent – Journey to Pascha* Saint Vladimir's Press 1969

### One Foot in Eden

by Edwin Muir

One foot in Eden still, I stand  
And look across the other land.  
The world's great day is growing late,  
Yet strange these fields that we have planted  
So long with crops of love and hate.  
Time's handiworks by time are haunted,  
And nothing now can separate  
The corn and tares compactly grown.  
The armorial weed in stillness bound  
About the stalk; these are our own.  
Evil and good stand thick around  
In the fields of charity and sin  
Where we shall lead our harvest in.

Yet still from Eden springs the root  
As clean as on the starting day.  
Time takes the foliage and the fruit  
And burns the archetypal leaf  
To shapes of terror and of grief  
Scattered along the winter way.  
But famished field and blackened tree  
Bear flowers in Eden never known.  
Blossoms of grief and charity  
Bloom in these darkened fields alone.  
What had Eden ever to say  
Of hope and faith and pity and love  
Until was buried all its day  
And memory found its treasure trove?  
Strange blessings never in Paradise  
Fall from these beclouded skies.



O precious Paradise, unsurpassed in beauty, tabernacle built by God, unending gladness and delight, glory of the righteous, joy of the prophets, and dwelling of the saints, with the sound of thy leaves pray to the Maker of all: may He open unto me the gates which I closed by my transgression, and may He count me worthy to partake of the Tree of Life and of the joy which was mine when I dwelt in thee before.

From Vespers on Saturday Evening

## This Week We Celebrate

Sunday March 14<sup>th</sup>: **Sunday of the Expulsion of Adam from Paradise**

**Sunday of Cheesefare – Forgiveness Sunday**

Epistle: Romans 13:11b – 14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6: 14-21

**Saint Benedict of Nursia** (543)

Monday 15<sup>th</sup>: **Apostle Aristobulus of the Seventy**

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Patrick**, Apostle to the Irish (5<sup>th</sup> C)

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Edward the Martyr** King of England (c978)

**Saint Nikolai Velimirovich** Bishop of Ohrid and Zhicha (1956)

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Cuthbert** of Lindisfarne (687)

## Saint Patrick, Enlightener of Ireland

The dates of Patrick's life cannot be fixed with certainty, but there is broad agreement that he was active as a missionary in Ireland during the fifth century. Early medieval tradition credits him with being the first bishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland, and regards him as the founder of Christianity in Ireland, converting a society practising a form of Celtic polytheism. He has been generally so regarded ever since, despite evidence of some earlier Christian presence in Ireland.

According to the autobiographical *Confessio*, when he was about sixteen, he was captured by Irish pirates from his home in Britain and taken as a slave to Ireland, looking after animals; he lived there for six years before escaping and returning to his family.

After becoming a cleric, he returned to northern and western Ireland as a missionary. In later life, he served as a bishop, but little is known about the places where he worked. By the seventh century, he had already come to be revered as the patron saint of Ireland.

Source: Wikipedia

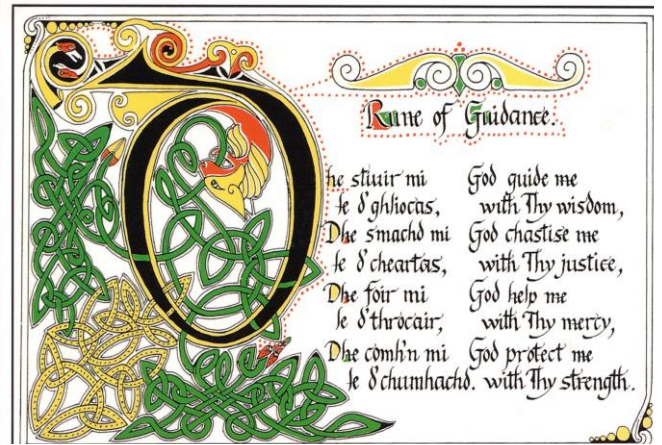


Image kindly sent by Christa Antonina

## Saint Aristobulus of the Seventy, First Bishop of Britain

The holy, glorious, all-laudable **Apostle Aristobulus** (also *Aristovoulos*) is numbered among the Seventy Apostles. Along with the Apostles Urban, Stachys, Narcissus, Apelles and Amplias he assisted the Apostle Andrew. St. Aristobulus was also the brother of the Apostle Barnabas. He preached the Gospel in Britain as its first bishop and there he reposed peacefully in the Lord. His feast days are celebrated on March 15<sup>th</sup>, on October 31 with Amplias, Apelles, Stachys, Urban, and Narcissus, and on January 4<sup>th</sup> with the Seventy.

Source: St. Nikolai Velimirovich, *The Prologue from Ohrid*



## Saint Nikolai Velimirovich

Saint Nikolai Velimirovich (1880-1956) was bishop of Ohrid and Zhicha in the Serbian Orthodox Church. As an influential theological writer and gifted orator, he became known as 'the New Chrysostom'. He travelled extensively as a participant in the ecumenical movement, and made many friends among Western Christians, although he always maintained that only in Orthodoxy was the fullness of the Christian message to be found.

Among his many publications were the beautiful *Prayers by the Lake* and the great two-volume *Prologue from Ohrid*, containing in each day's entry the lives of the Saints of that day, hymns, reflections and a homily. It is expensive to buy, but several Orthodox sites offer daily online postings, eg

[www.stgeorgehermitage.org/prologue](http://www.stgeorgehermitage.org/prologue)



The church of Saint John the Theologian overlooking Lake Ohrid



## The Lenten Prayer of Saint Ephrem the Syrian

O Lord and Master of my life;  
take away from me the spirit  
of idleness, despondency,  
lust of power, and vain  
talking.

But rather the spirit of purity,  
humility, patience and love  
do Thou grant to me,  
Thy servant.

Yea, Lord and King, grant me  
to see mine own faults,  
and not to judge my brother,  
for blessed art Thou  
unto ages of ages. Amen.

Господи и владыко живота  
моего, дух праздности,  
уныния, любоначалаия и  
празднословия не даждь ми.

Дух же целомудрия,  
смиреномудрия, терпения и  
любве даруй рабу твоему.

Ей, Господи царю, даждь  
ми зрети моя согрешения и  
не осуждати брата моего,  
яко свят еси во веки веков.  
Аминь.

Κύριε και Δέσποτα της ζωής  
μου, πνεύμα αργίας,  
περιεργείας, φιλαρχίας και  
αργολογίας, μή μοι δως.

Πνεύμα δε σαφροσύνης,  
ταπεινοφροσύνης, υπομονής  
και αγάπης, χάρισαί μοι τω  
σω δούλω.

Ναι, Κύριε Βασιλεύ, δώρησαι  
μοι του οράν τα εμά  
πταισματα, και μή κατακρίνειν  
τον αδελφόν μου, ότι  
ευλογητός ει εις τους αιώνας  
των αιώνων. Αμήν

Doamne și Stăpânul vieții mele,  
duhul trândăviei, al grijii de  
multe, al iubirii de stăpânire și  
al grăirii în deșert nu mi-l da  
mie.

Iar duhul curăției, al gândului  
smerit, al răbdării și al  
dragostei, dăruiește-l mie,  
robului Tău.

Așa Doamne, Împărate,  
dăruiește-mi ca să-mi văd  
greșalele mele și să nu osândesc  
pe fratele meu, că binecuvântat  
ești în vecii vecilor. Amin.

### Noticeboard

#### Services

Saturday March 13<sup>th</sup> – **Divine Liturgy** at Saint James' Church Hall 10.30am

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> – Vespers of Forgiveness Sunday at Saint Anne's 3pm

Monday 15<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup>, Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> –

Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete at Saint Anne's 6.30pm

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> – Vespers at Saint Anne's 6pm

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> – Vespers at Saint Anne's 3pm

We are hoping to celebrate the Divine Liturgy with Father Trayan on  
Saturday March 27<sup>th</sup> & Saturday April 10<sup>th</sup>, as well as on Lazarus Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup>.  
Details to be announced.

Would that I could make musicians out of stone, and  
dancers out of the sand of the lake, and minstrels out of the  
leaves of all the trees in the mountains, so that they might  
help me glorify the Lord - and so that the voice of the earth  
might be heard amidst the choirs of angels!

St. Nikolai Velimirovich, *Prayers by the Lake*

Christianity is not a museum where everything is set from the  
start, but a workshop in which the roar of labour never stops.

Saint Nikolai Velimirovich