



Prophet Elias News

**News in the time of self – isolation for the Orthodox Church
of the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon
14th – 27th November 2021**



Father Alexander Schmemmann on Fasting and the Sanctification of Time

[We begin the Nativity Fast on Monday 15th November]

Inasmuch as the Church is still in "statu viae" [*in a state of journeying*] and Christians are still living in this world, they expect, they wait for, the "parousia"; they pray and keep the vigil for they do not know when the Son of Man shall come. And this expectation is expressed in a new fasting, in a new state of awaiting.

Hence the fasting period which must precede every Eucharistic celebration. Expectation must precede fulfilment. From this point of view, the eucharistic fast is not a simple abstinence before communion, it is made primarily of expectation and spiritual preparation. It is fasting in the scriptural sense, the waiting for the sacramental Parousia. Thus the whole liturgical life of the Church, which in turn determines the life of each member of the Church, is built on this rhythm of expectation and fulfilment, preparation and "presence."

But fasting has also a second meaning, that has been particularly stressed and developed in Monasticism. It is the ascetical fast, fasting as a fight against the demonic powers, as a method of spiritual life. The origin of this idea of fasting also goes back to the Scriptures. Before Christ went out to preach, He fasted for forty days and at the end of this period Satan approached Him (Matthew 4:3). In the Gospel, we find a clear statement that fasting and prayer are the only means for a victory over Satan (Mt. 17:21). For the advent of Christ not only fulfills the history of salvation, it is also the decisive moment in the struggle against Satan, who has become the "prince of this world."

This idea of fasting rooted in Christ's forty days of fasting and His encounter with Satan, is the foundation of the ascetical fast, which one must distinguish (but not separate) from the eucharistic fast, defined above as a state of preparation and expectation.

It is impossible to indicate here all the theological implications of fasting as it is described and prescribed in our liturgical tradition. We can only point to its essential significance. The Church lives on two levels, has two "states." She is waiting for, but she also possesses already, the object of expectation. In time, in history, she is not only "in via," on her way to the Kingdom, but also the manifestation of this Kingdom. And the meaning of her life is that these two "states" are not separated from each other, do not oppose each other in a radical contradiction. Each of them is founded in the other and is impossible without it. Eternity does not empty or make absurd and meaningless either time or our life in time, but on the contrary gives them all their weight, all their real value. The Church fills with an eternal truth, with reality which she alone possesses, the apparently meaningless flow of time. The rhythm of the Church, the rhythm of the Eucharist which comes and is always to come, fills everything with meaning, puts all things to their real place. Christians do not remain passive between one celebration and the next one, their "temporal" life is not empty, is not "diminished" by eschatology. For it is precisely the liturgical "eschaton" that ascribes real value to every moment of our life, in which everything is now judged, evaluated and understood in the light of the Kingdom of God, the ultimate end and the meaning of all that exists.

For the Eucharist bears witness to the Incarnation, and since it has been coordinated with time, introduced into time, time itself and each one of the moments in time are filled with meaning, acquire a significance in relation with Christ.

It is here that the Church has concealed the treasure of her love, of her wisdom, of her "practical" knowledge of God. The liturgy of the Church must be liberated from a trivial "schedule of services" and become again what essentially it is: the sanctification of time and in it of the whole life, by the presence of Christ. Only such a liturgy does not divide the life of a Christian into two lives, the one "sacred" and the other "profane," but transfigures the one by the other, making the whole existence a confession of Christ. For Christ did not come in order that we "symbolize" His presence but in order to transform and save the world by His presence.

Extract from Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann *Fast and Liturgy: Notes in Liturgical Theology*
St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly, Vol. 3, No. 1, Winter 1959, pp. 2-9 **See full article [here](#)**

There are some useful resources for exploring the Orthodox practice of fasting with children at <https://orthodoxpebbles.com/orthodox-basics/fasting/>

Sermon on The Good Samaritan by Metropolitan Sotirios of Pisidia

The Parable of the Good Samaritan is the Gospel reading for 14th November - the 21st Sunday after Pentecost

All of humanity lives in community. On the basic level, we have the family. From there we move up to the village/town, and then to cities. Over all of that is the nation-state. Because a person belongs to a particular community, it is natural for everyone to be concerned first with the prosperity of their own country, their own city and their own family. If something happens to one of their compatriots, they will rush to help. Alternatively, if they are far from home and they meet another person from their homeland, they feel a connection and do for them as best they can.

The key question is: What if in my life I meet an unknown person, someone who is a total stranger? Perhaps they are from a different country, or another religion. This person may be ill or hungry, and they ask for my help. Do I give it?

Our Lord answered this question with the parable of the Good Samaritan. We know that the Jews regarded the Samaritans as enemies and did not want to have any dealings with them. They also saw them as heretics to be shunned. Here we see the Samaritan travelling, and he sees a Jewish man, fallen and badly wounded by thieves. He didn't think about their differences. The fact that he was a Jew was not on his mind. He got off his animal, treated his wounds, and put the wounded man on his animal to take him to the nearest Inn. He told the innkeeper to care for him, and gave money to do this. The Samaritan left with the promise that he would pay for any extra care that should become necessary.

This is what the Good Samaritan did. Why did Jesus teach us this parable?

Because when we speak of others, we usually distinguish between "Us" and "Them." We say "our people" and "foreigners" or "friends" and "enemies." If the other person is "one of us," my friend and my compatriot, we will express love and help in whatever way they need. But if they are from another race, another country or another religion, we avoid them. We do this even if we see them in a great deal of need.

Christ teaches us with this parable how thinking in this way must be corrected. It is completely wrong. We can't just love our own people and our friends. When we do this, we show ourselves to be bad Christians. Let's learn to love all people, without distinguishing between friend or foe, compatriot and foreigner. A Christian who loves only their friends is no Christian at all. To be a Christian means to love everyone and to be devoted to helping those who need it. A Christian is one who smiles at strangers, forgives enemies and does so without expecting anything in return.

This is why we have as a model the Good Samaritan. For our sake, our Lord Jesus Christ taught us love to all. Not only in his perfect words, but above all in his supreme example! Christ came to earth and found humanity, mortally wounded and fighting against God. He brought them to Himself in His Church, and redeemed humanity from the tyranny of Satan. And all of this, with the sacrifice of His life on the Cross. This example of His love to everyone can also inspire us in our interactions with others, to all people. Amen

Posted on [Sermon of 8th Luke .The Good Samaritan \(Luke 10:25-37\) \(orthodoxpath.org\)](#)

Mice for Saint Cyprian's



One of our parish members handcrafts these adorable Mice and offers them for sale for charities. She has very generously suggested the parish might sell them to raise funds for orphaned and otherwise disadvantaged children in Father Daniel's parish in Uganda.

The Mice come in two styles. The 'Cuddly Mouse' (left) is made entirely of soft materials and so is safe for babies. The 'Glamour Mouse' (right) has a bead nose and eyelashes and decorative buttons, so is not suitable for under 3's. They measure 30cm (12") tall.

Cost: £7.50 each

plus P&P where appropriate – 1st Class £3.85

2nd Class £3.20



The Mice will be available for sale at our Typika and Divine Liturgy services, or you can order by contacting me either by email at martinolsson827@btinternet.com or by phone on 01837 82796. Supplies are limited, so rather than asking for payment with order, you will be invoiced on delivery. Payment can then be made to Holy Prophet Elias Parish either by BACS or by cheque. *Ed.*

This Fortnight We Celebrate

On Sunday November 14th: **Holy Apostle Philip**

We wish **Philip S** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

Saint Gregory Palamas (1359)

We wish **Father Gregory Palamas** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Tuesday 16th: **Holy Apostle Matthew**

We wish **Hugh A** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Wednesday 17th: **Saint Hilda**, Abbess of Whitby (680)

On Friday 19th: Holy New Martyr **Elias Fondaminsky** (France 1942) Co-worker with Saint Maria of Paris

On Sunday 21st: **THE ENTRY OF THE MOST HOLY MOTHER OF GOD INTO THE TEMPLE**

On Monday 22nd: **Martyrs Cecilia, Valerian, Tiburtius and Maximus** (c230)

We wish **Celia O** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Tuesday 23rd: **Saint Alexander Nevsky** (1263)

We wish **Alexander M** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Wednesday 24th (Greek usage – 25th): **Great Martyr Catherine of Alexandria** (c310)

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 Stylianos of Paphlagonia**, Protector of Children (5thC?)

Noticeboard

The Nativity Fast begins on Monday 15th

Services:

Saturday November 13th: Divine Liturgy Saint James' Hall 10.30am

Sunday 14th: Orthros and Divine Liturgy Plymouth 9.30am Torquay 9.30am

Matins and Divine Liturgy (in Romanian) St Stephen's Church, Exeter High Street 9am

Saturday 20th: Vespers for the Feast of the Mother of God Saint Anne's 6pm

Sunday 21st: Orthros and Divine Liturgy Plymouth 9.30 Torquay 9.30

Saturday 27th: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm

Sunday 28th: Divine Liturgy Saint Anne's 10.30

In view of the continuing spread of Covid 19 in the South West, we ask that face coverings continue be worn for the time being in the confined space in Saint Anne's.

Modern Slavery – A Litmus Test for the Credibility of the Gospel Today

Discussion led by Bishop Alastair Redfern **Sunday 14th November 6pm in Exeter Cathedral.**

All are welcome.

Climate and Orthodoxy Webinar 17th November 18.30-20.00

A conversation hosted by the Institute of Orthodox Christian Studies: **'What has climate change to do with Orthodoxy? A conversation about Christian witness in a warming world.'** The panellists include two people well known to us - Dr Edward Skidelsky and Dr Elizabeth Theokritoff. For more details or to register go to <https://www.iocs.cam.ac.uk/what-has-climate-change-to-do-with-orthodoxy-a-conversation-about-christian-witness-in-a-warming-world/>

Tell us about Your Saints at Home

On the next page Irina Raihert introduces us to Saint Paraskeva of the Balkans, whose relics lie in the Metropolitan Cathedral in Irina's home city in Romania. We would love to hear from anyone else whose home town or city has a special relationship with a Saint who might not be so well known to the rest of us.

A Romanian Pilgrimage St. Paraskeva (Petka) of the Balkans

In October Irina Raihert visited her home town of Iași, Romania's second city and former capital, in time to join the celebrations for the feast of Saint Paraskeva on October 14th.



St. Paraskeva was born into a pious family during the eleventh century in the village of Epivato, between Silistra and Constantinople. While attending Divine Liturgy one day, the words of the Lord pierced Paraskeva's heart like an arrow, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself." From that time, she began to distribute her clothing to the needy which caused much grief to her family.

Upon the death of her parents, Paraskeva was tonsured into monasticism at the age of fifteen. She withdrew to the Jordanian desert where she lived the ascetic life until she was twenty-five years old. An angel of the Lord ordered her to return to her homeland, so she lived in Epivato for two years.

St. Paraskeva departed to the Lord at the age of twenty-seven and was buried near the sea. Because of the many miracles which took place at her grave, her relics were uncovered and found to be incorrupt. They were placed in the Church of the Holy Apostles at Epivato, where they remained for about 175 years.

St Paraskeva's relics were moved to Trnovo, Bulgaria in 1223 and placed in that city's cathedral. When the Turks occupied Bulgaria in 1391, her relics were given to Mircea the Elder, Prince of Romania. In 1394, the relics were given to Princess Angelina of Serbia, who took them to Belgrade and then to Constantinople. For 120 years, St Paraskeva's relics rested in Constantinople in the patriarchal cathedral.

In 1641, her incorrupt relics were transferred to the monastery of the Three Hierarchs at Iași in Romania, where many healings took place. On December 26, 1888, after being rescued from a fire, St. Paraskeva's relics were placed in the new cathedral at Iași, where they remain until the present day. Pilgrimage at her shrine has become one of the major religious events in Romania. Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims gather each year in Iași in the second weekend of October to celebrate her memory.

Posted at [St. Paraskeva \(Petka\) of Serbia | Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese](#)

There are several Lives of Saint Parascheva. Irina's favourite was written by Bishop Evtimiy of Tarnovo in ca. 1385

Irina writes: What can I say - I was, am, we are all blessed to have her so close to us, in my home town - basically I grew up 'under her eyes'. We could, can come to visit her anytime, there are times where we don't have so many visitors, a good chance when you can spend time only by yourself in her presence. But, for those who might be sad that they can't come to visit her - please don't be sad, please - don't be sad at all - as travelling on earth's 'distance' is only a 'problem' for us, but not for Saints - there's no 'distance' between us and a Saint when it's about a prayer from one heart to another - so, dare to 'talk' to her, even though you can't touch, see her, and you won't be disappointed.

What else can I say... Even though she wasn't born a Romanian, St Parascheva's incorrupted body has stayed for many years in my home town - for me, as maybe for all of us, specially for each of us as orthodox - she is there as a living reminder: that we should love one another, regardless of languages spoken, nationality, appearances, social status... as through orthodoxy we are all brothers and sisters, and not only as we /each of us living on this planet are God's children, a constant living reminder of our Christ's words: 'love one another as I did/do love you.'



Deanery Assembly held on 30th October 2021 at Lancaster Hall Hotel in London.

For the first time since February 2020 the members of the Clergy-Laity Meeting were able to meet personally. It was lovely to see fellow representatives and clergy from many parts of the Deanery.

Archbishop Nikitas was there and his address is reported below. As usual at these meetings we had the Dean's report in which he reported that since we last met two deacons have been ordained, for Clapham and for Dunblane. We also had the Treasurer's report, a discussion about and vote on amendments to the Deanery Statutes to reflect our position now and a report on Safeguarding - a small team is working to bring our safeguarding into line with current regulations. The team who organises the Deanery Conference told us about the plans for 2022. It will be held at High Leigh, Hoddesdon from Friday, 27th May to Monday 30th May, costing £234 - bursaries are available. The theme will be 'How to be the Church: Learning from our Past, Discerning our Calling'. A poster for downloading will be available shortly, along with a link to the website and bookings will open in the New Year. We want to encourage a wide constituency rather than just Deanery, for example searchers and some Romanians have shown interest.

We completed all our discussions in amazingly good time and the meeting closed shortly before 1pm. We were then able to chat and catch up with people over lunch, which after such a long time was a real treat.

Archbishop Nikitas's Address

Archbishop Nikitas thanked us all for coming. In times of instability the church stands strong because of the faithful. He thanked Fr Patrick for his co-operation, faith and patience, and also the clergy as their difficult job is not always appreciated. He spoke for about 20 minutes and then asked for questions from the floor.

He wants us to get to know him better – he is not here to Hellenise. The Church must become local, be of the people here, venerating the local British saints. The language used should be the one which serves the needs of people - all are acceptable, but English is the main one.

For the Church to grow education is needed. Fr Nephon (*our link to the Archbishop*) runs various programmes of discussion meetings and retreats, for clergy and laity. A colouring book for children is being produced and a future 'Festival of Orthodox Books' is a possibility.

On more than one occasion Archbishop Nikitas said we must show compassion. He is aware of the many issues to which people want answers, for example: cremations, burying suicides, transgender people hoping to marry. A 'good' Orthodox bishop may turn them away but he cannot do this. Christ came not to judge - What would He say if we turned someone away? The Church is not against organ transplant as long as individuals are not put at risk, eg. human trafficking, etc.

We need more clergy. A programme to educate young men includes a psychological test to ensure solid clergy. To serve the church with faith and love is more important than having a PhD. Priests should not be promulgating their own opinions on Covid conspiracy theories etc.

Regarding women, the feminine voice is important and we need to correct old traditional ideas and not be afraid to mention the great women of the past – conveners of councils and hymnographers. Answering a later question from the floor he spoke about the role of women as nurturers, but he also sees women as enablers getting things done. There is no reason why women can't be Readers. He wants to open up rather than restrict. We all need to work together and look forward to the future

Answering a question about relations with the Muslim community, the Archdiocese has a food bank which serves 8,000 per month, and it supported Muslims during Ramadan. This was an example of helping one another during the pandemic and he posed the question if religious leaders can do this and talk together why can't the people. He will ask Fr Nephon to schedule this topic for one of his evening discussions.

(Notification of a related webinar was sent to parishioners)

Archbishop Nikitas finished his report by telling us about the diocese's first Christmas concert at Aghia Sophia Cathedral on 2nd December. The Cathedral's Byzantine choir will be followed by a black gospel choir and ending with a sing along. The event is free but seats need to be booked on Eventbrite, as Covid restrictions limit space.

Celia Olsson, Parish Lay Delegate

The Entry of the Most Holy Mother of God into the Temple

The account from the Protoevangelium of Saint James:

“And she cared for her child through the months. When she was two years old, Joachim said, “Let us take her to the Temple of the Lord, to fulfil the promise we made, lest the Lord should be angry with us and find our gift unacceptable.” But Anna said, “Let us wait until her third year, so that she will not look for her father or mother.” And Joachim agreed, “Let us wait.”

And the child became three years old. And Joachim said, “Let us call the pure daughters of the Hebrews, and let them take their lamps, and let them be lit, so that the child will not turn back, nor will her heart be drawn away from the Temple of the Lord.” And they did so, and went up to the Temple of the Lord.

And the priest welcomed her, and kissed her, and said, “The Lord has magnified your name among all generations. Through you, the Lord will reveal his redemption to the people of Israel in the last days.” And he set her down on the third step of the altar, and the Lord God poured his grace upon her. And she danced on her feet, and the House of Israel loved her.

And her parents went down, marvelling and praising and glorifying the Lord God that the child had not turned back. And Mary was in the Temple of the Lord. She was nurtured like a dove, and received food from the hand of an angel.”

The Gospel of James (or the Protoevangelium of James) is a 2nd-century 'infancy gospel' telling of the miraculous conception of the Virgin Mary, her upbringing and marriage to Joseph, the journey of the holy couple to Bethlehem, the birth of Jesus, and events immediately following. It is the earliest surviving assertion of the perpetual virginity of Mary, meaning her virginity not just prior to the birth of Jesus, but during and afterwards, and ... became a widely influential source for Mariology. Wikipedia

Stichera for the Feast

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 named. 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 as the dwelling place of God.

The young girls rejoice today, and with their lamps in hand they go in reverence before the spiritual Lamp, as she enters into the Holy of Holies. They foreshadow the brightness beyond speech that is to shine forth from her and to give light by the Spirit to those that sit in the darkness of ignorance.

When all hope was gone, Joachim and Anna gave birth to the undefiled Virgin, and in piety they promised to offer her to God. Today they fulfil their promise, giving their child as a sacrifice in the house of God.

Memory Eternal!

It is with great sadness that we report the death on October 12th at his Care Home near Bristol of Bob Lock, husband for over 65 years of Daphne Mary, one of the founding members of our parish. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Daphne and her family.

The funeral took place in Ilfracombe on November 8th.

Messages of condolence may be sent to Daphne at

West Green House, Wotton Road, Kingswood,
Wotton-under-Edge, GL12 8RA