



# Prophet Elias News

**News in the time of self – isolation for the Orthodox Church  
of the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon  
12<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> December 2021**



## **Metropolitan Anthony on the Invitation to the Bridal Feast**

*The Gospel reading for Sunday December 12<sup>th</sup> is the parable of the Bridal Feast – Luke 14: 16-24*

Time and again we hear this parable of Christ. If we only received it deep in our hearts, if we only saw ourselves as we are depicted in it, both to our shame and to our glory, to our hope! How many of us are those who are described there, are the people who could say when they are called by God - not to do anything in particular, but simply to be with Him, to share His joy, to be partakers of the grace - how many of us would say to Him (and we do, but are we aware of it?): Lord, I belong to the earth; didn't You take me out of the earth, have I not been fashioned out of the dust? The earth is my mother, the earth is the closest thing to me, I belong to it. Forgetting that indeed, we belong to it; not only we are taken out of it, fashioned out of it, but we shall return to it as dust, unless there is the other dimension that has grown in us, unless we realize - not only with our mind but with all our being - that we were indeed made out of earth, but by the powerful, the creative word of God, and that we belong to Him Who spoke this word, we are akin to Him more than we are to this earth, if that is possible. We feel as though we have set roots deep, deep into the earth, as though we derived from it all that we are: our life - yes, called out of it; but also all that it produces, beauty and joy, and everything; and it is so easy to forget that we are called to be more than just the dust of this earth!

And then, how often do we think, there is no time for me to spend in the intimacy of God, to be with Him, just to be, just to be happy, to be together with Him. Haven't I got a task? It may be something that I feel is important! It may even be something that we imagine is important to God - is there time for me to be with Him now? We may be with Him later, one day, when all things are fulfilled, or when death has severed our fetters, our link with the earth and with what we imagine is our task. And our tasks are endless; one of the divines of the past said that the image of the five yokes of oxen indeed speaks of the work we feel we must fulfil; but also perhaps, do they not represent our five senses? Do they not represent the five senses which we use continuously, in all directions, anarchically, unpurposefully, being by them blinded to the invisible? Isn't it true that the demon of the noonday is this moment when everything created, all the visible, becomes so intensely, powerfully perceptible to us that it blinds us to the invisible?

And then the last man said, I can't share your joy, oh Lord, for I have my own. I have taken a bride, my heart is full of rejoicing! Can I turn away from my joy, forget it for one moment, let go of it and share yours? Let this joy of mine become every day's life, lose its newness perhaps, and then I will share yours.

Don't these various images depict us? And what can God do about it? He offers Himself; He wants to share with us all that there is: yes, even this earth, but on His terms; to use an image of Saint Ephraim of Syria, to make this very earth for us a sacrament of initiation: a sacrament, a divine act by which He Himself is disclosed, and the means by which He discloses Himself become holy, sacred, shining with glory divine... Yes, He wants us to fulfil a task on earth, but that this task should be what He is doing, to make us co-workers with Him, not people sent away from His presence, but people who have become so perfectly one with Him that what we do is what He does and what we are is what He is, ultimately, and that His joy should be ours, the joy that cannot be contained in our hearts - so great it is, it fills the heart of God.

But isn't there a way? Yes! Become like the people to whom the King sent His servants: they were lame, they were beggars, they were in rags, they were the scum of the earth; but because they were deprived of everything, their longing was for all; and 'all' was not simply the little things of the earth that seem so great to us, but something greater: the Kingdom of God, where all should be love,

beauty, truth, justice, all they have longed all their lives; and it is to them the Angels of God, the servants of the King were sent!

What about us? Couldn't we become, each of us, one of these people? Aren't we as blind as the blind, as lame as the lame, as poor as the poorest? Why not turn to God and receive the earth, and our task, and all that can fill our life and our hearts on God's own terms, with Him? And this is what He is offering us on this day of the Nativity which we will keep next week; the day when He became one of us to show us that while being human - totally, perfectly, unreservedly human, and yet, totally pervaded with divinity - we can become one with Him, partakers of the divine nature, partakers of His cross and of His glory. Let us reflect on this; let us become the lame, and the poor, and the blind, and the hungry; and then as the Beatitude tells us, we shall be fed.

Sermon given by Metropolitan Anthony on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1990  
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## Noticeboard

### Services in December:

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>: Divine Liturgy Saint James' Hall 10.30am**

Celebration of the Feast of Saint Anne

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>: Orthros and Divine Liturgy Plymouth 9.30am Torquay 9.30am

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

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>: Orthros and Divine Liturgy Plymouth 9.30am Torquay 9.30am

Friday 24<sup>th</sup>: Christmas Eve Vespers Saint Anne's 6.30

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>: CHRISTMAS DAY Divine Liturgy St James' Hall 10am**

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>: Matins and Divine Liturgy (in Romanian) St Stephen's 9am

### Services in January:

*(Please note that the Covid Pandemic may still disrupt our plans. Arrangements for Plymouth, Torquay and Saint Stephen's will appear in the next issue.)*

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup>: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup>: Typika Saint Anne's 10.30am**

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup>: Vespers for the Feast of Theophany Saint Anne's 6pm

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup>: Divine Liturgy Saint Anne's 10.30am\***

Celebration of the Feast of Theophany. Fr Trayan will bring blessed water for distribution.

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup>: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup>: Typika Saint Anne's 10.30am**

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>: Divine Liturgy Saint Anne's 10.30am\***

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup>: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm

**Sunday 30<sup>th</sup>: Typika Saint Anne's 10.30**

**\* Please note that these services will start promptly. We are hugely grateful to Father Trayan for coming to serve the Liturgy for us; he is on a very tight schedule on Saturdays and needs to get away in good time.**

### Reception:

Sunday December 19<sup>th</sup>: **Joshua Feyi-Waboso** will be received by chrismation at the Church of the Archangel Michael and the Holy Piran at Laity Moor near Truro. Josh worshipped with us as a catechumen through Lent and Easter this year, when he was in his final year at Exeter University Medical School. He is now working as a junior doctor in Cornwall. May God grant him Many Years!

## Plans for the New Year

The Parish Advisory Council have decided that in the New Year we should begin again to hold the majority of our services in Saint Anne's. This decision was prompted initially by the increasing difficulty of booking Saint James' Hall on Saturdays, as long-standing groups have begun to resume their activities. We also felt that we needed, now that most people have been vaccinated against Covid 19, to have some form of service every week at Saint Anne's so as to reestablish a sense of continuity. Father Trayan has agreed to come on two Saturdays each month to celebrate Divine Liturgy; on weekends where there is no Liturgy Father Nicanor will lead the Typika when he can, otherwise we will do Reader's Typika. We will continue to ask people to wear facecoverings in Saint Anne's for the time being.

We are very aware that there are some for whom coming to Saint Anne's is for various reasons not practicable in the present circumstances. Please talk to any member of the PAC if this applies in your case, so that we can look into what alternative arrangements might be possible from time to time. *Ed.*

## Liturgy at St Anne's on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2021

For the first time since the beginning of Covid lockdowns there was a Liturgy in St Anne's to which everyone who wanted to could come. (*It was really only the choir who could go to Fr Peter's streamed services last summer.*) Fr Patrick came from Norfolk and celebrated Vespers on the Saturday evening before and then the Liturgy on the Sunday. He was assisted by Fr Nicanor and Deacon Brandon and Mitch (Alexander) served. About 30 people came and it was a lovely to see people back in our 'home'.

Celia



## This Fortnight We Celebrate

On Sunday December 12<sup>th</sup>: **Sunday of the Holy Forefathers**

We wish **Mother Sarah, Naomi S and Sally L** a **Happy Feast and Many Years!**  
**Saint Spyridon the Wonderworker** Patron Saint of Corfu (c348)

On Monday 13<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Herman of Alaska**, Wonderworker of All America (1837)  
**Virgin Martyr Lucia (Lucy)** of Syracuse (304)

On Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Stephen of Sourozh** in Crimea (787)

On Friday 17<sup>th</sup>: **Prophet Daniel** and the **Three Holy Children** (c600BC)

We wish **Fr Daniel Kaddu** in Uganda, **Daniel L** and **Daniel W**  
a **Happy Feast and Many Years!**

On Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>: **Commemoration of All the Righteous Who Pleas'd God, from Adam**  
**down to Joseph the Betrothed of the Mother of God**

We wish **Adam R** a **Happy Feast and Many Years!**

On Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>: **THE NATIVITY ACCORDING TO THE FLESH OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST**

**The Adoration of the Magi, Melchior, Caspar and Balthazar**

**Commemoration of the Shepherds in Bethlehem** who went to see the Lord.

We wish **Christos P** and **Father Ian** and **all members of the Parish of the**  
**Nativity of Christ in Lewes** a **Happy Feast and Many Years!**

## Advent Calendar

He will come like last leaf's fall.  
One night when the November wind  
has flayed the trees to the bone, and earth  
wakes choking on the mould,  
the soft shroud's folding.

He will come like frost.  
One morning when the shrinking earth  
opens on mist, to find itself  
arrested in the net  
of alien, sword-set beauty.

He will come like dark.  
One evening when the bursting red  
December sun draws up the sheet  
and penny-masks its eye to yield  
the star-snowed fields of sky.

He will come, will come,  
will come like crying in the night,  
like blood, like breaking,  
as the earth writhes to toss him free.  
He will come like child.

Rowan Williams  
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## The God We Hardly Knew

No one can celebrate  
a genuine Christmas  
without being truly poor.  
The self-sufficient, the proud,  
those who, because they have  
everything, look down on others,  
those who have no need  
even of God - for them there  
will be no Christmas.

Only the poor, the hungry,  
those who need someone  
to come on their behalf,  
will have that someone.  
That someone is God.  
Emmanuel. God-with-us.  
Without poverty of spirit  
there can be no abundance of God.

Óscar Romero  
Archbishop of San Salvador  
(assassinated 24<sup>th</sup> March 1980)

Lo, the time of our salvation is at hand. Make ready, O cave; the Virgin draws nigh to give birth. Be glad and rejoice, O Bethlehem, land of Judah, for from thee our Lord has shone forth as the dawn. Hearken, ye mountains and hills and all ye lands around Judaea: for Christ comes in His love for mankind, to save the man He fashioned.

Let us celebrate, O ye people, the Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ, and raising our minds on high let us go in spirit to Bethlehem; and with the eyes of our soul let us look upon the Virgin, as she hastens to the cave to give birth to our God, the Lord of all. Joseph, when he beheld the greatness of this wonder, thought that he saw a mortal wrapped as a babe in swaddling clothes; but from all that came to pass he understood that it was the true God, who grants the world great mercy.

Let us celebrate, O ye people, the Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ, and raising our minds on high let us go in spirit to Bethlehem; and let us look upon the great mystery in the cave. For Eden is opened once again, when from a pure Virgin God comes forth, perfect in His divinity as in His manhood. Therefore let us cry: Holy God, Thou Father without beginning: Holy and Mighty, Thou Son made flesh: Holy and Immortal, Thou Spirit the Comforter: Holy Trinity, Glory to Thee.

From Vespers for the Forefeast of the Nativity