



Prophet Elias News

**News in a time of pandemic for the Orthodox Church of the
Holy Prophet Elias in Devon
23rd January – 5th February 2022**



Homily on the Meeting of the Lord by St. Theophan the Recluse

What a tender scene the Meeting of the Lord shows us! The venerable elder Simeon, holding the infant God in his hands, on either side of him are the righteous Joseph and the Most Holy Mother of God. Not far away is the Prophetess Anna, an eighty-year-old faster and woman of prayer. Their eyes are all directed toward the Saviour. Their attention is absorbed by Him and they drink in spiritual sweetness from Him, which feeds their souls. You can judge for yourself how blessed was the state of these souls!

However, brethren, we are called not only to think about this blessedness, but also to taste it in reality, for all are called to have and carry the Lord in themselves, and to disappear in Him with all the powers of their spirit. When we have reached that state, then our blessedness will be no less than that of those who participated in the Meeting of the Lord. They were blessed who saw it; we shall be blessed who have not seen, but believed. Pay attention. I will show you briefly how to achieve this. Here is what you should do.

1. First of all, repent. Remember that nothing must be done in spiritual life without repentance. No matter what anyone endeavours to seek, let the beginning of it be repentance; anything begun without repentance was begun in vain. Thus, first of all, repent—that is, weep over everything bad that you have done, and resolve to do only what is pleasing to God. This will be like turning your gaze and your whole body towards the path of meeting the Lord, and taking the initial step upon that path.

2. Next, keep this state of repentance constant; establish for yourself a manner of life and conduct that would make every step or movement something directing your attention to our Lord and Saviour. Such an order of life will establish itself naturally if: a) you do everything that you do for the Glory of the Lord and Saviour, for Christ's sake. Here we mean not only great deeds, but all deeds. For seeing and hearing, silence and speaking, food and drink, sitting and walking, work and rest can all be dedicated to the Lord and sanctified by His All-Holy Name. There isn't a minute when we are not doing something; so, by thus dedicating your activity, you will be meeting the Lord minute by minute, directing all of your activities to His glory. You can even more conveniently do this and reap fruits from it if you also: b) insert into the order of your daily activities the practice of prayer—both in church and at home. As the content of all prayer is the Lord and our turning to Him, by doing it and participating in it you will be meeting the Lord through your heart's sympathy and delight. If after this: c) you fill all your interim time with reading the Scriptures about the Lord, listening to talks about Him, or with your own contemplation of Him and the great work of salvation that He wrought on earth, then you will see for yourself that nothing will remain within us or outside of us that does not bring remembrance of the Lord, bring Him to your attention, or carry your spirit to meet Him.

3. Just the same, you should not forget that all of these labours and occupations are only preparation. You should not stop at them, but rather strive onward. The labour of consecrating all our activities to the Lord should have the quality of reaching with our whole soul's desire only for the Lord; when we do all our prayers or attend the Divine services, a feeling should form in our hearts of accord only with the Lord and what is His. Underlying our reading and hearing the Holy Scripture about the Lord should only be the eager directing of our mind's attention toward the Lord alone. This is what is called tasting the Lord, rest in Him, mentally standing before the Lord, walking in the presence of the Lord, and ceaseless prayer—the object of all God's saints' labour, desire, and seeking.

I wish that all of you who celebrate the Meeting of the Lord be vouchsafed this blessing. If anyone complains that he would like the fruit but the labour it takes to get it is too hard, the answer is: Good. There is an easier method, a method simpler than the one laid out. Here it is! Repent; then, with zeal for keeping all of God's commandments, walk unflinching in the Lord's presence, striving for Him with all your mind's attention, all your heart's feelings, and all your will's desires. If you thus dispose yourself, you will soon meet the Lord. He will come down to you and abide in you, as in the embrace of Righteous Simeon. There is no other way to lighten the labour needed to seek a meeting with the Lord. The Jesus Prayer: Lord Jesus

Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, is powerful and strong to help in this work. Again, however, not by itself; but under the condition that all the strength of our spirit be directed toward the Lord! Be sober, be vigilant (1 Pet. 5:8). Seek those things which are above—and your life is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:1, 3). Then, having become one in spirit with the Lord (cf. 1 Cor. 6:17), you will behold and embrace the Lord, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you (Jn 16:22), neither in this age, nor in the age to come. Amen.

translated by Nun Cornelia (Rees)

Posted at <https://www.stnicholasoc.org/feast-meeting-of-our-lord>

Like a Prophet of Old: Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu by Metropolitan Petros of Accra

I never had the privilege of meeting Archbishop Desmond Tutu face to face, yet he was very much a part of my life while I was growing up in a South Africa characterized by apartheid and even after the fall of that deplorable system.

I remember how, as a child, I would watch scenes of rioting on the news programme, the clashes between demonstrators and the security forces, frightening scenes particularly for a child. And there in the thick of the clash one could discern a man in a cassock trying to come between the two sides, urging calm and sobriety. It was not that he disagreed with the demonstrators and their expression of absolute frustration and anger. It was that he had chosen the path of nonviolence.

Like the prophets of old, he condemned injustice, not mincing his words but rather “calling a spade a spade.” If one was neutral in situations of injustice, one had chosen the side of the oppressor. “When missionaries came to Africa, they had the Bible and we had the land. They said, ‘Let us pray,’ and we closed our eyes. When we opened them, we had the Bible, and they had the land.” To this statement he added, “If you want to keep people subjugated, the last thing you place in their hands is a Bible. There’s nothing more radical, nothing more revolutionary, nothing more subversive against injustice and oppression than the Bible.”

As Chairman [after apartheid] of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, he gathered testimony documenting the viciousness of apartheid. “You are overwhelmed by the extent of evil,” he said, “but it is necessary to open the wound to cleanse it.” In return for an honest accounting of past crimes, the committee offered amnesty, establishing what Archbishop Tutu called the principle of restorative—rather than retributive—justice. “Forgiveness,” he said, “does not mean condoning what has been done. Forgiving means abandoning your right to pay back the perpetrator in his own coin.”

Bringing people together is what was for him *ubuntu*—the African sense of belonging—“I am because we are.” He believed that far too often people see themselves as individuals, separated from one another, whereas we are all connected and what we do affects the whole world. When we do well, it spreads out and affects the whole of humanity. “My humanity is bound up in yours and we can only be human together.” Differences are not intended to separate, to alienate. We are different precisely in order to realize our need for one another. “We are made for love. Without love we will be like plants without water.”

Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu died on December 26, 2021, and the Dalai Lama is quoted to have said, “We have lost a great man who lived a truly meaningful life.” In his characteristic manner, the Archbishop himself had at one time said, “I give great thanks to God that he has created a Dalai Lama. Do you really think as some have argued, that God will be saying: ‘You know that guy, the Dalai Lama, is not bad - but what a pity he is not a Christian?’ I don’t think that is the case—because, you see, God is not a Christian.”

Desmond Tutu scandalized. “We may be surprised by the people we find in heaven. God has a soft spot for sinners. His standards are quite low.” He was that little pebble in our shoe that just wouldn’t let us become “too comfortable” with injustice, with our own self-interests, our complacency. Desmond Tutu was our alarm clock, our conscience. God will count him among the blessed.

Rest in peace, your Eminence. We are made poorer by your loss. May your prophetic role and legacy of nonviolence, justice, reconciliation, accountability, and the human dignity of all live on.

Metropolitan Petros (Parginos) is the ruling hierarch for the Metropolis of Accra, Ghana in the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa.

Abridged from the posting on Orthodoxy in Dialogue 31st December 2021. For full text go to: <https://orthodoxyindialogue.com/2021/12/31/like-a-prophet-of-old-archbishop-desmond-mpilo-tutu>

As Celia commented on hearing of Archbishop Tutu’s death: ‘The world has lost a wonderful laugh.’ Ed.

St Gregory's Foundation Update

Many thanks to those who bought SGF Christmas cards. As things were still not back to normal a relatively small stock was ordered; however, all packs were sold.

The charity's winter news bulletin carries news of Mkumali, the centre for needy young people in Georgia mentioned in my last update (Newsletter 12-26 June), where the work continues despite various setbacks. These include a falling-off in demand for its cartridge refilling enterprise, doubtless due ultimately to Covid, and some serious health problems among staff and residents.

On a brighter note there is good news from the organisation 'Physical Rehabilitation', which helps severely disabled children in St Petersburg to achieve greater mobility. This report is accompanied by an inspiring photograph of a 7 year-old girl crippled by spastic tetra paresis standing in a 'verticalizer' and assisted by an 'arm orthosis' helping her parents to paint a wall – a wonderful achievement for a child who might otherwise be condemned to permanent inactivity in a wheelchair.

The cover story reports on the visit last October by the Foundation's Royal Patron HRH Prince Michael of Kent to the Sunflower Centre in St Petersburg, which helps young people raised in orphanages to make a smooth transition to independent adult life. Without adequate support orphanage leavers can easily get involved in crime, debt and generally antisocial activities, and those who (inevitably!) bring children into the world don't always have much idea of how to bring them up, thus spawning a new problem generation. Sunflower runs classes to help them become more effective parents, and has an impressive record of success stories to its credit.

The annual contribution of SGF to the Sunflower Centre is £30,000, and this is the focus of their current Christmas appeal. If you would like to make a donation, I can provide the necessary contact details.

Hugh Allen
(hughallen188@gmail.com)

Blessing Our Houses

During the great prayer of blessing of the water at Theophany, one of the petitions is: 'For those who shall draw of it and take of it unto the sanctification of their homes, let us pray to the Lord.' A lovely time to do our house blessing is on the Sunday of Zaccheus (6th February this year) when the gospel reading recalls Christ's insistence on going to the tax collector's home, and his words after Zaccheus' repentance: 'Today is salvation come to this house'. Again this year most of us are unlikely to be able to call on a priest for this, so here again is the advice we offered last year about performing this important ceremony ourselves.

All we need is a bowl of blessed water (from a previous year if that is all we have – it doesn't have a 'best before' date), and something to sprinkle it with. We begin the ceremony at our icon corner, and that is where we return for the closing Troparion. Father Patrick has suggested this outline:

To begin:

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us.

O Heavenly King.... Holy God.... x3 Glory....Both now....

O all holy Trinity.... Lord have mercy x3 Glory....Both now.... Our Father....

Then sing or read the Troparion of the Feast:

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest, for the voice of Father bore witness unto Thee calling Thee the beloved Son, and the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed His word as sure and steadfast. O Christ, our God who hast appeared and enlightened the world, glory to Thee.

Then the prayer:

O God our Saviour, the True Light, Who wast baptized in the Jordan by John to renew all men by the waters of regeneration, and Who didst condescend to enter under the roof of Zacchaeus, bringing salvation to him and to all his house: As the same Lord, also keep safe from harm those who dwell here; grant us Thy blessing, purification and health of body and soul; grant all our petitions that are for our salvation and eternal life; for Thou art blessed, together with Thine eternal Father, and Thy Most-holy, Good and Life-creating Spirit, now and for ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Then sprinkle holy water all round the house, singing (if possible) 'When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized...'

At the end, after the final troparion at our icon corner: 'Through the prayers of our holy fathers...' as we began.

Andrew Walker - Memory Eternal!

Andrew Walker, a founding member of the Deanery parish of St Peter & St Paul in London and Professor of Theology Culture & Education at King's College London until his retirement in 2010, passed away peacefully on the 26th October 2021. Below are some brief extracts from a reflection by Costa Carras, a long-term friend and collaborator in the work of our Church in this country. The full text can be found at [Andrew Walker – Memory Eternal! | Deanery \(thyateira-deanery.uk\)](http://Andrew Walker – Memory Eternal! | Deanery (thyateira-deanery.uk))

‘Seventy years ago British Orthodox were a rare species. Today they are a small but significant group in the country's religious life. Andrew Walker was one of those who played an important role in this gradual development.

Andrew made at least three major contributions to the growth of Orthodox Christianity in these islands. In the 1970s he was chosen by the late Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh as one of a three-member team to draft Statutes for the Diocese. The result was a judicious blend of the forward-looking provisions of the 1917 Church Council in Moscow with provisions taken from British practice.

Andrew was an active participant in the work of the British Council of Churches Commission on Trinitarian Doctrine, a proposal initiated by the late Metropolitan Anthony to celebrate the 1600th Anniversary of the Council of Constantinople in 381. The work of the BCC Commission was a triumph of living ecumenism.

In the 1990s, together with [Costa Carras], Andrew co-edited a book of essays under the title "Living Orthodoxy in the Living World". The fact that it was translated into and published in several other languages demonstrated there was - and remains - a widespread need and demand for such work.

Andrew described himself as a ‘wayward son’. He remained always a person of unimpeachable integrity, extraordinary determination and total commitment to search for the truth, without a trace of hypocrisy. Not all ‘dutiful sons’ have achieved the same!’

This Fortnight We Celebrate

On Sunday January 23rd : **Sunday Of The Blind Man** (Luke 18: 35-43)

On Monday 24th: **Saint Ksenia of Saint Petersburg** (1803)

We wish **Ksenia S** and **Xenia C** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Tuesday 25th: **Saint Gregory the Theologian** (389)

Saint Alexander Hotovitsky (c1937) Martyr under the Bolshevik yoke

On Thursday 27th: Translation of the Relics of **Saint John Chrysostom**

On Friday 28th: **Saint Ephraim the Syrian** (373)

Saint Isaac of Nineveh (7th C)

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

On Saturday 29th: **Saint Gildas the Wise**, Abbot of Llantillud and later of Rhuys, Brittany (c570)

Author of *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae* (‘On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain’)

On Sunday 30th: **Sunday of Zacchaeus** (Luke 19: 1-10)

Synaxis of the Great Hierarchs and Ecumenical Teachers **Basil the Great**,

Gregory the Theologian and **John Chrysostom**

On Tuesday February 1st: **Martyr Tryphon** of Campsada in Syria (250)

We wish **Father Tryan** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

Saint Bridget Abbess of Kildare (c525)

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

On Wednesday 2nd: **THE MEETING OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE**

On Thursday 3rd: **The Righteous Symeon the God-Receiver** and the **Prophetess Anna**

We wish **Symeon L**, **Anya K** and **Felicia F** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

Omissions

Editorial lapses led to two namedays being omitted from the last newsletter – those of **Ita G** on January 15th – **Saint Ita** ‘Foster-mother of the saints of Erin’ (6thC), and **Christa Antonina S** on 17th – **Saint Antony the Great** (356)

Albeit belatedly, we wish them both **Many Years!**

Noticeboard

Pattern of Services

God willing, we now have a regular pattern of services in the parish.

On the **first, third and fifth Sundays** of the month, the **Typika** will be served at 10.30am at Saint Anne's, led by Father Nicanor. **Vespers** will be sung the previous evening at 6pm.

On the **second and fourth Saturdays**, Fr Trayan and Fr Nicanor will celebrate **Divine Liturgy** at Saint Anne's at 10.30am.

We are very aware that in the present circumstances there are some members of the parish who feel unable to come to Saint Anne's. We are looking into the possibility of continuing to hold occasional services at Saint James' Hall, which is both larger and easier of access. Details of these, and any changes or additions to the above pattern will be posted in advance in the newsletter.

As far as possible services will begin at the stated times. This is particularly important in the case of those conducted by Fr Trayan, who is on a tight schedule and needs to get away on time.

While Covid-19 infection rates remain high, we ask everyone who can to take a lateral flow test before coming to church.

Saturday January 22nd : Divine Liturgy Saint Anne's 10.30am

Saturday 29th: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm

Sunday 30th: Typika Saint Anne's 10.30am

Orthros and Divine Liturgy Plymouth 10.30am Torquay 10.30am

Tuesday February 1st: Vespers for the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord Saint Anne's 6.30pm

Wednesday 2nd: The Meeting of the Lord – for services at Plymouth and Torquay go to

[Services - Saint Demetrios & Saint Nikitas Greek Orthodox Church \(plymchurch.com\)](http://plymchurch.com)

Saturday 5th: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm

Sunday 6th: Typika Saint Anne's 10.30am

Followed by Blessing of Candles. *(It is traditional at the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord -- Candlemass – to bring candles to church to be blessed for domestic use.)*

Saturday 12th: Divine Liturgy Saint Anne's 10.30am

Sunday 13th: **Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee – Beginning of the Lenten Triodion**

Matins Saint Anne's 10.30am

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

The following week – 14th to 19th February – is Fast-free.

Saturday 19th: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm

Sunday 20th: **Sunday of the Prodigal Son** Matins and Typika Saint Anne's 10.30am

Saturday 26th: Divine Liturgy Saint Anne's 10.30am

Sunday 27th: **Sunday of the Last Judgement** Matins Saint Anne's 10.30am

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

How incredibly wonderful it is that God says to you, to me: "There is nothing you can do to make me love you less. I take you very seriously – you, body and soul, you, the visible and invisible of you. I love you. I love you. I love you."

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Sermon on the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, February 1st 2004

Posted on ACNS Anglican Communion News Service

<https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2004/02/sermon-by-archbishop-desmond-tutu-at-southwark-cathedral.aspx>

Mice for Uganda



In the run-up to Christmas we sold ten of Irina R's delightful mouse dolls, meaning we have an extra £75 to send to Father Daniel at Saint Cyprian's. This amount will be earmarked specifically to support disadvantaged children in the parish.

Thank you so much, Irina

An Unexpected Treat



It was a great joy to welcome Father Alexander and Patsy to Saint Anne's for Vespers on the Eve of Theophany, when Father Alexander blessed the water for our use during the coming year. He and Patsy called in at Exeter on their way home to London from a short holiday.

Homeless Books

There is a box of books at the back of Saint Anne's, kindly donated by Christa. Some are on religious themes, some of general interest, all are looking for appreciative homes. Please look through them and take whatever speaks to you. We would like everything to go; donations would be gratefully accepted but are not essential.

*Fill your house with stacks of books
In all the crannies and all the nooks.*

Dr Seuss

Memory Eternal – Jim Forest

Some readers will have known Jim Forest personally, many will have encountered him through his writings – among them *Praying with Icons*, *Loving Our Enemies*, lives of Thomas Merton and Dorothy Day, his introduction to *Mother Maria Skobtsova: Essential Writings*, or his personal memoir *Writing Straight with Crooked Lines* - or in connection with his lifelong work as a peace activist.

Jim died at his home in the Netherlands on January 13th at the age of 80. May his memory be eternal.

<https://orthodoxyindialogue.com/2022/01/17/jim-forest-the-holiness-of-friendship-by-paul-pynkoski/#>

[JIM FOREST: A EULOGY FOR MY FRIEND by Vincent van Buuren | ORTHODOXY IN DIALOGUE](#)

URGENT APPEAL FROM CTaX (Christians Together across Exeter)

We are URGENTLY seeking a MEETINGS' SECRETARY, a TREASURER and a WEBMASTER to join our team. We earnestly believe someone in your church can help! Please forward this to them, and invite them to apply at ctaxexeter@gmail.com for more info.

Two Big Birthdays

Two of the cornerstones of our parish will celebrate their 80th birthdays during this fortnight - Irina, choirmistress, parish archivist, and chatelaine, first of 55 Regents Park then of 32 Barnfield Road – on 30th January, and Father John - our parish priest for forty years from the beginning, without whom our community would simply not exist - on February 4th. We owe them both a huge debt of gratitude. May they have a prosperous and peaceful life, health, salvation, and furtherance in all good things, and may God grant them Many Years.