



The Tower

April 2020

The Christian Orthodox Community of Saint Barbara the Great Martyr,
Overleigh Cemetery, Overleigh Road, Chester CH4 7HW

Parish Website: <http://www.stbarbara.org.uk/>

Diocesan Website: www.thyateira.org.uk

Facebook: [Greek Orthodox Community of Saint Barbara the Great Martyr in Chester](#)

Charity No: 1144751

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is not perhaps surprising that these difficult times should occur as we celebrate Great Lent. It is an opportune moment to review our lives and our relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Surely it is time to concern ourselves less with the availability of toilet paper and more with the state of our souls. It is the moment to enhance our spiritual lives through prayer and fasting, through the active support for those around us, not only our families, but for our friends and neighbours, both those who love us and those who hate us. Above all it is for us to show to all the love that Christ poured out over us even as He hung upon the Cross.

It is particularly important that we care for the needs of those who are forced to remain behind closed doors through illness at this time. Please advise the clergy so that pastoral visits may be undertaken.

We intend that our Paschal services will take place as usual, subject to any directions that may come from the Archdiocese in the future. We will keep you all informed as we receive updates.

*May God grant you health and strength at this time
Fr Pancratios & Presb. Anna,
Fr Dn John & Diaconisa Vera*

Until Further Notice

It breaks my heart to present the following information to you all:

Following instructions received from Archbishop Niketas we have to advise the following:

For the foreseeable future there will be no public worship at Saint Barbara's. This means that NO Divine Liturgies or weekday services will take place until further notice from the Archdiocese.

Additionally we are called to defer Baptisms, 40-Days, and other occasional services until the present situation is resolved.

The Narthex (Entrance Porch) will be open for private prayer and to light candles at the times and days given below. Names of the Living and the Departed may be listed on the Commemoration slips placed on the candle desk.

An Akathist will be offered at 12 noon on each of these days.

We recommend that while this situation prevails we should redouble our prayers for the sick and the suffering for their families, for ourselves and for all those who are tirelessly fighting to control this virus. Please make good use of your prayer books for Morning and Evening Prayers and such other prayers as you may have. There are also many broadcasts on the Internet (YouTube etc.) where the Divine Liturgy is being celebrated.

The Church Narthex only will be open from 12 noon to 2pm as follows:

Wednesday – Friday – Saturday – and on Sunday 11am to 2pm

It is important that we follow carefully the guidelines published by the NHS and government which are offered concerning the virus. All the faithful are asked to place close heed to these, as to protect themselves and the community.

With love and prayers for you all at this trying time,

Father Pancratios.

Priest in Charge:

Very Rev'd Protopresbyter Pancratios Sanders

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Rev'd Father John Petkov

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Fr Pancratios is normally in church during the day on Tuesdays, Thursdays & Saturdays. Please check before setting out to avoid a wasted journey.

Church (Sunday) School is held after the time of Communion every Sunday of each month during school term times (except on major feasts).

Pastoral Visits, Weddings, Baptisms, Receptions, Catechism Classes, etc., by arrangement with Father Pancratios.

Confessions before or after Vespers, or before the Divine Liturgy, at other times by arrangement.

Memorials may be celebrated on Saturday evenings before Vespers

Principal Services for April

1 st	Wednesday	6.30pm	Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete
2 nd	Thursday	6.30pm	Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified gifts
3 rd	Friday	6.30pm	Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified gifts
		7.30pm	Akathist to the Mother of God
4 th	Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers
5 th	Sunday	10.00am	Matins
		11.00am	Divine Liturgy Fifth Sunday – St Mary of Egypt
8 th	Wednesday	6.30pm	Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified gifts
10 th	Friday	6.30pm	Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified gifts
11 th	Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers
12 th	Sunday	10.00am	Matins
		11.00am	Divine Liturgy Entry of Our Lord into Jerusalem – Palm Sunday

>>>> For Great & Holy Week Services – see separate sheet attached <<<<<

Holy Pascha

18 th	Saturday	11.00am	Vesperal Liturgy of Saint Basil
		11.30pm	Midnight Office
19 th		Midnight	ΕΠΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ, Matins of Pascha and Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom Paschal Feast follows
			Saint George, Patron of England
22 nd	Wednesday	6.30pm	Vespers
25 th	Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers
26 th	Sunday	10.00am	Matins
		11.00am	Divine Liturgy 2 nd Sunday of Pascha – St Thomas Sunday
29 th	Wednesday	6.30pm	Vespers Holy Apostle James, the son of Zebedee

Principal Services for May

2 nd	Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers
3 rd	Sunday	10.00am	Matins
		11.00am	Divine Liturgy 3 rd of Pascha – The Myrrh-bearing Women
6 th	Wednesday	6.30pm	Vespers The Vision of the Precious Cross over Jerusalem
9 th	Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers
10 th	Sunday	10.00am	Matins
		11.00am	Divine Liturgy 4 th of Pascha – The Paralysed Man -(Apostle Simon Zelotes)
13 th	Wednesday	6.30pm	Vespers Martyr Isidore of Chios
16 th	Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers
17 th	Sunday	10.00am	Matins
		11.00am	Divine Liturgy 5 th of Pascha – The Samaritan Woman - (Martyr Photini)
20 th	Wednesday	6.30pm	Vespers Emperor Constantine and his mother Helena
23 rd	Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers
24 th	Sunday	10.00am	Matins
		11.00am	Divine Liturgy 6 th of Pascha – The Blind Man - (St Symeon Stylites)
27 th	Wednesday	6.30pm	Vespers
		7.30pm	Divine Liturgy The Ascension of our Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ
30 th	Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers
31 st	Sunday	10.00am	Matins
		11.00am	Divine Liturgy 7 th of Pascha – Fathers of the 1 st Ecumenical Council

Please note all services may be subject to change or cancellation depending on the spread of Coronavirus

‘Thy will be done’

When you wish for physical health and do everything you can to ensure it, and yet remain ill, then say: “Thy will be done.” When you undertake something but your enterprise fails, say: “Thy will be done.” When you do good to others, but they repay you with evil, say: “Thy will be done.” When you would like to sleep but are attacked by insomnia, say: “Thy will be done.” In general, do not become irritated when anything is not done according to your will, but learn to submit in all things to the will of the Heavenly Father.

St John of Kronstadt +1909

A Scripture Reading Calendar for April

with Irish Saints (where known)

1	Fast**	Isaiah 41:4-14	Proverbs 15:20-16:9	St Cellach mac Congaille, Archbishop of Armagh, founder of Kells (815)
2	Fast**	Isaiah 42:5-16	Proverbs 16:17-17:17	St Brónach, the Virgin of Glen-Seichis, now Kilbronach (6thC)
3	Fast**	Isaiah 45:11-17	Proverbs 17:17-18:5	<i>St Burgundofara of Eboriac, now Faremoutiers (657)</i>
4	Fast**	Hebrews 9:24-28	Mark 8:27-31	St Tigernake, Abbot of Clones, Bishop of Clougher (549)
5	Fast**	Hebrews 9:11-14	Mark 10:32b-45	St Bécán, one of the 'Twelve Apostles of Ireland' (6thC)
6	Fast	Isaiah 48:17-49:4	Proverbs 19:16-25	<i>St Brychan, King in Wales with 24 saintly children (5thC)</i>
7	Fast	Isaiah 49:6-10	Proverbs 21:3-21	St Finnian, Abbot-Bishop of Clonard (c549)
8	Fast	Isaiah 58:1-11	Proverbs 21:23-22:4	<i>St Perpetuus, Bishop of Tours (490)</i>
9	Fast	Isaiah 65:8-16	Proverbs 23:15-24:5	<i>St Theodore, Abbot of Crowland, martyred by the Danes (869) – we have his relic</i>
10	Fast	Isaiah 66:10-24	Proverbs 31:8-31	<i>Martyrs Beocca, Ethor and others at Chertsey, martyred by the Danes (869)</i>
11	Fast**	Hebrews 12:28-13:8	John 11:1-45	St Maedhog, Abbot of Clonmore (6thC)
12	Fast***	Philippians 4:4-9	John 12:1-18	St Wigbert, disciple of St Egbert, pilgrim (690)
13	Fast	Job 1:1-12	Matthew 24:3-35	<i>St Guinoch of Buchan, Bishop (c838)</i>
14	Fast	Job 1:13-22	Matthew 24:35-26:2	St Tassach, disciple of St Patrick, First Bishop of Raholp (c495)
15	Fast	Job 2:1-10	Matthew 26:6-16	St Ruadhan, disciple of St Finian, Founder and Abbot of Lothra (c584)
16	Fast**	1 Corinthians 11:23-32	Matthew 26:2-27:2	St Elias, Monk and Abbot in Ireland and Germany (1021)
17	Strictfast	1 Corinthians 1:18-2:2	Matthew 27:1-61	<i>Monk-martyr Donnán of Eigg and those with him (618)</i>
18	Fast*	Romans 6:3-11	Matthew 28:1-20	St Laserian, founder of the monastery and bishopric of Leighlin (639)
19	Fastfree	Acts 1:1-8	John 1:1-17	<i>Hieromartyr Alphege, Archbishop of Canterbury (1012)</i>
20	Fastfree	Acts 1:12-17,21-26	John 1:18-28	St Gundebert, monk-martyr (8thC)
21	Fastfree	Acts 2:14-21	Luke 24:12-35	St Maelrubha of Apur Crossan (Applecross), monk of Bangor, Eire (722)
22	Fastfree	Acts 2:22-38a	John 1:35-51	<i>Martyr-brothers Arnvald on the day after their Baptism on the Isle of Wight (686)</i>
23	Fastfree	Acts 2:38-43	John 3:1-15	St Ibar of Beggerin, preacher in Leinster and Meath (5thC)
24	Fastfree	Acts 3:1-6	John 2:13-22	<i>St Dyfnan, founder of a church in Anglesey (5thC)</i>
25	Fastfree	Acts 3:11-16	John 3:22-33	St Maughold, Bishop of Croghan, Offaly, and patron of the Isle of Man (c489)
26		Acts 5:12-20	John 20:19-31	<i>Martyr Peter, First Bishop of Braga, Portugal (c60)</i>
27		Acts 3:19-26	John 2:1-11	St Assicus, first Bishop of Elphin, brought to the Faith by St Patrick (490)
28		Acts 4:1-10	John 3:16-21	St Crónán, Abbot of Roscrea (640)
29	Fast**	Acts 4:13-22	John 5:17-24	St Dictinus, first convert of St Patrick in Ulster (5thC)
30		Acts 4:23-31	John 5:24-30	<i>St Cynwl, Hermit and brother of St Deiniol, first Bishop of Bangor (6thC)</i>

* Wine is allowed on this day

** Wine & Oil are allowed on this day

*** Fish, Wine & Oil are allowed on this day

Sundays are shown in Bold

† Note: there are more readings on certain days - If you have no other Calendar, the Diocesan Hemerologion serves as a guide. Alternatively search the internet and download **Menologion 3.0** - a useful perpetual calendar.

A Parable

The boy was seriously ill. Many nights the mother sat by his bed, praying for God's help. On one of the heaviest nights there was a rustling of the wings of the angel of death.

"Do not take my son away!" Exclaimed his mother. - My boy has not grown up yet and has not known the most important thing - love.

"In heaven, he will meet all the best that is on earth," the angel whispered.

"But what will he bring with him?" Let him collect at least a few drops of love, and I'll let him go to heaven! - Mother pleaded.

- Good. Let it be as you ask. When he fills this thimble with drops of love, I'll come after him again," said the angel and laid a gold thimble in front of his mother.

The boy recovered, the mother told her son and asked: - Remember, son, about our agreement and do not hurry to love.

But can you order your heart? The boy's heart can skilfully love, and he generously gave this gift to his relatives. My mother was anxiously awaiting the moment when the thimble was full. Years passed, the son became an adult. He loved his family, his work and friends. He cared for his mother and father with tenderness, and the thimble was not filled.

The mother again saw the angel of death, but only when she ascended to heaven.

"You have tricked me, mother," the angel laughed. "No vessel can contain more than its volume, but the vessel of love is bottomless.

Some Further Thoughts on the Life and Traditions of our Church – Pascha: Christ is Risen – He is Risen Indeed

We conclude our journey through Great Lent on the Sixth Friday (10th April) and the following day of anticipation, Lazarus Saturday.

Now we begin that unique week of our progression through the crowded streets of Jerusalem in the footsteps of Christ-God. At each stage of this journey we relive the encounters that He had through that most earth-shaking week in human history.

So let us make our entry with Him on the Sunday of Palms; otherwise known as the Entry into Jerusalem. This is a triumphal entry, Jesus is hailed as a King, the people laid their clothes and palms in the roadway before Him and they cry 'Hosannah in the highest'. They greet Him as a King but He does not enter the city on a magnificent horse, befitting as king, but rather on an ass, a beast of burden. Here is a message to those who would understand that His Kingship is not of this world.

The Lord spends these coming days preaching and teaching both publicly in the Temple and privately to His disciples. He backs His teaching with high visibility and with acts. He turns out the stall-holders and money changers from their places in the Temple; He is seen both in the city and the villages close by. He speaks to the simple folk and the national leaders (Scribes and Pharisees) alike. His message is simple: Repent, believe in Me, believe in God – for the sake of your immortal souls.

For the first days of this week we recall specific events in our worship (Matins and the Presanctified Liturgy especially). Thus on Monday He curses the fig tree that bore no fruit (The Jews) and weeps over Jerusalem, the city that will reject Him. In our Tuesday worship, He challenges the leaders of the city who have become blinded by minutiae of their laws; He calls on the people to be prepared for the coming of the end times and recounts the parable of the Ten Virgins. Who, He says, will we be like – wise or foolish?

On Wednesday, the pace quickens – time is growing short for Christ's time on earth. We find Jesus back in Bethany at the house of Simon the Leper and the woman (Mary Magdalene) who anoints Him with very costly oil. In like manner we confess our sins and approach the Sacrament of Holy Unction. Laying ourselves bare before the Lord we receive His healing through anointing with the blessed oil.

Having received the holy oil for health of soul and body, we enter the Thursday of this sublime week with the celebration of the Vespertine Liturgy of Saint Basil at which some of the Holy Gifts will be held back to be reserved for the benefit of the sick throughout the year to come. On this day we give thanks for the institution of the Eucharist at a

simple table in an upper room of Jerusalem 2000 years ago. As night falls we remember that Christ came as a servant as our feet are formally washed by the priest.

In anticipation of Great and Holy Friday we now celebrate one of the most moving services of the year – the Matins of the Twelve Passion Gospels where the entire account of the Saviour's Passion is recounted as we stand and kneel before His Cross, no longer a Cross of Shame but a Cross of Hope!

Our journey continues from the foot of the Cross on the evening of Friday as we join with the Myrrh-bearing Women together with Joseph of Arimathea and take His blessed Body down from the Cross, reverently wrap It in burial clothes and carry It in procession to the tomb for burial. We sing the Lamentations and decorate His tomb with flowers. It is over! We disperse to our homes! We cannot perhaps understand with what heavy hearts those who bore His Body to the tomb must have felt. Not one of them could have imagined that the story was only just beginning!

The quiet of Holy Saturday contrasts with the hustle and bustle of the previous days, The Epitaphios stands in the middle of the church. Christ is entombed. But things begin to stir, the Vespertine Liturgy of Saint Basil is offered during which the dark hangings and vestments of Lent are changed for the bright ones of Pascha – a new Sun is rising over the world and these bright colours are a sign of this new day that is beginning – the Day of Christ.

For the weeks of Lent we have listened to the Old Testament Prophecies: The Messiah is coming, but when? Now it is confirmed for we close the books of the Old Testament in favour of the New as we read from the Book of the Acts of the Apostles and how the Church of Christ took shape in those early days.

Nothing will ever be the same for He, Christ, is Risen! Midnight comes and the Glory of the Lord is revealed as the Holy Fire passes from candle to candle; the darkness is expelled and the Light of Christ shines out. Our cry rings out in all the world 'Christ is Risen! – For He is Risen indeed! The joy of all Christians is expressed in this cry and the promises are fulfilled. The Gates of Hell can never again prevail for He is Risen.

The wonder of the Resurrection Procession is lit by the candles that dispels the darkness that can never overshadow us again. This new-found joy finds us back at the church and the beauty of the Paschal Matins and Divine Liturgy. Throughout the whole night there is one continuous cry: Christ is Risen – He is Risen indeed!