



# The Tower

April 2013

The Tower is the Newsletter of the  
Greek Orthodox Community of Saint Barbara the Great Martyr,  
Overleigh Cemetery Chapel, Overleigh Road, Handbridge, Chester

Parish website: *Under reconstruction*

Diocesan website: [www.thyateira.org.uk](http://www.thyateira.org.uk)

Facebook: [Greek Orthodox Community of Saint Barbara the Great Martyr in Chester](https://www.facebook.com/Greek-Orthodox-Community-of-Saint-Barbara-the-Great-Martyr-in-Chester)

Charity No: 1144751

*Dear brothers and sisters,*

Father Pancratios had the blessing to Visit Archbishop Gregorios on the last day of February. In the course of our conversation we discussed the programme for the consecration of our church and he agreed that this would be best undertaken during June or July,

Once we have a confirmed date there will be plenty for all of us to do - and not much time in which to do it! We still have quite some work to do to prepare the church itself (volunteers welcome) and we will have to arrange accomodation for our Archbishop and his party throughout the weekend. We are hopeful that the consecration will take place on a Saturday for that will allow the clergy and people of other parishes to attend without compromising their Sunday Liturgies. The other important issue to attend to will be that of arranging a venue for the feast to follow on Saturday afternoon. As this is in the height of the 'wedding season', the sooner this can be arranged the better.

Nearer the date, we will need to undertake a 'deep clean' of the church ensuring that neither spider or cobweb shows itself on the day!

We will also welcome sponsors for the consecration or 'baptism of the church'. Any who are willing to contribute to this are invited to meet our President, Marc Greenwood, after Liturgy, telephone 07746 399909.

*Wishing you God's Holy Blessing and good fast this Lent*

*Fr Pancratios and Presbytera Anna*



Where are we on the ladder of our spiritual journey through life? Are we ascending towards Christ or are we allowing the the world to overwhelm us? Great Lent is the time to assess our spiritual well-being and when it is found wanting to begin its repair...

## Confessions

Father Pancratios will be available for the Sacrament of Repentance before and after the services in Lent and Great Week and at other times by appointment. (telephone 0151 639 6509 or 07850 467675)

## Community Board & Trustees Meetings

will be held on Sunday 21st April. All matters for discussion should be with the Secretary by the Sunday before.

## The Prayer of Saint Ephrem

O Lord and Master of my life,

Grant me not a spirit of sloth, faint-heartedness, idle talk or ambition,

But rather give to me a spirit of purity, humility, patience and love.

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own faults and not to judge my brother.

# The Story of a Baptismal Cross

*A deeply moving story from a manuscript anthology of poems and prose by Archimandrite Ambrose Pogodin, in the archives of Pravoslavnaya Rus. Printed in Prav. Put' 2004, from which it is translated by Mary Mansur for Orthodox Life.*

One of my parishioners told me the story of his cross. Here it is in his own words.

I was born in the USSR. My father was the chairman of a *kolhoz* and my mother was a schoolteacher. My father was a Communist Party member, while my mother was a leader in the *komsomol*. I was raised in the spirit of total materialism. My grandmother was the only religious one. When no one was at home, as we huddled together on the stove" she taught me to pray; and, to tell the truth, what she told me was much closer to my heart and understanding than that which I heard from my parents. My grandmother - who, as I later found out, baptised me without my parents' knowledge - died when I was still quite young. Yet those few prayers that she had taught me remained etched in my memory for a long time, as among the few beautiful things that I chanced to experience in my younger years. Yes, perhaps these were the *only* beautiful things in my life.

Gradually I forgot all the words of these prayers; after all, I did not hear them repeated anywhere: I was never taken to church, and I did not take it upon myself to go, knowing that I would incur the rage of my parents if they were to find out. Besides, I wasn't particularly drawn to go to church. How can one be drawn by something one knows nothing about? I attended a Soviet school and graduated from the tenth class.

It was at this time that the war broke out. Hitler unexpectedly invaded Russia, and his troops cut into the very heart of the country almost without opposition. Among many others, I was sent to war. And here, at the front, I remembered many of the prayers that my grandmother had taught me. And I was not alone; our commissar also prayed when two German tanks attacked our trench and we had nothing but rifles.

I did not have a cross, and I wanted one very much. I felt that if had a cross around my neck, nothing bad would happen to me.

Soon there was an incident ... or I should say, the Lord God - to Whom be glory forever! - gave me the opportunity to acquire a cross.

In the fighting near Kharkov, our patrol captured three Germans. They were taken by surprise, panicked, and offered no resistance. Senior Lieutenant Yershin, the commander of our patrol, took their weapons, all the information necessary for the staff, and ordered them to be released. They were young - mere boys.

It often happened that such chance prisoners were "simply" shot, to avoid having to bother further with them, or else they were sent, if there was a lull in the fighting, to the regiment division. But Lieutenant Yershin was a man of heart, and to those few of us who were close to him, he showed by example and precept not to harbour hatred towards a vanquished enemy and not to pour out one's anger upon defenceless prisoners. "Remember, the way you treat others is the way they will treat you. If you do evil, it will inevitably come back upon your head, whereas if you do good, you will receive the same from others." I think he was right. Of course, if in our patrol there was a bad apple, a member of the SMERSH ["Death to Spies," a counter-espionage arm of the Soviet secret police], it would have been dangerous for our commander to act as he did, but we all supported his convictions.

And so, three of us soldiers (I was the senior) led our captives into the forest in the direction of the German lines. They were terrified, particularly one of them, a very young fellow who sobbed as he walked. They were all certain that for them this was the end. When we reached the outskirts of the forest, I motioned them towards the lines and said, "Get along, Fritz; go find your compatriots!" At first they did not understand, but I gestured expressively and they understood. They still did not wholly believe that they were being released, and, anticipating a bullet in the back, they advanced hesitantly, but the farther they drew away from us, the more they increased their pace: finally, they realized that these "Ivans" were letting them go.

We stood watching them, when suddenly one of them, the one who had been crying, pulled away from the other two and began walking back in our direction. The great emotional effort that this demanded was evident in every movement of his body. The closer he drew to us, the greater was the fear written in his eyes. It was the same fear seen in a dog's eyes when his master summons him in order to punish him, and the dog, trembling with dread, crawls back to his master in abject submission.

At last it was evident that he could not master his fear any longer, for when he was still ten paces away from me, he took something from his neck and, indicating that it was meant for me, he turned and raced back to his companions. Soon we lost sight of them. Only then, probably, were they assured that a bullet would not hit them in the back.

I walked over to pick up the object intended for me, and saw that it was a gold cross on a chain. On the reverse was inscribed, Christ -- my life." It was written in German,

but with the help of a dictionary I was able to translate it. I was overjoyed and put the cross on my neck, asking my friends that they tell no one of the incident.

Kharkov passed from hand to hand. The SS divisions were particularly active there. Our detachment was thrown into counter-attack. The Germans surrounded us, and the few of us who survived were taken prisoner.

Captivity was bitter, oh, how bitter! One day a car carrying some officers drove into our camp. It turned out that several prisoners had escaped. In the confusion, a German guard had been killed. We expected that there would be hell to pay - and we were right.

The Germans divided us into groups and began to execute us. As a senior, I was also singled out for execution. I was taken with three others. We were ordered to take off our shirts. Mechanically and hurriedly, we obeyed. They aimed their rifles at us. I remember all this down to the smallest detail. In another moment the officer, an older man with a moustache, would give the order to fire. It is hard to die; how I wanted to live! I closed my eyes and prayed: "Lord, for the sake of my grandmother, save me!"

I don't know what happened, but the next thing I knew, I was being shaken by the shoulders. I opened my eyes: the same elderly officer who was giving commands to shoot was shaking me by the shoulders and shouting something at me that I couldn't understand.

The shooting stopped. I was taken aside. The officer sat me down and again asked me something I could not comprehend. An interpreter was called. He spoke Russian, but even that was no help: I heard the words, but I didn't understand their meaning. They gave me some schnapps

to drink and left me to come to myself. When I did, at last I understood the words of the elderly officer related to me through the interpreter:

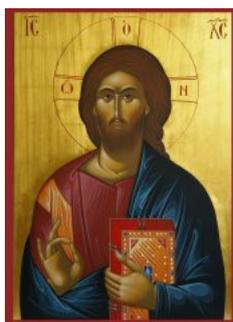
"I am the father of that soldier whom you released. When you were taken out to be shot, I saw my son's cross on your chest. My wife and I commissioned this cross to be made for our son when he was sent off to war. I understood that it was you to whom my son had given his cross. One good turn deserves another. I managed to persuade the general to stop the executions."

Then I remembered and said, "Yes, he was the young one, the one who cried." The lieutenant, looking at the interpreter, said, "A German soldier does not cry!" But then he turned his head and hurriedly took a handkerchief out of his pocket to wipe his eyes, adding hesitantly, "Well, sometimes he cries."

Later I was sent to Germany, where I lived out the rest of the war tolerably well. After the war I again made contact with the elderly lieutenant and his son, the very one who had given me his cross. His joy on seeing me was beyond words. And I, in turn, was very glad to see him.

I made a little cross out of wood, carved it and finished it with a knife, took it to be blessed, and gave it to Johann (that was his name). From that time we became "cross brothers." We spent some time living together in perfect harmony until I became restless and left Germany. They are always asking me to come back.

By the way, not long ago I sent Johann a real gold cross, the best I could find, gold, with the inscription: "Preserve and save," but he gave it to his little son and continues to wear the simple wooden one that I made for him.



**Christ is our Friend, our Brother; He is whatever is beautiful and good. He is everything. In Christ there is no gloom, melancholy or introversion, whereas man suffers from temptations and situations which make him suffer. Christ is joy, life, light, the true light, which makes man glad, makes him fly, makes him see all things, see all people, suffer for all people, and want all people to be with him, close to him.**

Elder Porphyrios +1991

## Services during Lent — the full calendar for April for your diary

*Each week of Lent there are additional evening services offered at Saint Barbara's at 6.30pm:*

3rd Wednesday	Divine Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts	6.30pm
5th Friday	Akathistos Hymn to the Mother of God (III) (Memorial Saturday‡)	6.30pm
7th Sunday	Third Sunday of Great Lent* - Veneration of the Cross§	11.00am
10th Wednesday	Divine Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts	6.30pm
12th Friday	Akathistos Hymn to the Mother of God (IV) (Memorial Saturday‡)	6.30pm
14th Sunday	Fourth Sunday of Great Lent* - Saint John Climacus	11.00am
17th Wednesday	Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete - Life of Saint Mary of Egypt	6.30pm
18th Thursday	Divine Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts	6.30pm
19th Friday	Matins with the Akathistos Hymn to the Mother of God	6.30pm
21st Sunday	Fifth Sunday of Great Lent* - Saint Mary of Egypt	11.00am
24th Wednesday	Divine Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts	6.30pm
26th Friday	Divine Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts	6.30pm

The richness of our Orthodox Faith is to be found most frequently in the additional services of Great Lent. In them we may derive great spiritual benefit and by them we will be aided in preparing for our proper celebration of Great Week and Holy Pascha. Please try to attend these services as frequently as possible.

\* On the Sundays of Great Lent we are reminded of the solemnity of the season by offering the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. It is good for us to listen carefully to the beautiful words of the the Anaphora. They teach us much about our holy Orthodox Faith.

‡ Following Compline, we offer the Memorial Service; please include the names of your departed loved ones.

§ The Veneration of the Cross properly occurs at the end of the Matins service. It will immediately precede the beginning of the Divine Liturgy at 11am

Other services during the weekdays are notified on Sunday. Father Pancratios is available at all these times for Confession.

## Services for Holy Week / Pascha

### Great Monday - 29<sup>th</sup> April

Bridegroom Service 6.30pm

### Great Tuesday - 30<sup>th</sup>

Bridegroom Service 6.30pm

### Great Wednesday - 1<sup>st</sup> May

The Sacrament of Holy Unction and the Matins of Great Thursday 6.30pm

### Great Thursday - 2<sup>nd</sup>

Vesperal Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great 2.00pm  
The Office of the Holy Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ 6.30pm

### Great Friday 3<sup>rd</sup>

Vespers of Great Friday - the Descent from the Cross 5.00pm  
Matins of Great Saturday - The Veneration of the Epitaphios 6.30pm

### Great Saturday / Pascha - 4<sup>th</sup> / 5<sup>th</sup>

Vesperal Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil 11.00am  
The Reading of the Acts of the Apostles 9.00pm  
The Midnight Office 11.30pm  
Christ is Risen, The Matins of the Resurrection and the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom -  
The Paschal Feast follows 12.00am

## ΠΡΟΠΑΜΜΑ ΙΕΡΩΝ ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΙΩΝ

### Κυριακή τῶν Βαΐων - 28 Απρίλιος

Ὁρες καὶ Θεία Λειτουργία 10.30πμ

### Μεγάλη Δευτέρα - 29

Ακολουθία τοῦ Νυμφίου 6.30μμ

### Μεγάλη Τρίτη - 30

Ακολουθία τοῦ Νυμφίου 6.30μμ

### Μεγάλη Τετάρτη - 1 Μαΐου

Ἅγιο Ευχέλαιο καὶ Ὁρθρος  
Μεγάλη Πέμπτες 6.30μμ

### Μεγάλη Πέμπτη - 2

Εσπερινός καὶ Θεία Λειτουργία  
Μεγάλου Βασιλείου 2.00μμ  
Ακολουθία τῶν Ἁγίων Παθῶν 6.30μμ

### Μεγάλη Παρασκευή - 3

Εσπερινός - Αποκαθήλωση 5.00μμ  
Ακολουθία τοῦ Επιταφίου 6.30μμ

### Μέγα Σάββατον / Πάσχα - 4/5

Εσπερινός καὶ Θεία Λειτουργία  
Μεγάλου Βασιλείου 11.00πμ  
Πραξεις των Αποστολων 9.00μμ  
Μεσονυκτικὸν τῆς Ἀναστάσεως 11.30μμ  
Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη (Καλὸς Λόγος), Ὁρθρος  
καὶ Θεία Λειτουργία Ἀναστάσεως.  
Φαγοπότι τοῦ Πάσχα 12.00μεσ

Jacob was a cheater ,  
Peter had a temper,  
David had an affair,  
Noah got drunk,  
Jonah ran from God,  
Paul was a murderer,  
Miriam was a gossip,  
Martha was a worrier,  
Gideon was insecure,  
Thomas was a doubter,  
Sarah was impatient,  
Elijah was depressed,  
Moses stuttered,  
Zachaeus was short,  
Abraham was old  
and Lazarus was dead.

**God doesn't call the qualified; He qualifies the called!**

# Selections from the Sermons of Elder Sebastian of Optina

## At the Beginning of Great Lent 1960

‘Open unto me the doors of repentance, O giver of life ...’ With a profound awareness and sense of his own sinfulness, the Publican repented. Not like the Pharisee, who addressed God with haughtiness and pride. The Publican cried to the Lord with a broken heart, not daring to lift his eyes up to heaven, smiting himself on the breast: “O Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.”? Such was one who truly repented. He repented and no longer returned to his former sins, but began a new life in a renewed spirit.

## On the repentant sinner 1960

Sinner, abandon your passions and sinful habits. Heaven, with more than ninety-nine righteous ones is calling you! The angels in heaven rejoice over a single repentant sinner. Heaven is seeking your salvation. Only repent and be converted, and break yourself of sin. For your sake the Lord Himself was born in a manger of dumb beasts and suffered. He was insulted, spat upon, crowned with thorns, and was nailed to the Cross by the hand of his own creation. He suffered and died so as afterwards to be glorified and exalted. But you, O man, what can you be proud of? What do you possess that is truly yours, which is fit for eternity? You won't take your riches with you, and honour, glory, and health are temporal. Let us enrich ourselves for the future, and gather our wealth there through beggars, the poor, and the sick. You are a citizen of heaven, so why are you glued to the earth? You are an heir of the Kingdom of Heaven and you possess an immortal soul, which the Only-begotten Son Himself redeemed by His death upon the Cross.

## At the Feast of the Beheading of John the Baptist 1958

John the Baptist died ... as a martyr for the truth. The truth rejoices when people die for it. Now it's as though everyone thought that one can live lawlessly. If there were no truth, then there would not have been life on the earth, either. Everyone would have perished in their lawlessness. All of us must live according to truth, and by this to be an example to others. Truth, purity, love; and chastity are so beloved of the Lord. The holy martyrs went to martyrdom for the sake of truth, putting false-hood and lawlessness to shame.

## On the acquisition of a Guardian Angel

A Guardian Angel is present with a person who has a chaste heart and a pure conscience. If you listen to your heart and your conscience, you will always hear his voice, exhorting you to the truth. He who feels spiritual hunger, a spiritual feeling of the soul, will seek to be filled with the spiritual food of the word of God, in the same way that in the case of physical hunger a person looks for food in order to be filled. The person in whom this spiritual feeling is silenced or blinded by the passions will not feel any hunger except for physical hunger. But he who forgets bodily hunger will strive to appease his spiritual hunger. A passion blinds the soul

through the gradual suggestion of a thought, and then by agreement and the carrying out of the deed: 1) the onset of the illness, 2) the state of illness, and 3) the death of the soul. Where a single passion is acting, the Holy Spirit and the Guardian Angel step away and the person dies in soul. O Lord! Save us from all these things! Holy Guardian Angels, pray to God for us!

## On love towards one's neighbours - undated



*Elder Sebastian in his later years - his repose came on April 6th (OS) 1966 (that year the celebration of Radonitsa); along with others, he was recognised as a saint by the Russian Orthodox Church in 1997*

How could one not love Him, the Founder and Creator of the Universe and of all things visible and invisible, the Creator of you as well, O man. The Lord created man and breathed into him the life-giving spirit. He gave him a will and reason, and a heart capable of delighting in the gifts of God. To love, not the Creator, but the creation, means to love not life, but death; to not love yourself, but to be your own enemy. To not love your neighbour as yourself means to set the Creator against yourself. You must love the Creator with all your soul, all your strength, and all your thoughts - to contemplate, think about and consider God and the blessings He has sent down to us. For He sees all our thoughts, desires, and intentions regarding Him and our neighbour, whom you should love for his salvation and not for yourself.

## From an undated sermon

... Walk before the face of God, and bear Him in your heart. He enters into a pure heart, unoccupied by pride, licentiousness, impurity, and other vices and sins. O Lord, capture our hearts and cleanse them! The Lord descends into our hearts when we open the way for Him through humility, patience, purity, chastity, meekness, good works, love of one's neighbour and especially of God, obedience, prayer, and abstinence from spiritual and bodily sensations and thoughts. We block Him out through incontinence, impurity of feelings and thoughts, lack of endurance of griefs and sickness, grumbling, ingratitude, and the returning of evil for evil.

## A sermon on Time 1958

What is more precious than anything in the world? Time! And what do we waste uselessly and without being sorry? Time! What do we not value and what do we disregard more than anything? Time! When we waste time, we lose ourselves! We lose everything! When we have lost the most trivial item, we search for it. But when we lose time—we're not even aware of it. Time is given by God to use correctly for the salvation of the soul and the acquisition of the life to come. Time must be allocated in the same way that a good housekeeper allocates every coin—each one is used for something. Each one has its own purpose. In such a way let us also allocate time profitably, not for vain amusements and entertainments, conversations, feasts and parties. The Lord will call us to account for having stolen time for our own whims, and for not using it for God and our souls.

# Patriarch Bartholomew's Lenten Message

Beloved brothers and sisters, children in the Lord,

The holy fathers, who arranged everything in an orderly manner, instituted a period of ascetic discipline and spiritual purification for forty days prior to the great feast of the Lord's resurrection. This ascetic rule assumes the form of a limitation on foods through fasting, but especially an abstinence from evil. The saintly hymnographer characteristically emphasizes that a genuine and favourable form of fasting for God is the estrangement from wrongdoing, control of the tongue, alienation from anger, separation from evil desires, including gossip, deceit and swearing, restoration of justice, disengagement from passionate thoughts, fervent confession, cleansing of the conscience, "which there can be nothing more difficult," refraining from "harmful passions, from envy and hatred, indeed from every wickedness," shunning of "the mind's perversion," admission of transgressions. For "the Judge is close, at the door," and he tries hearts and minds, since "He is everywhere present and fills all things." (Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete)

The aim of bodily asceticism is the purification of the mind and its concentration on the love of our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, as well as on the love of our fellow human beings, which constitutes the evidence that we are disciples of the One who loves them. This love must be tangible, resulting in some sacrifice for them on our part. For love without offering the necessary material and spiritual goods to those whom we love is but an empty word. This is particularly true in our age of great moral and financial crisis, when those of us who can are obliged to offer assistance to our fellow human beings with gladness, love and respect. Only then will our joy in the Lord's resurrection be complete, when our support for the least of His brothers, our own brothers and sisters, is complete. According to the honourable words of St. Basil the Great, "the man who loves his neighbour as himself possesses no more than his neighbour...thus, as much as your wealth increases, so much does your love decrease" (Homily to the Rich, PG 31.281B).

Unfortunately, the world believes that joy comes from gaining and possessing wealth, glory, positions and other pleasures. "There is nothing worse than a person who does not know how to love." And "when you see someone who needs physical or spiritual

healing, do not say to yourself: I wonder why this person was not healed by anyone. Simply heal that person of his or her illness, and do not seek to lay blame on others. If you anoint that person with the word of your teaching, like the oil of healing, if you cure that person with your good nature, restoring that person's health with your patience, then that person will become the cause of the greatest treasure for you." (See St. John Chrysostom, Homily 27 on 2 Corinthians and Homily 8 Against the Jews, PG 61.586-587 and PG 48.932-933). The truth is that the joy and satisfaction from offering love and material goods to our fellow human beings is incomparably greater. The conventional social understanding, which the young generation is taught as the most advantageous way of life, is greed and avarice. However, when such notions prevail, they create social turmoil and ultimately harm even those who acquire excessive wealth at the expense of others. The inevitable social division must be alleviated voluntarily by the offering of those who have to those who do not have, as our Lord explicitly teaches: "Let the person who has two garments give to another who has none" (Luke 3:11). It is only when we perceive our unity with all our fellow human beings, and especially the weak, will we journey through the period of Holy and Great Lent in a godly manner and receive the blessing of Christ.

During this year, which we have declared as "The Year of Global Solidarity," particularly in light of the serious financial crisis in our world, we must all demonstrate greater concern for the consolation of our brothers and sisters who are deprived of the most elementary resources.

In this way, we shall enter "the arena of virtues that lies before us" in a devout manner and with spiritual progress, we will "enjoy the small coin," "we will accept the just payment" and we will celebrate with fullness of joy the Holy Resurrection of our Lord, through which "life is truly oriented." May His Grace and rich Mercy be with you all.

Holy and Great Lent 2013

Your fervent supplicant to God

†Bartholomew

Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch

---

## Progress to date

Since the last issue of The Tower, the waste pipe from the kitchen to the outlet has now been plumbed in. The sink is now usable and the ladies are delighted to be able to do the washing up in good order.

In the refectory, the remaining pews have been disposed of and the new tables and chairs are now in place. This will now make matters much more practical for the church school gatherings and for our refreshments and parish lunches. It will also allow cleaning to be undertaken properly and I here must add my grateful thanks to one particular

member of our community who travels quite a distance during the week to clean the whole of the church. Thank you.

The two rather useless bookcases have now been replaced by one purpose made bookcase which displays our library in better order. A volunteer has now offered to organise and catalogue the collection.

Several other jobs have now been started and I shall report on their progress next month

**Fr Pancratios.**

# On our Entry into Great Lent

## *Archbishop Gregorios' letter to all the faithful*

Once more, dear brothers and fathers, we have been blessed with another Great and Holy Lent - that solemn and spiritual season of our Orthodox Church. This is a time when we are carried into a world of sacred joy and hope, a world governed by the spirit and practice of repentance and humility, of love and charity, overshadowed by the holy presence of God Who is worshipped in Trinity. In a gladsome and poetic way, the Church carries us through time and vividly describes the tragedy of the human race: sin and the fall, our alienation from God, the chastisement of death, disobedience and pride, selfishness and greed, the wickedness and ploys of the devil. These are things we encounter every day in life and they make up the harsh reality of the universe.

Yet, at the same time, it is a period which reminds us of the ceaseless efforts and spiritual struggles of Christians to cling to the "Image of God" with which God endowed us, entrusting to us the spiritual deposit of our existence. The Lord exhorts us to nurture and preserve this "Image of God" and to work toward the imitation of our Creator. It is for this reason that the Lenten Triodion begins with the famous parable of the Tax Collector and the Pharisee, which sums up our human nature, burdened by sin and wicked tendencies. We have to struggle to be perfected in Christ, to expel selfishness and to foster forgiveness, humility, and obedience to the will of God. Thus the Gospel readings for the first weeks of the Triodion act as an introduction to Great and Holy Lent, projecting the characters of the Tax Collector and Pharisee, the Prodigal Son and his elder brother. These serve as a constant reminder of the love and charity of God the Father, Who receives the Prodigal with fatherly compassion and reminds the elder brother that he ought to forgive and receive his lost brother who was led astray on the paths of sin and wasted his inheritance on dissolute living.

During this spiritual Lenten journey, the Church also reminds us of the reality of death, the bitter cup from which we are all destined to drink, the critical and unique experience which we are all bound to endure in this life. Thus the Church invites the Faithful to remember their departed brethren and to pray for those who have passed from this world in faith to be received in the next. Thus we remember during this season of the Triodion the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, when all shall be judged according to their works: some shall be blessed in hearing His voice, while others shall be condemned by His divine righteousness.

At the threshold of our entry into Great and Holy Lent is the memory of the expulsion of the First-formed from Paradise. That exile changed the human course to "*worshipping creation instead of the Creator*" and was the result of alienation from God. Humanity forgot his divine origin and abused God's gifts. The "Image and

Likeness of God" were darkened, as the Church Fathers teach us, bringing falsehood and suffering into the world, yet never losing the memory of the joy, freedom and blessedness of Paradise.

The Church revisits these themes during the season of Lent through its services, calling us to reflect on the mystery of life, of the fall, of death and of Divine Economy. That Divine Economy came to a head in time - as is made explicit in the Scriptures and Christian Tradition - with the coming of the Incarnate Word of God in Bethlehem of Judea.

Brothers, sisters and fathers, we are living in the joyful and hope-filled Christian age of the Incarnate Word of God - the revelation of the Gospel of Love, the Foundation of the Church which is the Holy Ark that travels through the seas of life to the corners of the earth to bring the Message of Salvation. As St Paul the Apostle writes, "*God has chosen to make known among the Nations the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*" (1 Col.1:27)

The Church therefore continues the saving and redeeming work of Christ and proclaims what He preached on earth. "*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*" (Matt. 11:28) So during this season we strive and are called to become imitators and humble worshippers of our Lord Jesus Christ, following the example of the groans of the Tax Collector and the change of mind of the Prodigal, as the Triodion characteristically states: "*Let us eagerly follow the ways of Jesus the Saviour, and His humility, in our desire to attain the eternal dwelling of joy, and to find rest in the land of the living.*"

With all this in mind, let us go to church regularly to participate in Lenten worship and to receive Holy Communion; let us share our goods with others, let us fast and forgive one another, and we shall find mercy and joy in Christ our Saviour.

With these sacred thoughts and expectations I greet you, the Flock of this biblical Eparchy of the Ecumenical Throne of Constantinople, and before God's Holy Altar I pray that with peace, love, sincere repentance, humility and fervent prayer, we shall complete the journey of Great and Holy Lent, looking to the Great High Priest of our souls, "*And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*" (Heb. 12:1-2)

To Him be glory, dominion and power for ever and ever. Amen.

London, March 2013

Gregorios, Archbishop of Thyateira & Great Britain

# Encyclical from Archbishop Gregorios on the Feast of the Annunciation recalling the events of the 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1821

*“Freedom is not purchased, but earned.  
Freedom, through struggle, is victorious.”*

Dearly Beloved in the Lord,

Every year at this time, the Greek world celebrates the feast of 25<sup>th</sup> March 1821. It is an anniversary which marks the beginning of Modern Greek governance and the survival of its people; an anniversary which Greek people rightly praise and from which they draw courage, strength, patience, resilience and inspiration in difficult times such as these, when the Greek people are suffering the consequences of the economic crisis that is plaguing Greece and Cyprus.

*“Freedom is not purchased, but earned”*. When we speak of “freedom”, we should not limit this to the possession of land, for freeing a country of a foreign yoke brings us to the second part of the affirmation with which we began: *“Freedom, through struggle, is victorious”*. Struggle means sacrifice, self-denial, heroism, unity, harmony, co-operation, love for righteous principles and a deep belief in God and our Christian Orthodox Tradition. Freedom and safety demand education, culture and love which act as pedagogues and guardians of both young and old. The nurturing of faith and regular participation in church are necessary components of patriotism and make up the spiritual and physical freedom of the Greek people, which survived very many difficult circumstances throughout its history.

By being united and of one mind, the Greek people throughout the ages have thrived. By remaining firm in its principles and mores, through solidarity, faith in God and the values with which Hellenism has been enriched, the Greek people have prevailed and progressed. It is precisely this reality which Greeks all over the world celebrate every year on 25<sup>th</sup> March. Their freedom was not acquired with money, by bowing to oppressors, or by betraying

their conscience, since such freedom is equal to an even worse subjugation. They won their freedom by their own blood, by self-sacrifice, through moral, spiritual and physical strength, with struggles of heroic proportions, and through a profound and unshakable faith in Christ and His Church.

In many instances in Greek history, the Church was a scapegoat, but also the motivating power behind the initiation and foundation of the freedom of the nation. This is something we should neither forget nor under-rate. If we do so, then we undermine the Greek nation as a whole, which, when it resolved to rise up for its freedom, made the sign of the cross and proclaimed with one voice, “for holy faith in Christ and the freedom of the nation”, and “now is the fight for all”. It preferred to suffer the terrible deaths of the Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory V, Athanasios Diakos, Papaflessas, and the Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, than to deny its faith in Christ and His Church.

It is therefore no coincidence that the Greek people chose the 25<sup>th</sup> March as the beginning of the Greek revolution of 1821. It is the day of the Annunciation of the Mother of God, when the Archangel Gabriel proclaimed the good news to the Virgin Mary. Thus the saving message of Christianity was linked to the freedom of the Greek people from years of suppression under the Ottoman yoke.

(...)

Wishing you all health and a blessed Great Lent, and with my prayers for the progress of Greece and Cyprus, I remain with love in the Lord and esteem.

London, March 2013

Gregorios, Archbishop of Thyateira & Great Britain

---

## Principal Services for April / May

Divine Liturgy every Sunday: Prayers of Preparation 10.30 am -- for Divine Liturgy 11 am

### Feast Day & Other Services during APRIL

Sunday 7th	Third Sunday of Great Lent: Veneration of the Cross	Liturgy 11am
Sunday 14th	Fourth Sunday of Great Lent: St John Climacus	Liturgy 11am
Sunday 21st	Fifth Sunday of Great Lent: Saint Mary of Egypt	Liturgy 11am
Sunday 28th	Entry of Our Lord into Jerusalem: Palm Sunday	Liturgy 11am

### Feast Day and other Services during May

Sunday 5th	Great and Most Holy Pascha - see separate notice - there are NO daytime services on this day	
Sunday 12th	St Thomas Sunday	Liturgy 11am
Sunday 19th	Third Sunday of Pascha - The Myrrh-bearing Women	Liturgy 11am
Sunday 26th	Fourth Sunday of Pascha - The Paralysed Man	Liturgy 11am

## An Ikos from the Akathist “Glory to God for All Things”

When You did call me to serve my brothers and filled my soul with humility, one of your deep, piercing rays shone in my heart; it became luminous, full of light like iron glowing in the furnace. I have seen Your face, the face of mystery and unapproachable glory.

*This Akathist Hymn was written either by Metropolitan Tryphon of Turkestan in 1934 or Protopresbyter Gregory Petrov in 1940 according to differing sources. They both suffered for Christ under the Godless Soviets.*

---

### Scripture Reading Calendar for April

1 Fast	Isaiah 8:13-9:7	Proverbs 8:1-21	St Mary of Egypt (1st)
2 Fast	Isaiah 9:9-10:4	Proverbs 8:32-9:1	St Titus the Wonderworker in Constantinople(9th)
3 Fast	Isaiah 10:12-20	Proverbs 9:12-18	St Joseph the Hymnographer (883)
4 Fast	Isaiah 11:10-12:2	Proverbs 10:1-22	St Isidore, Bishop of Seville (636)
5 Fast	Isaiah 13:2-13	Proverbs 10:31-11:12	St Mark the Anchorite of Athens (400)
6 Fast**	Hebrews 10:32-38a	Mark 2:14-17	St Platonida of Nisibis (308)
<b>7 Fast**</b>	<b>Hebrews 4:14-5:6</b>	<b>Mark 8:34-9:1</b>	St Sabas the New of Kalymnos (1948)
8 Fast	Isaiah 14:24-32	Proverbs 11:19-12:6	St Niphon, Bishop of Novgorod (1156)
9 Fast	Isaiah 25:1-9	Proverbs 12:8-22	Monk Martyr Bademus of Persia (376)
10 Fast	Isaiah 26:21-27:9	Proverbs 12:23-13:9	Hieromartyr Gregory V, Patriarch of Constantinople (1821)
11 Fast	Isaiah 28:14-22	Proverbs 13:19-14:6	St Callinicus of Cernica, Bishop of Rimnicului (1868)
12 Fast	Isaiah 29:13-23	Proverbs 14:15-26	St Acacius of Kavsokalyvia (1730)
13 Fast**	Hebrews 6:9-22	Mark 7:31-37	St martin the Confessor, Pope of Rome (655)
<b>14 Fast**</b>	<b>Hebrews 6:9-12</b>	<b>Mark 9:17-31</b>	Martyrs Anthony, John and Eustathius of Vilna (1347)
15 Fast	Isaiah 37:33-38:6	Proverbs 14:27-15:4	St Padarn of Wales, founder of Llandabarn Fawr (5th-6thC)
16 Fast	Isaiah 40:18-31	Proverbs 15:7-19	Martyr Leonidas of Corinth (258)
17 Fast**	Isaiah 41:4-14	Proverbs 15:20-16:9	St Paisius the Fool-for-Christ, of the Kiev Caves (1893)
18 Fast**	Isaiah 42:5-16	Proverbs 16:17-17:17	New Martyr John of Epirus (1526)
19 Fast**	Isaiah 45:11-17	Proverbs 17:17-18:5	Hieromartyr Alphege, Archbishop of Canterbury (1012)
20 Fast**	Hebrews 9:24-28	Mark 8:27-31	St Athanasios, founder of the Transfiguration Monastery (1380)
<b>21 Fast**</b>	<b>Hebrews 11:9-14</b>	<b>Mark 10:32b-45</b>	St Bueno, Abbot of Clynnog (c640), The Kollyvades Fathers (18thC)
22 Fast	Isaiah 48:17-49:4	Proverbs 19:16-25	St Theodore the Sykeote, Bishop of Anastasiopolis (613)
23 Fast	Isaiah 49:6-10	Proverbs 21:3-21	Glorious Great Martyr George (303 [feast transferred to 6 <sup>th</sup> May])
24 Fast	Isaiah 58:1-11	Proverbs 21:23-22:4	Hieromartyrs Joseph, Elias & Sabas, Confessors of Romania (17-18C)
25 Fast	Isaiah 65:8-16	Proverbs 23:15-24:5	St Phoebadius, Bishop of Agen (c393)
26 Fast	Isaiah 66:10-14	Proverbs 31:8-31	St Stephen, Bishop of Perm (1396)
27 Fast**	Hebrews 12:28-13:8	John 11:1-45	St Eulogius the Hospitable of Constantinople (4thC)
<b>28 Fast***</b>	<b>Philippians 4:4-9</b>	<b>John 12:1-18</b>	St Cyril, Bishop of Turov (1183)
29 Fast	Exodus 1:1-20	Matthew 24:3-35	St Basil, Bishop of Ostrog in Montenegro (16thC)
30 Fast	Exodus 2:5-10	Matthew 24:36-26:2	New Martyr Argyri at Constantinople (1725)

\* 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***

---

Please remember, if you are a UK taxpayer we can recover the tax that you have paid on your contribution to the work of the church – but only if you fill in an envelope (to be found at the church door) and place your gift in it.

Especially in these difficult times, the church needs your financial support. As I'm sure you understand, work on our church building is ongoing and expensive, besides our ordinary day-to-day expenses.

May God bless you all for your support in these matters and may you seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in forming a regular and responsible habit of giving for the work of His Church.

**Priest in Charge: Rev'd Oeconomos Pancratios Sanders**

42 Withens Lane, Wallasey, Wirral. CH45 7NN  
Telephone: 0151 639 6509; Mobile: 07850 467675  
email: pancratios@btinternet.com

**President: Marc Greenwood,**

6 Meadow Close, Cuddington, Northwich. CW8 2LZ

**Treasurer: Lidia Critchley**

10 Easton Road, New Ferry CH62 1DR

**Secretary: Presbytera Anna Sanders**

42 Withens Lane, Wallasey, Wirral. CH45 7NN  
(Telephone & email as above.)

The Divine Liturgy is served at the Church of Saint Barbara the Great Martyr, Handbridge, Chester each Sunday at 11.00am and on all the major Feasts.

The Vespers Service is normally served each Saturday at Fr. Pancratios' home (please check time before travelling any distance).

Fr Pancratios is *normally* in church during the day on Tuesdays & Thursdays. Please phone him 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 should be arranged by contacting Fr Pancratios.

Weddings, Baptisms, Receptions etc., by arrangement with Father Pancratios.

Confessions before the Divine Liturgy or after Vespers. In Lent on Wednesdays and Fridays 5.30 - 6.30pm and at other times by arrangement.

Catechism Classes by arrangement with Fr Pancratios.

**ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΝ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΕΙΟΝ - ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΘΥΑΤΕΙΡΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΓΑΛΗΣ ΒΡΕΤΑΝΙΑΣ**

**Membership Subscription 2013**

**Greek Orthodox Community of Saint Barbara the Great Martyr**

**Overleigh Cemetery Chapel, Overleigh Road, Chester. CH4 7HW**

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose herewith £25.00 annual subscription\*      £

Add £1.00 Free Will Offering to the Archdiocese      £

I enclose a gift for the work of the church      £  
\_\_\_\_\_

(\*unwaged £15.00 plus £1.00 FWO)      £  
=====

*I am a UK taxpayer intending tax to be reclaimed on the enclosed donation made under the Gift Aid scheme (please delete if not applicable)*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return to the Treasurer with your gift::*

**Mrs Lidia Critchley, 10 Easton Road, New Ferry, Wirral. CH62 1DR**

Please note that only Orthodox Christians in good standing may hold full membership and be permitted to vote at general meetings. Non-Orthodox Christians are most welcome to subscribe as friends and supporters of the Greek Orthodox Community of Saint Barbara the Great Martyr, Chester.

Please print, cut out, and sent with your donation to the Treasurer. The community is grateful for every contribution received so that the work of the church may continue. In the present difficult economic climate such gifts are a true sacrifice. Please remember that there is a reduction for those not in work and that it is also possible to make your giving quarterly.