



The Tower

December 2019

The Tower is the Newsletter of the

Orthodox Christian Community of Saint Barbara the Great Martyr,
Overleigh Cemetery Chapel, Overleigh Road, Handbridge, Chester

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

Charity No: 114475

Dear brothers and sisters,

Christ is Risen!

It is with sadness mixed with joy that we learned a few days ago of the falling asleep of the former Archbishop Gregorios following a period of ill-health while in retirement at the Archdiocese. Resting in the bosom of Abraham, he is now an intercessor for us before the Lord. He will be greatly missed in the Communities and among the people of the Diocese, in his native Cyprus, and indeed much further afield. He had that remarkable ability never to forget a name or a face, and not only them but the details of their families as well.

A deeply pastoral and prayerful servant of God, we at Saint Barbara's have much to thank him for over the many years of his pastorate. He oversaw the development of our parish to the stage where we were able to acquire our church building and its subsequent consecration by His Eminence some six years ago. He was always ready with a kind word or, when needed, a gentle admonition, but which was always given with love and a twinkle in his eye.

His Eminence ordained this unworthy priest to the diaconate and priesthood and latterly raised Tsvetan Petkov to the honour and burden of the diaconate, giving him the name of John (of Rila).

We will now place the name of Archbishop Gregorios at the head of that list of the Commemorations of those from the parish who have gone before us to stand in the presence of the Lord. He now joins them and the choir of the Angels who continually offer the *Thrice-Holy* before the Throne.

Memory eternal, dear brother and fellow celebrant.

*With much love for you all at the Holy Nativity
Fr Pancratios & Presb. Anna, Fr Dn John & Diaconisa Vera*

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

Please read the notice regarding the
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of the Parish on the last page of this newsletter



The Feast of the Nativity will soon be upon us and while we will be sure to do all our food shopping and present buying, let us never forget the real meaning of Christmas. As faithful Orthodox Christians may we always give thanks to God for the Gift of His Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thank Him by your faithful presence in Church at the Liturgies we offer, and through love and care for the poor and lonely, wherever they may be. If you will be in far-off places over Christmas then please take our love and blessings to your families and all those you meet on the way.

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Theophany & House Blessings

A reminder that in the New Year we
should arrange to have our houses blessed in
the usual manner. Full details will be given
in the January Newsletter

Principal Services for December

1st Sunday	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	Holy Apostle Saint Andrew the First Called <i>(from 30th)</i> Saint Barbara the Great Martyr, our Patroness Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker
4th Wednesday	11.00am	Divine Liturgy	
5th Thursday	6.30pm	Vespers	
7th Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers	
8th Sunday	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	St Barbara the Great Martyr <i>(from 4th)</i> Followed by a Fasting Lunch St Spyridon the Wonderworker, Bishop of Trimythous
11th Wednesday	6.30pm	Vespers	
14th Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers	
15th Sunday	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	Sunday of the Holy Forefathers Martyr Boniface at Tarsus in Cilicia
18th Wednesday	6.30pm	Vespers	
21st Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers	
22nd Sunday	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	Sunday before the Nativity; All the Righteous before God
24th Tuesday	10.00am 1.00pm	Royal Hours Vesperal Liturgy of Saint Basil	
25th Wednesday	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	The Nativity of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ
28th Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers	
29th Sunday	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	The Holy Righteous Ones; The Holy Innocents

Principal Services for January 2020

1st Wednesday	11.00am	Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil – Feast of the Circumcision Cutting of the Vasilopitta	
3rd Friday	11.00am	Royal Hours	
4th Saturday	11.00am 5.30pm	Divine Liturgy Vespers	Sobor of the Seventy Disciples
5th Sunday	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	Hieromartyr Theopemptus of Nicomedia
6th Monday	11.00am	Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil, followed by the Outdoor Blessing of Waters when we visit the river Dee at Eccleston	
8th Wednesday	6.30pm	Vespers	Monk-Martyr Polyeuktos of Meletina
9th Thursday	6.30pm	Vespers	Saint Gregory of Nyssa
11th Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers	
12th Sunday	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	Virgin-Martyr Tatiana of Rome Chains of the Apostle Peter Saint Anthony the Great
15th Wednesday	6.30pm	Vespers	
16th Thursday	6.30pm	Vespers	
18th Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers	
19th Sunday	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	St Mark, Archbishop of Ephesus, Defender of the Faith Hieromartyr Clement, Bishop of Ancyra Saint Gregory Nazianzus, Archbishop of Constantinople
22nd Wednesday	6.30pm	Vespers	
24th Friday	6.30pm	Vespers	
25th Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers	
26th Sunday	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	St Xenophon and family Sobor of the Ecumenical Teachers
29th Wednesday	6.30pm	Vespers	

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The domestic church, which is such an important element of the Orthodox Christian tradition, can not be developed in a family where meals, prayers, and social life are all in separate parts of the house."

+Abbot Tryphon

THE RICH TRAVELER

By Archimandrite Seraphim Aleksiev

Into a remote and beautiful mountain village came an unusual stranger for his summer vacation. He was a very rich man. He was travelling alone, and, being quite tired, he wanted to find a place to stay and rest. He had the intention of rewarding the people who could give him a quiet and pleasant stay. Since he had countless riches, he wanted to give his cordial hosts a present that they had never even dreamed of.

He saw what seemed to be a beautiful house situated on a wonderful spot and decided to ask for shelter there. He knocked on the door, but when it was opened and he was invited to come in, he instinctively shrank away. An unbearably foul-smelling air reached him from inside. What was the matter? The home of these people and their pigsty were under the same roof. Without even mentioning the reason for his visit, the traveller excused himself and went back out into the yard.

He went along the clear river which was running through the village. Close by was another beautiful, newly built house which attracted his attention, and he decided to knock at its door. However, the owner of this home was a very cruel man. When he saw a stranger approaching the gates, he set his dogs on him and did not even let him come into his yard.

The traveller sought shelter in a third house as well. The people there invited him kindly, and he went inside. But after he saw that everything in this home was lying around in disorder, covered with dust and soot, and buried in waste and cobwebs, he decided that he would not be able to find the longed-for peace.

By that time, he was so tired that he decided to stay in the next, fourth house no matter what its condition. But there, besides the untidiness and the dirt, he noticed something else. There were signs of bedbugs on the walls, and he could not stand the parasites. Also, fleas crawled all over him, so he hurried to get out of there, too.

In this way he went about the whole village, but he could not find a clean home where he could rest peacefully. He wondered how these people, who lived in such a beautiful mountain country, could abandon their houses so. A small river ran through the village. Creeks spouted out from many places in the steep and curvy streets. In the square and in other places in the village there were spouts and fountains from which abundant water gushed out. It was clear to the traveller that the filth in the village houses was due not to the lack of water, but exclusively to the negligence of the owners.

At the end of the village, exhausted, he dropped by a small house in which, as it turned out, lived a good housewife. There he was met with great cordiality and with friendly, smiling faces. The moment he entered one of the rooms, he noticed that everything there was shining with cleanliness. There were no cobwebs in the corners. The boards of the floor were recently cleaned. The air in the room was fresh. It was evident that the fragrance of the near fields and forests was often allowed to come into this house through the open windows.

The traveller sighed with relief and stayed in this home. At last he had found a quiet, pleasant place to rest. It was there that he left his magnificent gift.

Dear readers, have you asked yourselves: if our Saviour were to come, He Who is bringing the greatest gift--His heavenly grace with which He makes our souls happy and saves them--and if He were to seek a shelter for Himself in our souls, where could He find a place fit for rest? Saint Macarius of Egypt says: *Just as God has created the body and the soul of man to inhabit, so He has created the body and the soul of man to be His abode, that is why the Apostle says, His "house we are* (Hebrews 3:6).

Jesus Christ, this wondrous Heavenly Guest, often comes among us and wishes to enter under the roof of our soul. He appears among us through the unfathomable mystery of Holy Communion. He knocks on every door, longs to come into every home, desires to talk with every heart, wants to make every believing soul happy and to give it his heavenly gift.

But how do we meet Him? Can He stay in each one of us as He would like to?

Here is a man approaching Holy Communion and inviting the Lord into the hidden room of his heart: *Come, Lord Jesus, and settle in me!* he whispers in his prayers before Communion. *Come under my roof, in the home of my soul; come in, please! I will open the doors of my heart! Settle in me!*

But Jesus Christ draws back with disgust from these hospitably opened doors! Such an unbearable spiritual stench is coming from the inside! There it stinks of debauchery and malice, of avarice and envy, of pride and selfishness...And the heavenly Guest draws back. He cannot enter such a home, where the man and the demons--these spiritual pigs--are co-existing under the same roof...

...We are all more or less unworthy of the Redeemer coming from heaven. But here, He is knocking on our doors (cf. Revelation 3:20). He Himself longs to come into us, because we are created for Him and without Him we are infinitely unhappy. He is coming to bring His Heavenly Gift to everyone.

Is there a way for us to become worthy of Him again? With great joy we must say: There is! This way is Confession! Through Confession, when it is sincere, deep, and involves disgust with oneself and a desire to start a new life, the room of the heart is thoroughly cleaned from all the waste of the sins. Through Confession, the demons, these deadly parasites in the heart, are chased away. Through Confession, the windows of the soul are opened for the fragrance and the freshness of God's grace to come through them. Through Confession, all confused thoughts and ideas, all chaotic feelings and desires of the heart are once again put in order. At last, through Confession the soul is adorned, so that it becomes fit to accept the Most Marvellous Guest--Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Forgotten Medicine. The Mystery (Sacrament) of Repentance.

A Scripture Reading Calendar for December

1	Fast***	Ephesians 2:14-22	Luke 18:35-43	St Castritian, Bishop of Milan (137)
2	Fast***	2 Thessalonians 1:1-10	Luke 20:27-44	Virgin-Martyr Bibiana, at Rome (c362)
3	Fast***	2 Thessalonians 1:10-2:2	Luke 21:12-19	St Lucius, founders of the dioceses of London and Llandaff (2 nd C)
4	Fast**	2 Thessalonians 2:1-12	Luke 21:5-8a,10-11,21-24	Deacon Felix of Milan, later to become Bishop of Bologna (429)
5	Fast***	2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5	Luke 21:28b-33	The 12 Martyrs of Numidia, Julius & others, under Diocletian (302)
6	Fast**	2 Thessalonians 3:6-18	Luke 21:37-22:8	St Gertrude the Elder, Abbess of Hamaye, Douai (France, 649)
7	Fast***	Galatians 1:3-10	Luke 13:19-29	Bishop Urbanus of Teano, Confessor (Campania, Italy, c356)
8	Fast***	Ephesians 4:1-7	Luke 13:10-17	St Eucharius, first Bishop of Trier (Germany, c250)
9	Fast***	1 Timothy 1:1-7	Mark 8:11-21	Virgin-Martyr Valerie of Aquitaine, beheaded (Limoge 1 st /3 rd C)
10	Fast***	1 Timothy 1:8-14	Mark 8:22-26	Virgin-Martyr Eulalia of Barcelona, burned under Diocletian (c295)
11	Fast	1 Timothy 1:18-20; 2:8-15	Mark 8:30-34	Martyr Eutychius at Méridia or Cádiz (Spain 4 th C)
12	Fast**	1 Timothy 3:1-13	Mark 9:9-15	Martyr Synesius, beheaded for refusing to sacrifice to idols (Rome 275)
13	Fast	1 Timothy 4:4-8,16	Mark 9:33-41	Martyr Antiochus of Sulcis, under Hadrian (Sardinia, c110)
14	Fast**	Galatians 3:8-12	Luke 14:1-11	Martyrs Justus & Abundius (Spain, 283)
15	Fast**	Ephesians 5:8b-19	Lk 14:16-24, Matt 22:14	St Valerian, Bishop of Abbenza (North Africa, 457)
16	Fast	1 Timothy 5:1-10	Mark 9:42-10:1	The many Women Martyrs of N-W Africa under Hunneric (482)
17	Fast	1 Timothy 5:11-21	Mark 10:2-12	St Maxentius, disciple of St Martin of Tours (5 th C)
18	Fast	1 Timothy 5:22-6:11a	Mark 10:11-16	Martyr Moses, in North Africa, under Decius (c250)
19	Fast	1 Timothy 6:17-21	Mark 10:17-27	St Fausta of Sirmium, mother of St Anastasia of Sirmium (Serbia, 3 rd C)
20	Fast**	2 Timothy 1:1,2,8-18	Mark 10:24-32	Bishop Ursicinus of Cahors (France, c585)
21	Fast**	Galatians 3:8-12	Luke 13:18-29	Bishop Honoratus of Toulouse, born in Spain (France 3 rd C)
22	Fast**	Hebrews 11:9-10,32-40	Matthew 1:1-25	30 Holy Martyrs of Rome (c303)
23	Fast	2 Timothy 2:20-26	Mark 9:42-50, 10:1	Virgin-Martyrs Victoria & Anatolia (Rome, 250)
24	Fast	Hebrews 1:1-12	Luke 2:1-20	Martyr Lucian & those with him at Tripoli (N Africa, c3 rd C)
25	Fastfree	Galatians 4:4-7	Matthew 2:1-12	St Eugenia of Rome (c258)
26	Fastfree	Hebrews 2:11-18	Matthew 2:13-23	St Dionysios, Bishop of Rome (268)
27	Fastfree	Acts 6:8-7:5,47-60	Matthew 21:33-42	St Fabiola, patrician of Rome, tireless worker of charity (399)
28	Fastfree	Ephesians 1:16-23	Luke 14:22-30	Martyrs Castor, Victor & Rogatian (North Africa, c3 rd C)
29	Fastfree	Galatians 1:11-19	Matthew 2:13-23	Bishop Trophimus of Arles (France, c280)
30	Fastfree	2 Timothy 2:20-26	Mark 12:13-17	Bishop Liberius of Ravenna (Italy, c200)
31	Fastfree	2 Timothy 3:16-4:4	Mark 12:18-27	Virgin-Martyr Columba martyred at Sens, who fled from Spain (273)

* *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

Some Further Thoughts on the Life and Traditions of our Church

On Entering and Leaving the Church

It is a good practice to develop a routine when approaching the church whether for worship or private prayer. Such a practice helps us to enter the church and approach the Lord in a spiritual frame of mind putting away all unnecessary worldly concerns.

On approaching, or passing, the church: to make the sign of the cross and say: Lord, have mercy! When we enter the Narthex we take (and pay for) our candles and venerate the icon(s) there in the Narthex.

We should always try to follow the same pattern of making the sign of the cross twice, kissing the icon and signing ourselves for the third time.

When we enter the Nave to approach and venerate the icon of Christ in the same manner; then the icon of

the Theotokos, that of the Baptist and then that of Saint Barbara (the icon of the Dedication) and then to go to the icon in the middle of the church which is normally of the Feast or day being commemorated.

We then light our candles both for the living and the departed whom we wish to remember, or for any other intention. Finally we take our place for worship quietly and without fuss, or in talking to others present (We should keep conversation for when the Liturgy is over!).

On leaving the church it is good to venerate the icons again (unless we have received Communion – the greater blessing) and take with us all the blessings we have received and keep them with us for the entire week of until we are next coming to the church.

A Preparation for Confession

by St. John of Kronstadt

The following is an aid, a guide only, as to how we may prepare ourselves to face the Lord Jesus Christ when we come to stand before His icon in church. It is NOT a substitute or a 'get-out' to voicing our sins in the Sacrament of Repentance. Before the Icon, we are truly asking for God's forgiveness for those sins we have committed and which we resolve not to repeat, leaving nothing out. Only 'I' know what sins are lurking within me and that my desire to be rid of them is true and honest.

Having considered those sins that our conscience reproaches us for, it is often helpful to write them down to aid us in our confession. Should we do so, it is essential to keep those notes safe and destroy them after making our confession.

Once the priest has exclaimed the words of forgiveness and with a heart cleansed of sin we may be blessed to approach the Holy Mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ which we, like the early Christians, should receive frequently – not just at Christmas and Easter. Remember the words of the priest as he offers you the precious Body and Blood: '... for the health of soul and body ...' – my health, my soul, my body.

I, a sinful soul, confess to our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, all of my evil acts which I have done, said or thought from baptism even unto this present day.

I have not kept the vows of my baptism, but have made myself unwanted before the face of God.

I have sinned before the Lord by lack of faith and by doubts concerning the Orthodox Faith and the Holy Church; by ungratefulness for all of God's great and unceasing gifts; His long-suffering and His providence for me, a sinner; by lack of love for the Lord, as well as fear, through not fulfilling the Holy Commandments of God and the canons and rules of the Church.

I have not preserved a love for God and for my neighbour nor have I made enough efforts, because of laziness and lack of care, to learn the Commandments of God and the precepts of the Holy Fathers.

I have sinned: by not praying in the morning and in the evening and in the course of the day; by not attending the services or by coming to Church only half-heartedly, lazily and carelessly; by conversing during the services, by not paying attention, letting my mind wander and by departure from the Church before the dismissal and blessing.

I have sinned by judging members of the clergy.

I have sinned by not respecting the Feasts, breaking the Fasts, and by immoderation in food and drink.

I have sinned by self-importance, disobedience, wilfulness, self-righteousness, and the seeking of approval and praise.

I have sinned by unbelief, lack of faith, doubts, despair, despondency, abusive thoughts, blasphemy and swearing.

I have sinned by pride, a high opinion of my self, narcissism, vanity, conceit, envy, love of praise, love of honours, and by putting on airs.

I have sinned: by judging, malicious gossip, anger, remembering of offences done to me, hatred and returning evil for evil; by slander, reproaches, lies,

slyness, deception and hypocrisy; by prejudices, arguments, stubbornness, and an unwillingness to give way to my neighbour; by gloating, spitefulness, taunting, insults and mocking; by gossip, by speaking too much and by empty speech.

I have sinned by unnecessary and excessive laughter, by reviling and dwelling upon my previous sins, by arrogant behaviour, insolence and lack of respect.

I have sinned by not keeping my physical and spiritual passions in check, by my enjoyment of impure thoughts, licentiousness and unchastity in thoughts, words and deeds.

I have sinned by lack of endurance towards my illnesses and sorrows, a devotion to the comforts of life and by being too attached to my parents, children, relatives and friends.

I have sinned by hardening my heart, having a weak will and by not forcing myself to do good.

I have sinned by miserliness, a love of money, the acquisition of unnecessary things and immoderate attachment to things.

I have sinned by self-justification, a disregard for the admonitions of my conscience and failing to confess my sins through negligence or false pride.

I have sinned many times by my Confession: belittling, justifying and keeping silent about sins.

I have sinned against the Most-holy and Life-creating Mysteries of the Body and Blood of our Lord by coming to Holy Communion without humility or the fear of God.

I have sinned in deed, word and thought, knowingly and unknowingly, willingly and unwillingly, thoughtfully and thoughtlessly, and it is impossible to enumerate all of my sins because of their multitude.

But I truly repent of these and all others not mentioned by me because of my forgetfulness and I ask that they be forgiven through the abundance of the Mercy of God.

Priest in Charge: Very Rev'd Protopresbyter Pancratios Sanders

The Presbytery, 18 Shannon Close, Saltney, Chester. CH4 8PJ
Telephone: 01244 659717; Mobile: 07850 467675
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Parish Deacon: Rev'd Father John Petkov
28 Greenfield Road, Waverton, Chester. CH3 7NF
Telephone: 01244 335609; Mobile: 07588 560219
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Fr Pancratios is *normally* in church during the day on Tuesdays, Thursdays & Saturdays. 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 the Divine Liturgy or after Vespers and at other times by arrangement.

Membership Subscription 2019/20 (12/19)
Greek Orthodox Community of Saint Barbara the Great Martyr
Overleigh Cemetery, Overleigh Road, Chester. CH4 7HW

Title: _____ Initials: _____ Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Date: _____

Membership is £10.00 per person, per month. Membership applies to those of 18 years of age and over. Fees may be waived for the unwaged.

It is preferable for memberships to be paid by Standing Order on a monthly basis on the First Day of each month. St Barbara's Bank details: Barclays Bank: Sort Code 20-20-46, Account number 33974146. Further details can be found on www.stbarbara.org.uk/membership

Alternatively, membership can be paid using the envelopes available at church at £10.00 per month or £120.00 annual subscription.

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::

John Gale, Treasurer, Greek Orthodox Church of Saint Barbara (address as above)

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 send 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.

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.

Board Meeting

A Board Meeting will be held on 15th December after the Divine Liturgy. All matters to the Secretary by 14 days earlier.

Board meetings will continue to be held in the Refectory and are open to all who wish to attend. Trustees meetings will, in future, generally be held via video Conferencing due to the difficulty for the Trustees to meet together in person.

The Annual General Meeting of the Parish will take place in January. You are all called to attend to learn of the progress of the parish, spiritually, materially and financially. This year we hold elections to the Parish Board; there are nomination forms to complete and these are available in the Refectory. If you love your Lord, your Faith, your Church, then you should want to be involved in the administration of the parish. Put yourself forward for election. There are twelve places on the board; if there are 13 nominees then we will hold an election.