



The Tower

December 2012

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

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

Charity No: 1144751

Dear brothers and sisters,

Christ is in our midst!

Glory to God! We have had a spate of Baptisms in the last few weeks and most recently, we welcomed Gina Maria Paunovici and Jessica Elena Boaca into Christ's flock. Please pray for these little ones, their families and their sponsors as they approach the Holy Feast of the Nativity for the first time.

Wishing you a Holy and Blessed Fast

Fr Pancratios and Presbytera Anna

Parish Lunch

The December parish lunch will be held on Sunday 9th. The usual donation applies.

AGM & Elections

It is that time of year when we gather to hear reports of the work and financial progress of the church and its board over the past twelve months. We will hold our AGM on Sunday 16th December. Please do your best to attend this important meeting which will take place immediately following the Divine Liturgy. On this occasion we elect the board for the forthcoming year.

Nomination forms are to be found in the Refectory; proposers and seconders must first obtain the agreement of their candidate before putting the name forward. Candidates must be Orthodox Christians of good standing and at least 18 years of age.

Icons for the Iconostasis

This is an appeal to 'fill the holes' in the Iconostasis. As you are no doubt aware, while the Iconostasis itself is complete, the icons themselves are not all there! We have placed on order the two panels of the Archangels for the Deacon's Doors and these will be started shortly while the twelve Apostles icons are now being prepared in Cyprus.

We have already received gifts towards these icons and welcome any further contributions to further beautify our church. Gifts should be given to the Treasurer, address (on the last page), and your name will be recorded among the benefactors of the church. In time we will also seek to have the Holy Doors adorned with the icon of the Annunciation, with a Eucharist or Mystic Supper icon above the holy doors, and a Deesis to rise above the screen.

Should your gifts in total exceed the cost of the icons, any surplus would be put towards other icons for the church so that we can begin to replace the paper copies that presently adorn our walls.

Of course, you may feel sad that the amount you can offer is too small to provide an icon. Do not worry; no gift is too small in the sight of God; remember the widow's mite (Mark 12:42-44). Perhaps several parishioners might then get together to combine their offering. Remember, what we are doing now is for the greater glory of God and, if He wills, will last long beyond our lifetimes and perhaps for centuries to come.

Progress so far!

The kitchen area is now complete except for the plumbing. We plan to forego that work until the doors have been stripped and varnished. In the meantime, please do not tip water down the sink!

Work has continued on stripping the old paint off the doors into the church and refectory. This has been quite a labour for several people but once back to bare wood these doors are transformed. Several coats of varnish are soon to be applied to complete the work.

Outside, the drains are being rodded through, probably for the first time in history! Hughie, George's handyman, has spent his time clearing and mortaring the path to the toilet, removing the moss and soil from the path to the vestry door and has begun painting the guttering and downspouts. Next summer, it is intended that we shall deal with the external woodwork, replacing rotted sections, repainting the wood and replacing missing grout.

Several outline quotes have now been received for the installation of electricity. The Trustees are awaiting one further quote, following which we aim to appoint a contractor to carry out the work.

In church, a washbasin is being installed for use at the Divine Liturgy and the epitaphios case has been removed for alteration. It will then be fitted in front of the monument on the south wall and this will make a fitting surround for the Epitaphios. It also clears the space under the south window where the bishop's throne will be installed (when it's made - see the separate note on future work!)

Again, thank you, one and all, who have helped, and continue to help (volunteers are always welcome on Tuesdays and Thursdays), in so many ways, with the improvements to our church; it is greatly appreciated. May God's blessing be upon you.

Fr Pancratios.

Principal Services for December 2012 & January 2013

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

Feast Day & Other Services during DECEMBER

Sunday 2th	26th Sunday after Pentecost	Liturgy 11am
Monday 3rd	Feast of the Great Martyr Barbara - Our Patronal Festival	Vigil 6.30pm
Sunday 9th	Conception of the Most Holy Theotokos	Liturgy 11am
Tuesday 11th	Saint Spyridon	Vespers 6.30pm
Sunday 16th	28th Sunday after Pentecost - Sunday of the Forefathers	Liturgy 11am
Sunday 23rd	Sunday before the Nativity	Liturgy 11am
Monday 24th	Eve of the Nativity (Liturgy of Saint Basil)	Liturgy 11am
Tuesday 25th	Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ	Liturgy 11am
Sunday 30th	30th Sunday after Pentecost	Liturgy 11am
	Feast Day & Other Services during JANUARY	
Tuesday 1st	Feast of the Circumcision & Cutting of the Vasilopitta	Liturgy 11am
Saturday 5th	Eve of the Theophany	Royal Hours 11am
Sunday 6th	Feast of the Theophany of our Lord	Liturgy & Blessing of Waters 11am
Sunday 13th	32nd Sunday after Pentecost	Liturgy 11am
Sunday 20th	33rd Sunday after Pentecost	Liturgy 11am
Sunday 27th	34th Sunday after Pentecost	Liturgy 11am
Tuesday 29th	Synaxis of the Oecumenical Teachers	Vespers 6.30pm

Future works

As many of you will already have realised, we have many tasks planned for the future and we always welcome competent volunteers to offer their services.

In the way of joinery / carpentry we need to provide a suitable Bishop's Throne and proper Stasidia for the choir. The vestry needs a complete outfitting to provide adequate hanging space for the vestments and space for the storage of service books, music and other materials together with a work space for the sacristan. The plan is to produce these items 'in house'. We also plan to fit a glazed door to the

porch and make that area into a proper Narthex. This will also serve to draught-proof the church and offer improved security.

In needlework, we need to provide suitable hangings for the altar table and better vestments for the servers. Again, we can produce these items 'in house'.

Offers to undertake any of these tasks will be most welcome; however, please don't start without first consulting the priest. Thus, we ensure that the work is suitable and that it is not being duplicated by somebody else.

How to avoid Christmas Depression

Much of the post-holiday blues and Christmas depression that occur may have to do with the way Christmas is celebrated nowadays. People often feel deprived and lonely, in stark contrast to all of the pre-Christmas cheer. Others feel let down and weighed down by food and debt after the Christmas holiday. Changing the way the holiday is celebrated can yield completely different results.

Let us humbly keep in mind what we are preparing for the birth of the Messiah Jesus Christ our Lord God and Saviour.

An Orthodox Christmas Can be a Remedy for Christmas Depression and Holiday Blues ...

The birth of Christ brought joy and hope to those who had been in darkness and the way the Orthodox celebrate Christmas is designed to let people feel that hope again. The Orthodox Church teaches that Advent represents the time before Christ, when God's people were lost and disconnected from God. Instead of "pre-celebrating" the Christmas holidays during Advent, Orthodox Christians participate in a solemn, six-week Nativity fast (started on November 15th until December 25th) during this time. It is a spiritual practice that helps people grieve their losses, endure their sadness, feed their souls, and ultimately, experience joy on Christmas day – the Holy Nativity of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Orthodox Christmas Nativity Fast Can Help Those Who Struggle with Depression ...

During the fast, all meat, cheese, eggs and wine are avoided on most days and primarily vegetarian diet is kept. Fish is allowed except on Wednesdays and Fridays and the last week of the Nativity of our Lord. In place of food, drink and partying during Advent, the faithful are asked to nourish their souls with prayer, communion with their fellow parishioners, and drawing closer to God. For those who are struggling with personal problems, this period can give them a spiritual boost. This helps Orthodox Christians prepare to receive the joy that Christmas day brings. We can spiritually look forward to the joy of the birth of our Lord and this can help take away the blues, as after all we do celebrate the birth of our Lord for ten days afterwards.

In addition to fasting and increased prayer, almsgiving is expected to increase during the Nativity fast. This means, specifically, giving money to relieve poverty and material

need. Doing this offers a counterbalance to people's urges to overspend and over-indulge in material goods during Christmas. It brings the faithful in contact with others who are far worse off financially, quelling feelings of personal deprivation that tends to arise in this culture where so many have so much.

The Orthodox Christmas Nativity Fast Helps People Feed their Souls ...

These acts of almsgiving restore Orthodox Christian's connection with humanity. They remind the faithful of Jesus' Great Commandment to love one another, which is the primary act Christians are charged with. It is a reminder that life has more meaning than the consumption of material goods. It helps Orthodox Christians get out of the rut of day-to-day life and put their spirituality first.

The Orthodox feast of the Nativity of our Lord is the Opposite of Depression ...

The faithful are prepared to experience true joy on the Nativity of our Lord that is Christmas Day. Toward the end of the fast, people feel like they have accomplished something difficult. On Christmas day they break the fast, exit the period of darkness and celebrate the light. The feast is that much sweeter because of the famine which precedes it. Because they have done the work of nourishing the soul they are now free to indulge in the God-given blessings of food, drink, material things, family, friends and fun. Orthodox Christians believe that God wants people to be joyful.

Even those who are lonely or poor, having their souls filled, may see a path to a more satisfying life, or a way to comfort their pain and experience joy in small things after breaking the fast. The baby in a manger offered hope to the world, Christians are called to follow in His footsteps and to be the light of the world. No person is too faulted or too ordinary to make a difference, according to Orthodox teaching. Each person is called by God to do good in the world and to love one another.

May you have a spiritually rewarding fast in preparation for the Great Feast of the Holy Nativity of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Keep Christ our Lord focused in your lives during these holy days of preparation and celebration. Peace to your soul! God love and bless you! Humbly in Christ our Lord.

Fr Nektarios

No one should be made sad by death, since in living is labour and peril, in dying peace and the certainty of resurrection.

Saint Cyprian of Carthage +258

The Prayer Rope

Komboschini / Chotki

Our Christian Orthodoxy regards the prayer rope as the sword of the Spirit, because prayer which is heartfelt and inspired by the grace of the Holy Spirit is a weapon that defeats the Devil.

The history of the prayer rope goes back to the origins of Christian monasticism itself. When monks began going into the deserts of Egypt, it was their custom to pray the entire 150 psalms every day. However, because some of the monks were unable to read, they would either have to memorize the psalms or perform other prayers and prostrations in their stead. Thus the tradition of saying 150 (or more) Jesus Prayers every day began.

The invention of the prayer rope is attributed to Saint Pachomius in the fourth century as an aid for illiterate monks to accomplish a consistent number of prayers and prostrations in their cells. Previously, monks would count their prayers by casting pebbles into a bowl, but this was cumbersome, and could not be easily carried about when outside the cell. The use of the rope made it possible to pray the Jesus Prayer unceasingly, whether inside the cell or out, in accordance with Saint Paul's injunction to *Pray without ceasing* (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

It is said that the method of tying the prayer rope had its origins from the Father of Orthodox Monasticism, Saint Anthony the Great. He started by tying a leather rope with a simple knot for every time he prayed Kyrie Eleison, but the Devil would come and untie the knots to throw off his count. He then devised a way—inspired by a vision he had of the Theotokos—of tying the knots so that the knots themselves would constantly make the sign of the cross. This is why prayer ropes today are still tied using knots that each contain seven little crosses being tied over and over. The Devil could not untie it because the Devil is vanquished by the Sign of the Cross.

Historically, the prayer rope would typically have 100 knots, although prayer ropes with 50 or 33 knots can also be

found in use today. There is typically a knotted cross where the prayer rope is joined together to form a loop, and a few beads at certain intervals between the knots (usually every 10 or 25 knots) for ease in counting. Longer prayer ropes frequently have a tassel at the end of the cross; its purpose is to dry the tears shed due to heartfelt compunction for one's sins. The tassel can also be said to represent the glory of the

Heavenly Kingdom, which one can only enter through the Cross.

The prayer rope is commonly made out of wool, symbolizing the flock of Christ; though in modern times other materials are used also. The traditional colour of the rope is black (symbolising mourning for one's sins), with either black or coloured beads. The beads (if they are coloured) and at least a portion of the tassel are traditionally red, symbolizing the blood

of Christ and the blood of the martyrs.

Though prayer ropes are most often tied by monastics, lay persons are permitted to tie them also. In practice, the person tying a prayer rope should be of true faith and pious life and should be praying the Jesus Prayer the whole time.

When praying, the user normally holds the prayer rope in the left hand, leaving the right hand free to make the Sign of the Cross. When not in use, the prayer rope is traditionally wrapped around the left wrist so that it continues to remind one to pray without ceasing. If this is impractical, it may be placed in the (left) pocket, but should not be hung around the neck or suspended from the belt. The reason for this is humility: one should not be ostentatious or conspicuous in displaying the prayer rope for others to see.

While the prayer rope is normally used as an addition to our daily prayers, it is sometimes used as a substitute when the service books are not available or when it is not possible to attend the worship of the church.

Some monasteries and hesychast monastics use the Jesus Prayer as replacement for the usual daily pattern of worship. For this, there are various rules in place but none should be attempted without the direction of one's spiritual father.



The Prerogatives of Sunday, the Lord's Day

By St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite

Brethren, we shudder when we think about the lofty and great and wondrous prerogatives of the resurrectional day of Sunday, which are these:

1) Sunday is the beginning of the Creation of the cosmos, on which day the Father especially acted, while co-operating with the Son and the Spirit.

2) Sunday became the beginning of the renewal of Creation, on which day the Son especially acted through His resurrection.

3) Sunday is the perfection of Creation, on which day the Holy Spirit especially acted, descending on Sunday in the likeness of fiery tongues, and enlightened and perfected the Apostles.

Behold how much the whole Holy Trinity honoured the holy day of Sunday!

4) Sunday is the eighth day:

a) Because it is numbered after the seventh day, and it superseded the seventh day of the Jewish Sabbath, according to Athanasios, Basil, and Gregory the Theologian in their reference to the inscription of the sixth Psalm. b) Because the resurrection of the Lord occurred on Sunday, being the eighth resurrection numbered after the previous seven resurrections, according to Gregory Palamas of Thessaloniki. Three resurrections occurred in the Old Testament: one by Elias, and two by Elissaios. Four occurred by the Lord: the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow, Lazaros, and those who were resurrected on Great and Holy Friday. Therefore, the Lord's resurrection is the eighth. c) It is called the eighth day because the Lord rose on the eighth day and appeared to the Apostles, and again, after eight days, He appeared to them, Thomas being present. d) Because all of the other Feasts of the Lord are celebrated only one time per year, but Sunday is celebrated every eight days, therefore it is celebrated fifty two times a year. Behold how much more exalted and supreme Sunday is over the other Feasts!

5) Sunday is one, as Moses calls it: "And there was evening and there was morning, one day" (Gen. 1:5).

6) Sunday is an icon and a prelude of the future age. Wherefore Basil the Great, wondering why Moses called it "one" and not "first," says: "Thus it is in order that you may carry your thoughts forward towards the future life, that he marks by the word 'one' the day which is the icon of eternity, the first-fruit of days, the contemporary of light, Holy Sunday, honoured by the resurrection of our Lord." And Gregory of Thessaloniki says: "We call Sunday the new and first of all days. But Moses did not name it 'first,' but 'one,' as

superseding all the other days, and being a prelude of the future age: one never-setting day." Gregory the Theologian, in his Homily on Pentecost, said: "Seven being multiplied by seven generates fifty, minus one day, which we borrow from the age to come, at once the eighth and the first, or rather one and indestructible. For the present sabbatism of our souls can find its cessation there, that a portion may be given to seven and also to eight."

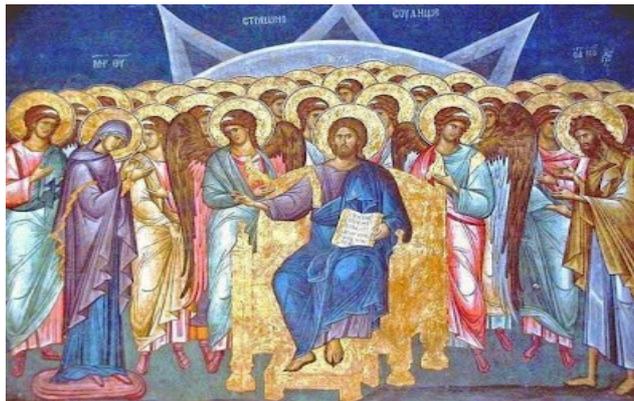
7) Sunday greatly surpasses Saturday, as much as the truth and the end surpasses the beginning, the type, and the shadow, according to Gregory of Thessaloniki: "As Friday is to Saturday, so Saturday is to Sunday, Sunday clearly surpassing Saturday, just as the beginning and the type and the shadow is surpassed by the end and the truth."

8) The Lord will come on Sunday at the Second Coming. Wherefore the Godbearing Maximos said: "The appearance of the Lord will be on the eighth day (which is Sunday, for there is no other eighth day), that is, His Second Coming."

9) The general resurrection of the dead will occur on Sunday, and not on another day. Wherefore Gregory of Thessaloniki said: "Sunday is so sublime and sacred, on account of the supremely blessed end and the hoped-for common resurrection of all that will take place on Sunday."

10) The Righteous will enter into the perfect rest of that eternal and absolute life on Sunday, according to the same Saint: "On Sunday will be the perfect entrance of the worthy into divine rest, and the dissolution and restoration of the entire cosmos."

11) Now, Sunday is an icon of the future age; then, it will be in truth the eighth age, for on Sunday the Second Coming will happen, as the divine Maximos said above, and the resurrection of the dead, and the delightful rest of the Righteous, as Gregory of Thessaloniki said. Many Saints say that the Lord, the never-setting Sun of Righteousness, will come at midnight on Sunday, as this is inferred from the Gospel passage which says: "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him" (Mt. 25:6). The reason being that once that Sunday is illumined by the rays of Christ the spiritual Sun, it will never again see the evening, but it will be one never-setting day, without any successor, and eternal unto the ages of ages. Wherefore Basil the Great said: "The great day of the Lord (that is, the Sunday on which the Second Coming will occur, as we said above), not the day that the physical sun will bring,



but the day that the rising Sun of Righteousness will exceedingly illumine, will be one and unending, having no successive night, but extending forever unto the ages.” And again: “And only the Lord will be exalted on that final day of all days, which day neither night will interrupt, nor time confine, nor will physical light give a beginning and end to it, but it is one, unmovable, never-setting, and perpetual.” And again, in his commentary on the six days of Creation he says: “This day without evening, without succession and without end is not unknown to Scripture, and it is the day that the Psalmist calls the eighth day, because it is outside this time of weeks. Thus whether you call it day, or whether you call it eternity, you express the same idea. Give this state the name of day; there are not several, but only one. If you call it eternity still it is unique and not manifold.”

In agreement, the brother of Basil the Great, the divine Gregory of Nyssa, also says: “When the time of weeks comes to an end, the eighth day (which is Sunday) will come after the seventh. And we call it ‘eighth’ because it follows the seventh, without however permitting itself to be superseded by any other number. For one day remains forever and the darkness of night will never interrupt it. For another Sun brings that day, which flashes the true light. When that Sun has illumined us but one time, as the Apostle says, it will never hide in the west again, but after it has embraced everything, it ceaselessly sends its light upon the worthy, upon which no darkness will follow, and those who participate in that light are made into other suns, as the Word says in the Gospel: ‘Then the righteous will shine like the sun’ (Mt. 13:43).”

And John of Damaskos says: “Eternal life and eternal hell prove that the age to come is unending. For time will not be counted by days and nights after the resurrection, but there will rather be one day with no evening (Sunday, that is), wherein the Sun of Righteousness will shine brightly on the

Righteous, but for the sinful there will be night profound and limitless.”

All of these Fathers which have been quoted concerning the eighth and one day of the future age spoke of Sunday as the eighth and one day, according to Moses and the divine teachers, as was shown above. For this reason the Church of Christ also considers the whole of Bright Week as one brilliant Sunday in order to show by this that this entire seventh age of this present life will become one day, the eighth, that is, Sunday, which will be that eighth age of the future life.

12) We add a twelfth prerogative to the already mentioned eleven prerogatives of Sunday: the name of Sunday itself. Even if all of the other days of the week belong to the Lord, being His creations, none of them, however, bear His Name, for only that one and eighth day was worthy to be named *Kyriaki* [the Lord’s Day] after the Lord Himself. First, because on Sunday, and no other day, the Lord’s resurrection occurred. Second, because that day, apart from all of the other days, is especially consecrated to the Lord.

Do you see, brethren, the lofty prerogatives? Do you see the great prerogatives? Do you see the wondrous prerogatives of the resurrectional day of Sunday? These lofty and great prerogatives of Sunday, then, we fear to violate and to contravene. We fear to ascribe any dishonour to Sunday, the day so honoured by the Holy Trinity. We fear to introduce the things of the seventh into the eighth. We fear to inject the shadow and the type of the Sabbath into the truth and perfection of Sunday, as Gregory Palamas designated it. We fear not offering the proper honour to the icon of the future age, for “the honour given to the icon passes to the prototype,” just as, contrarily, the dishonour given to the icon is brought upon the prototype. Sunday is “the chosen and holy day,” as St. John of Damaskos writes, for according to Moses, “the eighth day shall be chosen and holy unto you” (Leviticus 23:36).

Ioannina Baklava

A Christmas treat to look forward to!

500gms walnuts & almonds
125gms sugar
125gms butter
1 tsp cinnamon
500gms baklava pastry sheets (use puff or filo pastry)
For the syrup:
500gms sugar
450gms water
grated lemon peel
1 tsp lemon juice
cinnamon stick, clove

Mix the finely chopped walnuts and almonds with the sugar and cinnamon. Butter a baking tin 25x36cm., brush the melted butter on the pastry sheets and layer them one at a time, placing some of the mixture on each one. On top place two sheets of pastry and score them into serving sized pieces. Bake on a low oven for 35 minutes. Pour the syrup over and serve after two hours.

To prepare the syrup, boil the sugar, water, lemon juice and grated peel, cinnamon stick and clove for about ten minutes.

Encyclical for the Fast of the Nativity

Dearly Beloved and Cherished Children in the Lord,

Every day, we Christians celebrate the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. But we honour and remember it particularly during this period before Christmas, as we prepare our souls and families to receive the Saviour and Redeemer of the human race. He entered human history in humility, unobserved, just as all we mortal beings do. During the forty days before the Feast of our Lord's Nativity, the Orthodox Church in many ways pays homage to this event and invites the faithful to fast, to pray, and to cleanse their souls from all wickedness and sin, and to imitate Christ's love which rescued us from the devil and liberated us from fear of death and from all idolatry, which characterised the pre-Christian world, "that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph.2:7). These days remind us of God's providence and kindness, manifested in the Birth of Christ the God-man, and His reconciliation with humanity. "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the ages" (Heb. 1:1-2).

This season brings us before the eternal plans of God. He not only created the world from nothing through the Word (Who is Christ and Co-creator), but "the Word became flesh and lived among us" (Jn 1:14). Our Lord Jesus Christ was incarnated in time, and took on the fullness of human nature to heal, sanctify and deify it, and to raise it up into heaven, thus making us partakers and sharers of His Kingdom. Rightly does Scripture - both the Old Testament and the New, following his coming as Emmanuel - focus its teaching on the person of Christ, underlining the joy and hope He brought to all creation. The divine Paul calls Christ's Incarnation and entry into the world "the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations..." (Col.1:26), revealed to the world by Christ Himself, the Apostles, and the Saints and Martyrs, who are members of His Body, the Church. Therefore the Church glorifies the Lord and calls all people to believe and place their hopes in Him, to give their lives to Him, as God and Saviour: "...but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col.1:26-27).

This is a period of preparation to receive the Redeemer of the world, particularly today's world. It should make us think, and should bring us down to the realities of human life. In

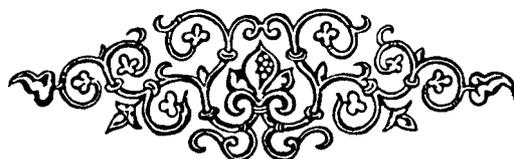
other words, we should better understand the importance and unique value of our Christian identity. We should not overlook the fact that this time is an opportunity to renew our faith and our relationship with Christ, to recall that He is our hope and our future. The Church is our refuge and our salvation, because it is in the Church that we find mercy and grace, peace which overcomes fear, doubt, disillusionment, spiritual sickness, sin, and death - all things which keep us away from salvation and redemption in Christ. We are invited to renew our devotion to Christ, to prayer and fasting, to voluntary poverty and frugality, to charity and simplicity of life, to honour and humility. As He Himself said, "The son of man has nowhere to lay his head" (Mt.8:20), "And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content" (1 Tim. 6:8).

Today is a time full of challenges: financial crisis, poverty, unemployment, disillusionment, and unrest. People distrust established orders, which we are quick to undervalue and undermine; we contemptuously oppose them in order to satisfy our greed, our passions, our selfishness and our petty interests. Within this climate of uncertainty and confusion, which we absorb every day through mass media and the cold-heartedness of the masses, Christ, "the Light of the world" (Jn 8:12) extends to us a rod of support, which will lead us to a better and more human world, and will guide us away from the inroads of sinfulness and alienation from Him. In short, these days prepare us for the Coming of the Redeemer, and they are filled with hope; they are days of salvation, full of sacred expectation of God's love for mankind. This is why the world has never forgotten Christ and has never ceased to find comfort in Him Who "became flesh and lived among us" (John 1:14), Who "bowed the heavens and came down" to earth (Ps.17:9 [LXX]), in order to unite it with heaven, and to assure us by His word that "I am with you always until the end of time" (Mt. 28:20).

Let us therefore open up the depths of our soul to receive Christ. Let us close our ears to the sirens of wickedness and sin, and with humility and obedience, "let our conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Ph.1:27). Let us wait upon Him, that He may grant us His joy and peace and rekindle our dwindled hopes. Let us begin a new life, with Christ the Saviour as its Lord and Guide, Whose Nativity Christians throughout the world anticipate with gladness and sacred joy. To Him be glory and dominion and boundless mercy for ever. Amen.

London, November 2012

Gregorios, Archbishop of Thyateira & Great Britain



A further Kontakion from the Akathist “Glory to God for All Things”

No one can put together what has crumbled into dust, but you can heal men whose conscience has become twisted; you give the soul its former beauty, which long ago it had lost without hope of change. With you, nothing is hopeless. You are love. You are the creator and redeemer of all things. We praise you with this song: Alleluia!

This Akathist Hymn was written by Metropolitan Tryphon of Turkestan in 1934

Scripture Reading Calendar for December

1 Fast***	Galatians 3:8-12	Luke 12:32-40	St Philaret the Merciful of Paphlagonia (792)
2 Fast***	Ephesians 5:8b-19	Luke 18:35-43	St Alexis Kabaliuk, Apostle of Carpatho-Russia (1947)
3 Fast	1 Timothy 5:1-10	Luke 20:27-44	St George of Cernica (1806)
4 Fast**	1 Timothy 5:11-21	Luke 21:12-19	St Barbara the Great Martyr (306), New Martyr Seraphim (1601)
5 Fast**	1 Timothy 5:22-6:11a	Luke 21:5-8a,10-11,20-24	St Sabas the Sanctified (532)
6 Fast***	1 Timothy 6:17-21	Luke 21:28b-33	New Hieromartyr Gregory Peradze (1942)
7 Fast	2 Timothy 1:1,2,8-18	Luke 21:37-22:8	St Nilus of Stolbensk Lake (1554)
8 Fast***	Galatians 5:22-6:2	Luke 13:19-29	St Patapius of Thebes (8thC)
9 Fast***	Ephesians 6:10-18	Luke 13:10-17	The Conception of the Most Holy Theotokos
10 Fast	2 Timothy 2:20-26	Mark 8:11-21	St Joasaph, Bishop of Belgorod (1754)
11 Fast**	2 Timothy 3:16-4:4	Mark 8:22-26	Hieromartyr Seraphim Chichagov (1937)
12 Fast**	2 Timothy 4:9-22	Mark 8:30-34	St Spiridon the Wonderworker, Bishop of Tremithus (348)
13 Fast**	Titus 1:5-14	Mark 9:10-15	St German of Alaska (1837)
14 Fast	Titus 1:15-2:10	Mark 9:33-41	St Hybald, Abbot in Lincolnshire (7thC)
15 Fast***	Ephesians 1:16-23	Luke 14:1-11	St Peter Moghila, Metropolitan of Kiev (1647)
16 Fast***	Colossians 3:4-11	Luke 14:16-24, Matt.22:14	Sunday of the Forefathers
17 Fast	Hebrews 3:5-11,17-19	Mark 9:42-10:1	St Dionysios, Bishop of Aegina, the Wonderworker (1622)
18 Fast**	Hebrews 4:1-13	Mark 10:2-12	Martyr Sebastian at Rome (287)
19 Fast	Hebrews 5:11-6:8	Mark 10:11-16	St Boniface the Merciful, Bishop of Florence (6thC)
20 Fast**	Hebrews 7:1-6	Mark 10:17-27	Hieromartyr Ignatios the God-bearer, Bishop of Antioch (107)
21 Fast	Hebrews 7:18-25	Mark 10:23b-32a	St Juliana, Princess of Vyazma (1406)
22 Fast**	Galatians 3:8-12	Luke 13:18-29	Great Martyr Anastasia (304)
23 Fast**	Hebrews 11:9-10,32-40	Matthew 1:1-25	All the Righteous who have pleased God (Adam to Joseph)
24 Fast	Hebrews 1:1-12	Luke 2:1-20	Virgin Martyr Eugenia of Rome
25	Galatians 4:4-7	Matthew 2:1-12	The Feast of the Nativity: We remember the Magi & Shepherds
26 Fast-free	Hebrews 2:11-18	Matthew 2:13-23	Hieromartyr Euthymios, Bishop of Sardis (840)
27 Fast-free	Acts 6:8-7:5,47-60	Matthew 21:33-42	Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen (34)
28 Fast-free	Hebrews 11:8-16	Mark 12:1-12	Hieromartyr Hilarion, Archbishop of Vereya (1929)
29 Fast-free	1 Timothy 6:11-16	Matthew 12:15-21	The Infants slain by Herod in Bethlehem
30 Fast-free	Galatians 1:11-19	Matthew 2:13-23	St Macarios, Metropolitan of Moscow (1563)
31 Fast-free	Hebrews 11:17-31	Mark 12:13-17	Hieromartyr Thaddeus, Archbishop of Tver (1937)

* 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
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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

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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.