



# The Tower

February 2020

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

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

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

Facebook: Greek Orthodox Community of Saint Barbara the Great Martyr in Chester

Charity No: 1144751

*Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

Time is passing and the window for house blessings is closing. I have not received as many requests for your homes to be blessed as in past years. We should seek to have our homes blessed every year at this time to sanctify our homes and ourselves for the year to come. Don't delay!

This month we celebrate the Feast of the Meeting of Christ in the Temple. Here according to custom, on the Fortieth day of His birth, Christ was brought by His mother, Mary, for their purification, the custom we continue today for every mother who bears a child. The mother returns to the church after her confinement and the new-born child enters the church for the first time. It is a thanksgiving.

We also enter the period of the Triodion, that weeks-long preparation for the start of the Great Lent. During this time we reflect on the differing characters of the Publican (tax-collector) and Pharisee (lawyer) [Sunday 9<sup>th</sup>] and in which of them we see ourselves. This is reinforced on the following Sunday [16<sup>th</sup>] by the repentance of the Prodigal Son and how we should take that repentance on board and make it our own with the Publican's cry 'Lord, have mercy'. The last Sunday of the month [23<sup>rd</sup>] presents us with the stark fact that we all will face Christ's Judgement in our due time. As the Canon of Repentance puts it 'Where shall I find myself? ... grant me, O Lord, repentance before my end' (Ode 8). The Publican and the Prodigal both beckon to us; let us follow them to the end of life lest we fall into the foolish temptations of the Pharisee.

*With much love for you all*

*Fr Pancratios & Presb. Anna, Fr Dn John & Diaconisa Vera*

## THE LITURGICAL HOURS OUR EUCHARISTIC DISCIPLINE

Just a reminder that our Sunday Services begin with Vespers on Saturday evening at 5.30pm and continue on Sunday Morning with Matins at 10:00am with Divine Liturgy at 11:00am

If you intend to attend the Divine Liturgy for communion then as an absolute minimum in preparation for this awesome reality of consuming the Risen Lord, you need to take no food or drink from midnight on Saturday night (small children are exempt from this) and arrive at the service before the Epistle and Gospel readings. Above all, you need to believe that what you are consuming is truly Christ's Body and Blood under the form of Bread and Wine. These are the minimum requirements. Please respect them. Saint Paul himself cautions us on the dangers of partaking unworthily.

If you want to prepare more than the absolute bare minimum then you need to keep the Church fasts according to our calendar as much as you are able, practice regular confession and attend Vespers on the eve of the Liturgy and Liturgy itself from the very beginning. For guidance beyond that or for any specific concerns or questions please speak to Father Pancratios or Deacon John.

### Priest in Charge:

**Very Rev'd Protopresbyter Pancratios Sanders**

The Presbytery, 18 Shannon Close, Saltney, Chester. CH4 8PJ  
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### Parish Deacon:

**Rev'd Father John Petkov**

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

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

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

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

Memorials may be celebrated on Saturday evenings before Vespers

## Principal Services for February

1 <sup>st</sup>	Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers	
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>10.00am</b> <b>11.00am</b>	<b>Matins</b> <b>Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>The Meeting of the Lord in the Temple</b>
5 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	6.30pm	Vespers	St Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople
8 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers	
9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>10.00am</b> <b>11.00am</b>	<b>Matins</b> <b>Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee</b> <i>Beginning of the Triodion</i>
12 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	6.30pm	Vespers	Apostles Aquila and Priscilla
15 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers	
16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>10.00am</b> <b>11.00am</b>	<b>Matins</b> <b>Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>Sunday of the Prodigal Son</b>
19 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	6.30pm	Vespers	St Leo, Bishop of Catania
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Saturday	4.30pm 5.30pm	Memorial Vespers	Soul Saturday
23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>10.00am</b> <b>11.00am</b>	<b>Matins</b> <b>Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>Sunday of the Last Judgement, Sunday of Meatfare</b> <i>Meat-Fast Week</i>
26 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	6.30pm	Vespers	St Prokopios, Confessor of Decapolis
29 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers	(Saturday of Cheesefare)

## Principal Services for March

1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>10.00am</b> <b>11.00am</b>	<b>Matins</b> <b>Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>Forgiveness Sunday, Sunday of Cheesefare</b> <i>First Week of Great Lent</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Monday	6.30pm		Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete (i)
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Tuesday	6.30pm		Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete (ii)
4 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	6.30pm 7.30pm	Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified gifts Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete (iii)	
5 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	6.30pm	Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete (iv)	
6 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	6.30pm 7.30pm	Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified gifts Akathist to the Mother of God (i)	
7 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers	
8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>10.00am</b> <b>11.00am</b>	<b>Matins</b> <b>Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>Sunday of Orthodoxy</b> <b>Followed by the Procession of Icons and the Anathemas</b>
11 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	6.30pm	Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified gifts	
13 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	6.30pm 7.30pm	Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified gifts Akathist to the Mother of God (ii)	
14 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers	
15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>10.00am</b> <b>11.00am</b>	<b>Matins</b> <b>Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>Second Sunday – St Gregory Palamas</b>
18 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	6.30pm	Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified gifts	
20 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	6.30pm 7.30pm	Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified gifts Akathist to the Mother of God (iii)	
21 <sup>st</sup>	Saturday	4.30pm 5.30pm	Soul Saturday Memorial Vespers	
22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>10.00am</b> <b>11.00am</b>	<b>Matins</b> <b>Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>Third Sunday – Veneration of the Cross</b>
25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>11.00am</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>Feast of the Annunciation to the Theotokos</b>
27 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	6.30pm 7.30pm	Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified gifts Akathist to the Mother of God (iv)	
28 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	5.30pm	Vespers	
29 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>10.00am</b> <b>11.00am</b>	<b>Matins</b> <b>Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>Fourth Sunday – St John Climacus</b>

# A Scripture Reading Calendar for February

*with Irish Saints (where known)*

1	1 Thessalonians 5:14-23	Luke 17:3-10	St Brigid of Kildare (524)
2	Hebrews 7:7-17	Luke 2:22-40	<i>St Laurence, second Archbishop of Canterbury (619)</i>
3	1 Peter 2:21b-3:9	Mark 12:13-17	St Caoilfionn in Roscommon (6thC), <i>St Werburga of Chester (c700)</i>
4	1 Peter 3:10-24	Mark 12:18-27	<i>Hieromartyr Aldate of Gloucester (5thC)</i>
5 Fast	1 Peter 4:1-11	Mark 12:28-37	St Vodalis, hermit (c725)
6	1 Peter 4:12-5:5	Mark 12:38-44	St Mél, Bishop of Ardagh (488)
7 Fast	2 Peter 1:1-10	Mark 13:1-18	St Trésain, missionary priest (550)
8	2 Timothy 2:11-19	Luke 18:2-8a	<i>Sts Jacut &amp; Guethenoc, disciples of St Budoc (5thC)</i>
9 Fastfree	2 Timothy 3:10-15	Luke 18:9-14	<i>St Curvinus 'the wise', Bishop (c700)</i>
10 Fastfree	2 Peter 1:20-21; 2:1-9	Mark 13:9-13	<i>St Trummvine of Abercorn (c704)</i>
11 Fastfree	2 Peter 2:9-22	Mark 13:14-23	St Gobnait, Abbess of Ballyvourney, Cork (7thC)
12 Fastfree	2 Peter 3:1-18	Mark 13:24-31	<i>St Aethelwold of Lindisfarne (740)</i>
13 Fastfree	1 John 1:8-2:6	Mark 13:31-14:2	St Modomnoc, Bishop of Ossory (c550)
14 Fastfree	1 John 1:8-2:6	Mark 13:31-14:2	<i>St Conran, Bishop of the Orkney Islands (c7thC)</i>
15 Fastfree	1 Timothy 6:11b-16	Luke 20:46-21:4	St Berachius, founder of a monastery in Connaught (6thC)
16	1 Corinthians 6:12-20	Luke 15:11-32	<i>St Honestus of Nîmes (270)</i>
17	1 John 2:18-3:8	Mark 11:1-11	St Lommán, first Bishop of Trim, Meath (c450)
18	1 John 3:9-22a	Mark 14:10-42	St Colman of Connaught, Confessor of Lindisfarne (676)
19 Fast	1 John 3:21-4:11	Mark 14:43-15:1	St Odran, first Christian Martyr in Irish History (c452)
20	1 John 4:20-5:21	Mark 15:1-15	St Olcan, Bishop of Derkan, baptised by St Patrick (c480)
21 Fast	2 John 1-13	Mark 15:20,22,25,33-41	St Ercongotha, nun (660)
22	1 Corinthians 10:23-28	Luke 21:8,9,25-27,33-36	St Elwin, missionary (6thC)
23	1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2	Matthew 25:31-46	<i>St Boisil, prior of Melrose (664)</i>
24 Meatfast	3 John 1-15	Matt 19:29-40; 22:7-39	<i>St Cummain Ailbe, Abbot of Iona (669)</i>
25 Meatfast	Jude 1-10	Lk 22:39-42,45-71; 23:1	<i>St Ethelbert, King of Kent (616)</i>
26 Meatfast	Joel 2:12-26	Joel 3:12-21	<i>St Dionysios, first Bishop of Augsburg (c303)</i>
27 Meatfast	Jude 11-25	Luke 23:1-31,33a,44-56	St Comgan, Abbot of Glenthzen (c565)
28 Meatfast	Zechariah 8:7-17	Zechariah 8:19-23	St Silvanus, second Abbot of Bangor, Co. Down (c610)
29 Meatfast	Romans 14:19-23; 16:25-27	Matthew 6:1-13	<i>St Oswald of Worcester, Archbishop of York (992)</i>

\* Wine is allowed on this day

\*\* Wine & Oil are allowed on this day

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

**Sundays are shown in Bold**

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

## Some Further Thoughts on the Life and Traditions of our Church – The Triodion (i)

The Lenten Triodion, together with the Pentecostarion, the Festal Menaion and Monthly Menaion comprise the great service books of the Church. They enable us to celebrate the daily services with all the variable material required.

So, what of the Triodion itself? It covers all the texts required for the period from the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee to the Sunday of Forgiveness and all the services of Great Lent itself concluding with the Midnight Office that occurs before we proclaim 'Christ is Risen!' on Easter Day.

All these texts are penitential, they express sorrow for our fallen nature but in every case they point with anticipation towards the Bright Day of the Resurrection. As human beings we cannot stand to face the Lord until we have first thrown our faces to the floor in repentance for our sins. We fast, we continually cry 'Lord have mercy', we weep but always with the expectation that the Lord hears us and looks

upon us with that love that only He is capable of.

The Triodion proclaims the forthcoming Lent with an increasing measure of fasting, week by week, removing meat from the menu and then dairy products. Prepared, we are able to ask forgiveness of our brethren and face the rigours of the First Week with some of the most beautiful hymns ever written for our Church. Saint Andrew of Crete's Great Canon over the first four weekdays are tragically ignored by too many of the faithful for their spiritual deprivation. On the Friday we keep in mind the Theotokos with her Akathist while on Wednesday and Friday we celebrate the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy in which the Gifts have been consecrated the previous Sunday, a solemn and peaceful service.

Then the Sunday of Orthodoxy when we give thanks for our Orthodox Faith and the Holy Icons, while rejecting the bearers and proclaimers of all heresy and falsehood.

# Ascesis

## *Metropolitan Antonius of Zable, Baalbek and their Dependencies*

In our patrimony, there are many stylites who practised asceticism in many regions. Saint Symeon the Stylite was the first of them in this way of life. One might then wonder: is asceticism the subjugation of the body through unusual methods?

What is asceticism?

In Greek the word used is *ἀσκησις* (ascesis), which means 'exercise'.

It is exercise in emptying oneself (*κένωσις*, cf. Philippians 2:7) of the ego. All passions and sins are tied to the ego and the ego is the source of the fall and estrangement from God and the other.

Most people think that asceticism is only for monks and ascetics, but this is something that is required of all believers. The Church teaches us how to live it through prayer, fasting and repentance according to the Lord Jesus' commandments to us.

Thus asceticism is the life of prayer, fasting and repentance with the goal of emptying ourselves of our ego so that God may become our ego, our life and everything for us.

Asceticism is escape from the self— that is, from the source of the passions— through setting aside the pleasures and passions that fight man within himself, his heart and his being, through personal effort, firm and sincere desire, and God's grace.

This is what is called the ascetic struggle or spiritual struggle. It is an activity that is shared between the will of man and the grace of the Holy Trinity, which we call 'synergy' (*συνεργία*).

Monks have become teachers of the spiritual life because they have left the world and all therein. They

have sold it and distributed it in order to follow Christ. The first of them were taught by God directly, as He taught Saint Anthony the Great when an angel appeared to him and taught him to defeat weariness through work, prayer and spiritual reading. Monks and ascetics, each according to his ability, began to struggle to control the body, acting according to the words of the Apostle Paul: "I discipline my body and bring it into subjection" (1 Corinthians 9:27). Saint Symeon the Stylite invented this manner of living on a pillar in heat and cold and others followed him in this.

Nevertheless, in the Orthodox Church, as we have mentioned above, asceticism is fundamentally the struggle of prayer, fasting and asceticism so that one may become practised in knowledge of the self and purification of the heart in order to ascend in his relationship with God and the other until He arrived, through unity with the Trinity, at unity with all creation and the service of God in man.

Beloved, the life, teachings, and traditions of our Orthodox Church are saturated with the spirit of asceticism, prayer and fasting. Our liturgy is filled with spiritual teachings that encourage repentance, humility, judgment of the soul, judgment of sin and love of the sinner.

In our Church we have a treasury of teachings of the fathers about how to combat the passions and confront temptations.

We must drink from the wells of grace that are in our Orthodox Church and the writings of her fathers, so that we may walk as those who came before us walked and become holy as they became holy. There is no Christian life without asceticism.

He who has ears, let him hear.

**T**he greatest goal of Christians' lives should be something far greater than worldly success or material possessions. It should be cultivating an intimate communion with our Creator - discovering the divine love of God, and filling ourselves with that love. We need to know in the depths of our souls that we are created out of love, we are deeply and passionately loved by our Creator, that nothing in life can take this love away from us if we do not allow it, and we can always live in this love - even live for eternity surrounded by this divine love. One of the great deceptions of this world is understanding life only limited to the here and now, to this material world. We forget that our eternal God created us to live eternally with Him.