



# The Tower

June 2015

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](http://www.thyateira.org.uk)

Facebook: [Greek Orthodox Community of Saint Barbara the Great Martyr in Chester](#)  
Charity No: 1144751

*Dear brothers and sisters,*

We are both now settling into Saltney life and hope you will take the opportunity to visit, either socially or for spiritual matters (or both!). Please check beforehand that we are in as we are still in the process of clearing our old home in Wallasey. Slowly we are getting there but it is a long business, dealing with the accumulated dross of 45 years of marriage!

We do have some furniture for disposal - mostly of the bedroom variety. If anyone has need of good quality wardrobes, chests-of-drawers etc., a donation to the church and removal of same would be welcome.

Gardeners among you, we have need for advice on what to do with a mini jungle (of dandelions!). The garden is described as lawned though we feel it would be better thought of as rough pasture. Do we have a garden planner among us?

The May Board meeting has discussed the priestly proposals for additional services and the re-timing of some (not the Divine Liturgy which will continue to be at 11.00am) now that we are so much closer to the church and able to do so much more. These plans will be revealed in the next edition of The Tower and will be brought into use thereafter.

*With much love for you this summer,*

*Fr Pancratios and Presbytera Anna*



## *A Sermon on the Dread Judgement in Five Lines*

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit!  
What happiness,  
that God will judge me,  
and not people.  
Amen.

## Principal Services for June / July

Divine Liturgy every Sunday: (Prayers of Preparation or Matins precedes)

### June

Sunday 7th	1st after Pentecost
11.00am	Divine Liturgy
	Beginning of the Apostles' Fast
Sunday 14th	All Saints of Russia / Romania
9.30am	Matins
11.00am	Divine Liturgy
Sunday 21st	All Saints of Britain / Bulgaria
11.00am	Divine Liturgy
<b>Wednesday 24th</b>	<b>Nativity of the Forerunner</b>
11.00am	Divine Liturgy
Sunday 28th	4th after Pentecost
9.30am	Matins
11.00am	Divine Liturgy
<b>Monday 29th</b>	<b>Leaders of the Apostles, Peter &amp; Paul</b>
11.00am	Divine Liturgy

### July

Sunday 5th	5th after Pentecost
11.00am	Divine Liturgy
Sunday 12th	6th after Pentecost
9.30am	Matins
11.00am	Divine Liturgy
Sunday 19th	Fathers of the 4th Ecumenical Council
11.00am	Divine Liturgy
<b>Saturday 25th</b>	<b>Dormition of the Righteous Anna</b>
11.00am	Divine Liturgy
Sunday 26th	8th after Pentecost
9.30am	Matins
11.00am	Divine Liturgy



**A Community Board Meeting  
will be held on Sunday 14th June. All matters  
for discussion should be with the Secretary by  
the Sunday before.**

## “The Doors, the Doors”

In our Orthodox Liturgy, the Creed is prefaced by a diaconal word of command. That is, just before the Creed is chanted or sung, the deacon cries out, “The doors! The doors!” and only after this does he invite the faithful to join in reciting the Creed by saying, “In wisdom, let us attend!” In its original context, the deacon was calling out to the door-keeper who stood by the main doors into the church, telling him to close and guard the doors against uninvited and unwanted intruders. In the days of the pre-Nicene church, it was a poignantly practical command—what they were all about to do (offer the Eucharist) was a capital offence under Roman law, and the lives of all the worshippers could be immediately forfeit if Roman soldiers broke in and caught them all. Hence the command to guard the doors.

The Creed was not introduced into the Divine Liturgy until about the late fifth century, under Peter the Fuller, patriarch of Antioch, long after the practical reasons for guarding the doors had ceased to apply. By the time the Creed was introduced, the assembled church had no reason to fear being raided by the Roman police and hauled off for punishment. Nonetheless, the liturgical proximity of the command to guard the doors with the recitation of the Creed is fortuitous, for both the guarding and the recitation serve to accomplish the same purpose.

That purpose is exclusion. The doors were closed to keep out those who had no spiritual right to attend the gathering of the holy Church around its Lord. The doors therefore formed not only a physical barrier between the Church and the World, but also a kind of symbol of the Church’s eschatological separation from the World as well. The World was indeed called to salvation, but the road to salvation led first to the baptismal font, and no one who had not first been immersed in its saving waters could join in the Eucharistic communion of the gathered Church. The closed doors stood as mute witness that the unbaptized or heretical world had no place among the Orthodox faithful.

It is the same with the Creed. Its purpose was to exclude error and keep those who embraced error away from the communion of those united in the truth. In our day, our culture exults in inclusivity. The word “Inclusivity” is a kind of magic word, a happy word, a word of commendation. It joins other happy words like “Tolerant” “Kind,” “Generous,” “Liberal,” “Progressive” To lack any of these virtues,

our culture insists, is to fall short of authentic living, and this failure betrays a cold heart and a mean spirit. No one in our culture wants to be denounced as intolerant or as not being inclusive. All must be welcome everywhere, and excluding someone for any reason is judged to be a fault.

Thus, our culture does nothing to prepare us to appreciate this exclusionary function of the Creed. Our culture finds it disturbing and incomprehensible that anyone would be excluded from a religious act (such as receiving Holy Communion) because of their religious views, but that is precisely why the Nicene and Constantinopolitan statements were created. These creeds did nothing to increase the greater numerical unity of the Church, or to include more people happily within its fold. Arius and his supporters were already part of the wider Church before the Council met in 325, along with Athanasius and the three hundred and eighteen Fathers. But Arius was spreading spiritual poison, and it was urgently necessary that the bishops as spiritual shepherds protect their flock from it. They did so by excluding Arius and his like from the Church. If they could not bring Arius to sanity (as clearly they could not), they could at least stop the insanity from spreading among their own people. Thus the Creed was created as a litmus test to keep out those spreading error and poison. It was a line drawn in the sand, marking the extreme limits of truth and tolerance, beyond which the Church dare not go. It was a door, barred against the intruder and the wolf. The door-keeper in the pre-Nicene church guarded the doors. The bishops of Nicea and afterwards guarded the true faith.

This means, of course, that truth is more important than unity, since the three hundred and eighteen deliberately chose the saving truth about Christ over greater inclusivity in the Church. Or, more precisely, this means that unity is based on truth, so that without agreement in the truth there can be no unity. And there was no truth more basic than this. The Fathers did not make agreement over (say) the authorship of the Letter to the Hebrews the litmus test of unity, and exclude those of different opinions. They did not make liturgical conformity the basis for shared communion in the Church. Rather, they made the Christological question, *What do you think of Christ? Whose Son is He?* (Matthew 22:42) the basis of Eucharistic communion. Salvation consists of worshipping Jesus and giving one’s life to Him, of falling before Him and crying from the heart,

*My Lord and my God!* (John 20:28). It was to secure this saving confession from its faithful that the Fathers of Nicea drew their creedal line in the sand, and closed the doors of Communion to any who refused to offer this cry.

Nicea was a long time ago. But the choice they faced in a hot May in 325 A.D. still remains before us all today. In the contemporary world, many voices offer rival interpretations about Jesus of Nazareth, and many deny that He is the everlasting Son of the everlasting Father. For them, Jesus is a celebrity, a

teacher, a wise man, the founder of an important world religion—but that is all. For the three hundred and eighteen, He was more than that. He was the divine Son of God, light from light, true God from true God, *homoousios* with the Father, the One by whom all things were made. There is no question more urgent and no choice more important than the choice between these two options. Nicea was a long time ago. But now is the moment of salvation. The Creed bids us make the right choice.

*Fr.L.F.*



## Food for thought

“What is a merciful heart? It is a heart on fire for the whole of creation, for humanity, for the birds, for the animals, for demons, and for all that exists. By the recollection of them the eyes of a merciful person pour forth tears in abundance. By the strong and vehement mercy that grips such a person’s heart, and by such great compassion, the heart is humbled and one cannot bear to hear or to see any injury or slight sorrow in any in creation. For this reason, such a person offers up tearful prayer continually even for irrational beasts, for the enemies of the truth, and for those who harm her or him, that they be protected and receive mercy. And in like manner such a person prays for the family of reptiles because of the great compassion that burns without measure in a heart that is in the likeness of God.”

*Saint Isaac the Syrian*

The Lord has called us to the feat of active love embedded in losing oneself in service to our neighbour, and even more so to those who especially need our support: the suffering, the sick, the lonely and the downcast. If this law of life, which is so clearly manifested and expressed in the earthly life of the Saviour, becomes the inheritance of the majority, then people will be truly happy. Indeed, in serving others, we gain incomparably more than we give: the Lord then enters our hearts and by communicating with divine grace all of human life is changed. As there can be no holiness without labour, as there can be no Resurrection without Golgotha, so too without spiritual feats the genuine spiritual and moral transformation of the human person is impossible.

*Patr. Kyrill of Moscow and All-Russia*



## Saint Plegmund - his Well and our Pilgrimage

The holy Plegmund is one of our most local of saints, yet is almost completely forgotten by the inhabitants of the city and county of Chester.

What do we know of him? Well, quite a lot, in fact.

The saint was a child of the ancient Kingdom of Mercia, a land stretching across much of central England during the post-Roman and early Medieval period. As time passed, so the boundaries moved for various reasons, but this need not concern us much for the purpose of examining the saint.

Plegmund was born about the middle of the Ninth Century but we have no knowledge of his parents or his native village, though in all likelihood, that lay somewhere in Cheshire.

He first appears in the annals of history as a hermit living on a small island to the north-east of the Roman city of Chester near what is now the village of Plemstall. The extensive low-lying farmland we now see was, in his time, salt marshes surrounding low islands, the marshes being regularly flooded by the Gowy and Mersey.

Plegmund settled on the one island that had a fresh water spring arising on it. There he spent his time in prayer and contemplation of the mysteries of God and used the spring as a Baptismal Font as occasion demanded. What he did for food, we know not!

There he would have remained for the rest of his life, unknown to the outside world except that the great king, Alfred, came to hear of his spiritual endeavour and his scholarly life. This king (the only king named "Great" in England), seeking to raise the stature and security of his Kingdom of Wessex sought advisers who would aid him in this task. For spiritual matters, he turned to this obscure hermit living his solitary life and brought him to the capital, Winchester.

Thus, sometime in the early 880s, Plegmund left his island and began the task of reviving scholarship across the land. He, among others, translated Saint Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Care* into Old English. He worked to improve the quality of Latin used by scholars and the clergy. He also contributed to the primary document of English history: *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

In due time (890) King Alfred called him to Canterbury selecting him as Archbishop. Here he remained for the rest of his life re-establishing the authority of Canterbury during which he broke up the huge diocese of Winchester so that each future shire of Wessex had its own bishop.

Although Plegmund was granted his Pallium by Pope Formosus in 890 it was not until 908 he was able to travel to Rome to receive his Pallium from the hands of Pope Sergius III. On his return, he brought the relics of Saint Blaise (+c316 f.d. 11th February) with him. Alfred died in 899 and Plegmund crowned his son, Edward, as king.

Plegmund reposed in the Lord in 914 or 923 on 2nd August, which is his feast day.

The well from which the hermit Plegmund drew his fresh water remains to this day though the water table has fallen so much that it is usually dry in summertime. It lies a short distance west of Saint Peter's Church in Plemstall close to Mickle Trafford.

The stone lined well, now surrounded by an ornamental fence and arch is first recorded in a document of 1301, but its use reaches back into pre-history. It is said to have been used for Baptisms into the last century. Well-dressing has taken place each 2nd August in recent times and pilgrims and other visitors are to be found there on an almost daily basis. The hawthorn tree that overhangs the well is frequently decorated with rags though this seems not to have any historical connection. There is no particular record of miraculous healings associated with the well though that lack should not be discounted.

Our pilgrimage this year will take place on the first Sunday afternoon of June (7th) rather than on the Feast Day. This is of course the day before the Apostle's Fast begins and is appropriate for us to enjoy our picnic in the grounds of Saint Peter's Church to the full!

Join us for this spiritual and pleasurable afternoon in the quiet countryside as we bless the waters. There is car parking space at the church, which, if it is open, is quite a delight. There are also some very interesting graves to be found close to the church itself. The picnic area was designated as a wild flower meadow some years ago but it has not enjoyed the care that such a meadow should receive. If you have no car, other pilgrims will gladly offer you transport. Do ensure you have a suitable picnic hamper with you!



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## Theotokos

*by Dane Johnson*

I wasn't raised to kiss or venerate icons.  
My spiritual leaders told me it was an archaic form of idolatry.  
So I sought the attributes of divinity in nature, human faces and modern melodies.  
I smelled fragrance of God on all of them.  
But then I sought refuge with a brotherhood of monks.  
They embraced me like the prodigal.  
In their monastery, they honoured depictions of never-dead saints painted on wooden  
rectangles reverently placed throughout their space.  
These saints were treated like living family; positioned for intercession at life's many  
intersections.  
I grew to love them.  
If the soul is eternal, I mused, these deceased ones are still alive now, somehow.  
I came to know them like you know an author or an artist or a musician long dead.  
They'd lived a masterpiece of a life still spanning space and time.  
I got to know them by what they gave in life.  
Yet, even in physical absence, they were still giving, as could be witnessed by flowing  
myrrh upon the face of Saint George.  
Two days ago, a year separated from the brotherhood and their iconic company, I was  
contacted from beyond the ether.  
A stranger told me about a weeping Theotokos in Cicero, IL, so I searched for the image  
on Google.  
Her picture brought past into present.  
And I was compelled to ask her what pains her most.  
My adult self concluded that a water line must've broken; burst pipes perfectly aligned  
behind her painted tear ducts.  
But another part of me wanted to believe in a miracle.  
My child self still wants wonder in the world.  
Seeing her mourn revealed reflected hurts I'd projected onto her.  
I know she can bear the pain for me while I come to terms with the pain itself.  
Like any loving mother, she lets you fall apart in her arms.  
"You're just an icon," I downplay.  
"We all are," she replies.

## A Troparion for Pentecost by the Emperor Leo

Come, you peoples, let us worship the Godhead in three persons, the Son in the Father, with the Holy Spirit; for the Father timelessly begot the Son, co-eternal and co-reigning, and the Holy Spirit was in the Father, glorified with the Son; one power, one essence, one Godhead, whom we all worship as we say: Holy God, who created all things through the Son, with the co-operation of the Holy Spirit. Holy Strong, through whom we have come to know the Father, and through whom the Holy Spirit came into the world. Holy Immortal, the Advocate Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and rests in the Son. Holy Trinity, glory to you.



## A Scripture Reading Calendar for June

1	Fastfree	Ephesians 5:8b-19	Matthew 18:10-20	Monk Agapit of Pechersk (1095)
2	Fastfree	Romans 1:1-7,13-17	Matthew 4:23-5:13	Martyr Constantine at Mytelene (1819)
3	Fastfree	Romans 1:18-27	Matthew 5:20-26	Nun Hieria (Niziba 320)
4	Fastfree	Romans 1:28-2:9	Matthew 5:27-32	Monk Zosima, Bishop of Babylon (5thC)
5	Fastfree	Romans 2:14-28	Matthew 5:33-41	Martyr Mark (Chios 1801)
6	Fastfree	Romans 1:7-12	Matthew 5:42-48	Monk Jonah of Klimetsk (1534)
<b>7</b>		<b>Hebrews 11:33-12:2a</b>	<b>Matthew 10:32-33,37-38; 19:27-30</b>	Holy Women Hesia & Susanna (Disciples of St Pancratios 1stC)
8	Fast	Romans 2:28-3:18	Matthew 6:21-34; 7:9-11	Martyr Paul of Kaium (766)
9	Fast**	Romans 4:4-12	Matthew 7:15-21	Monk Alexander, Hegumen of Kushtsk (1439)
10	Fast	Romans 4:13-25	Matthew 7:21-23	St John the Wonderworker, Metropolitan of Tobolsk (1715)
11	Fast***	Romans 5:10-16	Matthew 8:23-27	Monk Varnava of Vetluzhsk (1445)
12	Fast	Romans 5:17-6:2	Matthew 9:14-17	Holy Nobleborn Princess Anna of Kashinsk (1338)
13	Fast***	Romans 3:19-24	Matthew 7:1-8	St Tryphillios, Bishop of Leukyssa (370)
<b>14</b>	<b>Fast***</b>	<b>Romans 2:10-16</b>	<b>Matthew 4:18-23</b>	Monk Nyphontes of Athos (14thC)
15	Fast	Romans 7:1-13	Matthew 9:36-10:8	St Ephraim, Patriarch of Serbia (1400)
16	Fast**	Romans 7:14-8:2	Matthew 10:9-15	Monk Tikhon of Medinsk (1492)
17	Fast	Romans 8:2-13	Matthew 10:16-22	Martyr Shalva, Prince of Georgia (1227)
18	Fast**	Romans 8:22-27	Matthew 10:23-31	Monk Leontios the Perspicacious (Athos 1605)
19	Fast**	Romans 9:6-19	Matthew 10:32-36; 11:1	Monk Paisii of Khilendaria (18thC)
20	Fast***	Romans 3:28-4:3	Matthew 7:24-8:4	Monk Naum of Ochrid (910)
<b>21</b>	<b>Fast***</b>	<b>Romans 5:1-10</b>	<b>Matthew 6:22-33</b>	Martyr Nikita of Nyrosa (1732)
22	Fast**	Romans 9:18-33	Matthew 11:2-15	Martyr Zinon and Zina at Philadelphia (Arabia 304)
23	Fast**	Romans 10:11-11:2a	Matthew 11:16-20	Monk Joseph of Zaonikievsk (1612)
24	Fast***	Romans 11:2b-12	Matthew 11:20-26	Martyr Panagiotes of Caesarea (1765)
25	Fast**	Romans 11:13-24	Matthew 11:27-30	Prince Peter (Monk David) Wonderworker of Murom (1228)
26	Fast	Romans 11:25-36	Matthew 12:1-8	Monk David of Solunea (Thessaloniki 540)
27	Fast***	Romans 6:11-17	Matthew 8:14-23	Monk George of Iveria and Athos (1065)
<b>28</b>	<b>Fast***</b>	<b>Romans 6:18-23</b>	<b>Matthew 8:5-13</b>	Monks Sergei and German (Valaam c1353)
29		2 Corinthians 11:21-12:9	Matthew 16:13-19	Leaders of the Apostles, Peter & Paul (1stC)
30		Romans 14:9-18	Matthew 12:14-16,22-30	Martyr Michael the Gardener (Athens 1770)

\* 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 for 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

**Priest in Charge: Very Rev'd Protopresbyter Pancratios Sanders**

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**Treasurer: Robert Gale**

40 Ffordd Parc, Bodnant, Prestatyn. LL19 9LJ

**Secretary: Presbytera Anna Sanders**

18 Shannon Close, Saltney, Chester. CH4 8PJ

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.

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 2014/15 (6/15)**

**Greek Orthodox Community of Saint Barbara the Great Martyr  
Overleigh Cemetery, Overleigh Road, Chester. CH4 7HW**

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

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

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

Membership is £5.00 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](http://www.stbarbara.org.uk/membership)**

Alternatively, membership can be paid using the envelopes available at church at £5.00 per month or £60.00 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, 40 Ffordd Parc, Bodnant, Prestatyn. LL19 9LJ**

**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.**

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.