



# The Tower

March 2014

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](https://www.facebook.com/Greek-Orthodox-Community-of-Saint-Barbara-the-Great-Martyr-in-Chester)  
Charity No: 1144751

*Dear brothers and sisters,*

The recent gales have changed the character of Overleigh Cemetery somewhat. In our section we lost six conifers, three of them quite close to the church, fortunately without damage to the church itself, thanks be to God. However a number of graves have been damaged, both here and in the lower cemetery where at least ten trees have been brought down, including a couple of venerable redwoods, each around 150 years old.

In the light of the widespread damage around Cheshire, it will take the Council some time to repair the damage and clear the roadways so we do ask you to take extra care when going to and from the services at church and especially to watch over our children to keep them away from any unstable grave stones.

*Wishing you a holy and blessed Lent*

*Fr Pancratios and Presbytera Anna*

*Weekday services during Lent*

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

**In the First Week**

**from Monday 3rd to Thursday 6th March:**

**Great Compline and Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete.** This is a beautiful series of services that settles us into the rhythm of Holy Lent (Tessaracoste). The Canon itself is divided into four parts to be sung on successive days

**On Friday 7th**

The first part of the **Little Compline with the Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God.** This centres around the beautiful poem written by Joseph the Hymnographer in honour of the Theotokos. This Service is preceded by the **Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts.**

**On each succeeding week during March and April according to the Calendar:**

**On Wednesday:**

**The Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts.** This service of Vespers concludes with the distribution of Holy Communion sanctified at the Sunday Liturgy.

**On Friday:**

**Little Compline with the Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God.**

*Please try to attend these services as frequently as possible - they are for our spiritual benefit. Other services during the weekdays are notified on the Sunday before.*



## *Dates for your Diary*

**Sunday 16th March after Liturgy**

Fasting Parish Lunch and Board Meeting

**Sunday 23rd March**

Meeting to arrange the Paschal Festivities

**Saturday 29th March 11am**

Spring Cleaning Day - all welcome



*Faith is the beginning of love... The end of love is the knowledge of God*

Abba Evagrius



## 25<sup>th</sup> March

On this day the Creator enters into His Creation. “How”, the Virgin asks, “is this possible?” “All things are possible by the power of the Holy Spirit”, the Archangel answers.

Truly, today is Salvation come into the world. Mary, the new Eve, willingly offers her body to be shelter and protection for the Lord of All. The God whom Creation cannot encompass becomes, as it were, the smallest speck, He who brings us the promise of Salvation through his Birth, Death and Resurrection.

Glorify Him!

# What Orthodox Families Must Do to Keep their Children Orthodox

Sometimes the question may be asked why there aren't more children in church? It's an important question, since it raises two deeper issues: firstly, where will the Church in the Western World (outside traditionally Orthodox countries) be in twenty years, and secondly (and perhaps most critically); what on earth have Orthodox families been doing for the last few decades that has resulted in some parishes being almost devoid of young people?

Obviously, somewhere, the transmitting of the precious Orthodox faith from one generation to the next has not been accomplished. Of course, building faith in young people is a one-to-one exercise, requiring the time and concerted effort of parents, who bear the primary responsibility for this task. If young adults (or not-so-young adults) do not love Christ's Church, the question must be asked, what exactly has been the highest priority of their home life? Academics? Getting a good job? Sports? Social life? Entertainment?

Saint Paul tells us that whatever we sow, that is the thing that we shall reap (Galatians 6:7): whatever we put into our children – a love of music, international travel experiences, unbridled ambition, a concern for the poor – it is very likely that this will profoundly shape their character. Similarly, as Saint John Chrysostom tells us, the things that we allow to surround our children will either reinforce or undermine our primary influence on the life of our children (his Admonition to Parents is a tremendously helpful read for all mothers and fathers). Where can we start with this immense task? Consider the following:

## 1. Shop and plan like you'll spend eternity elsewhere.

We are all tempted to desire to be like the world, to be liked by those around us, and to "fit in". Sometimes the cost of such acceptance is too high. The way in which we use our money and our time says a lot about whether we are planning more for this life, or more for eternity. If we are planning primarily for this life, why would our children even consider worrying about their spiritual life? When our chequebooks, online shopping, and recreational trips to the supermarket outweigh the time spent at church or at prayer, why would our children turn out any other way?

## 2. Stop working and shopping on Sunday.

This is a concrete way to set aside time for God. The Lord tells us that the sabbath (Sunday, for Christians) was made for our sake (Mark 2:27) – for our rest and spiritual rebuilding from the spiritual maelstrom that tears us apart during the other six days of the week. If we lack the strength to live a spiritual life, we should ask why!

## 3. Provide orthodox as an identity option.

Orthodox children in the western world are usually provided with two mutually exclusive and spiritually poisonous options: retain a foreign culture (language, name, history, etc.) as your primary identity, in order to somehow "keep" the Orthodox faith as part of that culture, or become westernised and leave your faith and culture behind. The whole idea that Orthodoxy is "part" of any culture is of course absurd, since two millennia ago, nearly every culture was thoroughly pagan. Even recently, many "Orthodox" cultures fell under the hypnotic effect of Communism, and today many are intoxicated with capitalist materialism.

Having a rich sense of inherited culture – whatever the culture is – is a formative seed in the soul of a child, since a rich appreciation and love for inherited tradition prepares a child's heart for Orthodox living (since our faith is timeless, and requires inoculation against the passing winds of fashion). But a child's first loyalty, the loyalty that must be cultivated and exemplified by each parent, is loyalty to the

unchanging treasure of the Orthodox faith. If a young person thinks they have lots in common with other Orthodox people because they are Orthodox, there is a good chance they will remain faithful. On the other hand, if a child believes he has more in common with other peers who share their culture, whether those peers are faithful or not, it's probably too late – the young person does not have an Orthodox Christian self-image, and tremendous work needs to be done.

## 4. Learn the orthodox faith – acquire the mind of the holy fathers.

For parishes that use the English language, this means teaching Orthodoxy to adults (catechumens and long-time faithful) so they can pass it on at home, while teaching their children. The temptation to "make Orthodoxy British" must never turn into a watering-down practice; this is one of the reasons some Orthodox Christians do not trust missions using the local vernacular language with the task of religious education: watered-down, "modernized" Orthodoxy is a scandal to people who are already deeply fearful of losing their imported culture. Sadly, there are examples of Orthodox missions, here and abroad, that attempt to redefine Holy Tradition, to revamp inherited liturgical traditions, and generally to try to "know better than all the faithful saints who have lived the Faith since the beginning". We must learn from history that Orthodoxy is a universal faith, for all times, places and peoples, and teach this critical lesson to our children.

## 5. Cultivate a network of orthodox friends of all ages.

Imagine for a moment that the electricity supply was cut off to your home town. What would you do? Do you have alternatives close at hand? Many people – particularly younger people – would find life without electronic entertainment an almost unbearable reality. Similarly, many Orthodox parishes assume that the reality of foreign immigration will continue to keep their parishes vibrant, and full of Orthodox people. But what happens when immigration stops? What happens when the vitality of Orthodox life depends only on reaching those non-Orthodox who are already here? Sadly, we do not learn the lesson from previous generations of Orthodox immigrants: eventually immigration dries up, and we must start sharing our life of faith with the people around us.

## 6. Stop trying to "keep up" with westernised (in particular, "American-style") religions.

There is a reason that chirpy music and jumping services win over people quickly: they appeal to the senses, and are easily embraced by the noisy hearts of those in the western world. If we are trying to pass on Orthodoxy to our children, the idea of emulating modernised religious life is truly absurd, since it fails to pass on to them the unique tools that only Orthodoxy has to give. Orthodox eyes that see timeless, unchanging truth, an Orthodox mind that understands the teachings of the Apostles' faith, Orthodox ears that are drawn to eternal beauty, and an Orthodox heart that is trained in the inner stillness of prayer: these are gifts that the Orthodox faith gives. Our children need them. If we have access to them, and we fail to take the necessary steps to give them to our children, we have failed them.

As the Lord asks us, *If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a scorpion instead of a fish?* (Luke 11:11). The Orthodox Faith is available to us to give to our children the spiritual food they crave. What would we tell them if they ask us why we gave them something else instead?

*Father Geoffrey Korx in a priest in Canada. This article was originally published in the March-April 2005 of the newsletter of the All saints of North America Orthodox Church, and we have amended slightly to reflect British conditions.*

## Great Lent

## The Sundays of Lent

Now we enter the time of preparation to meet the Lord at his Resurrection. This is the symbol, a living symbol, of man's entire life which will be fulfilled in time with our own resurrection from the dead to be with Christ.

It is a time of renewed devotion: of prayer, fasting, struggle, and almsgiving. It is a time of repentance, a time of real renewal of our minds, hearts and deeds to conform to Christ and his teachings. It is the time, most of all, of our return to the great commandments of loving God and our neighbours.

In our Orthodox Church, Great Lent is not a season of brooding and gloominess. On the contrary, it is a time of joyfulness and purification. We are called to "anoint our faces" and to "cleanse our bodies as we cleanse our souls." Hymns of the Vesper Service of Clean Monday, the very first service of Great Lent, set the proper tone of the season:

*Let us set out with joy upon the season of the Fast and prepare ourselves for spiritual combat. Let us purify our souls and cleanse our flesh; and as we fast from food, let us abstain also from every passion. Rejoicing in the virtues of the Spirit, may we persevere with love, and be counted worthy to see the solemn passion of Christ our God and with great spiritual gladness to behold his holy Passover.*

*Thy grace has shone forth, O Lord, it has shone forth and given light to our souls; behold, now is the acceptable time. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the season of repentance. Let us cast off the works of darkness and put in the armour of light, that having sailed across the great sea of the Fast, we may reach the third-day Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of our souls.*

It is our repentance that God desires, not our remorse. We sorrow for our sins, but we do so in the joy of God's mercy. We mortify our flesh, but we do so in the joy of our resurrection into life everlasting. We make ready for the resurrection during Great Lent, both Christ's Resurrection and our own.

Each of the Sundays of Great Lent has its own special theme. The First Sunday is called the Feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy. It is a historical feast commemorating the return of the icons to the churches in the year 843 after the heresy of iconoclasm was overcome. The spiritual theme of the day is first of all the victory of the True Faith: *This is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith.* (1 John 5:4) Secondly, the icons of the saints bear witness that man, *created in the image and likeness of God* (Genesis 1:26), becomes holy and godlike through the purification of himself as God's living image.

The Second Sunday of Lent is the commemoration of Saint Gregory Palamas. It was Saint Gregory (+1359) who bore living witness that men can become divine through the grace of God in the Holy Spirit; and that even in this life, by prayer and fasting, human beings can become participants of the uncreated light of God's divine glory.

The Third Sunday of Lent is that of the Veneration of the Cross. The cross stands in the midst of the church in the middle of the lenten season not merely to remind men of Christ's redemption and to keep before them the goal of their efforts, but also to be venerated as that reality by which man must live to be saved. *He who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.* (Matthew 10:38) For in the Cross of Christ Crucified lies both the *power of God and the wisdom of God* for those being saved. (I Corinthians 1:24)

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is dedicated to Saint John Climacus (of the Ladder), the author of the work, The Ladder of Divine Ascent. The

abbot of Saint Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai (6th century) stands as a witness to the violent effort needed for entrance into God's Kingdom. (see Matthew 10:12) The spiritual struggle of the Christian life is a real one, *not against flesh and blood, but against... the rulers of the present darkness .... the hosts of wickedness in heavenly places ...* (Ephesians 6:12) Saint John encourages the faithful in their efforts for, according to the Lord, *only he who endures to the end will be saved.* (Matthew 24:13)

The Fifth Sunday recalls the memory of Saint Mary of Egypt, the repentant harlot. Mary tells us, first of all, that no amount of sin and wickedness can keep a person from God if he truly repents. Christ himself has come *to call sinners to repentance* and to save them from their sins. (Luke 5:32) In addition, Saint Mary tells us that it is never too late in life—or in lent—to repent. Christ will gladly receive all who come to him even at the eleventh hour of their lives. But their coming must be in serious and sincere repentance.



# The Akathistos Hymn

The Akathist Hymn is a profound, devotional poem or chant, which sings the praises of the Holy Mother and Ever-Virgin Mary (Theotokos). It is chanted in all Orthodox Churches throughout the world during the five Fridays in the Great Lent, and constitutes a very concrete spiritual preparation for the Holy Week and Easter Services.

Devotional Hymns to the Theotokos are as ancient as the first Christian Church. The Byzantine Empire from its very inception at Constantinople during the fourth century, closely allied itself to the Virgin Mary and always sought Her protection or intercessions. This we see from the Prayer Services to the Theotokos between the fifth and eighth centuries, and the reference to Constantinople as the 'Queen City'.

The Akathist Hymn, which in its present form was added to by many Ecclesiastical Hymnographers, existed for most part even before it was formally accepted by the Church in 626 AD. The Kontakion was added then, and came to be recognized as the Akathist Hymn, because of the following described miracle attributed to the intercession of the Theotokos.

While the Emperor of Byzantium Heracleios was on an expedition to fight the aggression of the Persians on their own grounds, there appeared outside the walls of Constantinople barbaric hordes, mostly Avars. The siege lasted a few months, and it was apparent that the outnumbered troops of the Queen City were reaching desperation. However as history records, the faith of the people worked the impossible. The Venerable Patriarch Sergius with the Clergy and the Official of Byzantium Vonos, endlessly marched along the great walls of Constantinople with an Icon of the Theotokos in hand, and bolstered the faith of the defenders of freedom. The miracle came soon after. Unexpectedly, as the chronicler narrates, a great storm with huge tidal waves destroyed most of the fleet of the enemy, and full retreat ensued.

The faithful of Constantinople spontaneously filled the Church of the Theotokos at Vlachernae on the Golden Horn, and with the Patriarch Sergius officiating, they prayed all night singing praises to the Virgin Mary without sitting. Hence the title of the Hymn "**Akathistos**", in Greek meaning '**not seated**'.

The Akathist Hymn is a very important and indeed an integral part of our religious and ecclesiastical life. When we are present during the first Friday Service, we firmly realise that we commence to ascend the spiritual steps of the lengthy Lenten period, to finally reach the peak with our Lord's Glorious Resurrection.

In any of our Service Books we can readily see that our glorious and Ever-Virgin Theotokos is the centre of many of our Orthodox Services in which prayers abound for Her interceding to Her Son, and our God, for our Salvation. The

Virgin Mary is the most exalted and most honoured person by God. She is the most revered and most loved by humans. She is a binding force for all Christians. She is the Unique Personality of the world, because of the unique fact of the Lord's Incarnation. She is the daughter of

Grace and the Crystal Vessel of the Grace of the Holy Spirit (see Luke 1:26-56).

Faith in the Almighty God is primary and all important to the Holy Orthodox Church. Our dependence on God is always beyond question, and from this faith we should strive not to stray. Therefore, Services, like the Akathist Hymn, should be a must and attended by all. Moreover, this particular Service links us so beautifully with a great and glorious period of our Christian history; it is also a very live tradition, which has never ceased in the Orthodox Church since its official acceptance in 626 AD.

Living in these trying times, when we are besieged by many forces of evil, the Akathist Hymn and our many other Services are the bulwark to withstand, and indeed to overcome these forces.

## The Kontakion

To thee, our leader in battle and defender, O Mother of God,  
We thy servants (*in Greek, I thy city*), delivered from calamity,  
Offer hymns of victory and thanksgiving.  
Since thou art invincible in power,  
Set us free from every peril,  
That we may cry to thee: Hail, Bride without bridegroom."



We often make use of all the goods the Lord has given us without giving it any thought, and we often behave quite dishonourably towards the Heavenly Father. It happens that we lay the table and forget to cross ourselves before eating or to read the "Our Father," a short prayer, although without God nothing would be on this table. We think it normal to be able to go buy clothes and groceries, to take the children to school, to go somewhere on the bus. We think of this as normal life, forgetting by Whose blessing we have achieved all this.

Archpriest Vitaly

## Principal Services for March / April

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

### *Feast Day and other Services during March*

Sunday 2nd	Sunday of Cheesefare - Expulsion of Adam from Paradise	Liturgy 11am Vespers 1pm
<i>Beginning of the Great Fast - Weekday services shown on page one</i>		
Sunday 9th	Sunday of Orthodoxy - Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste	Matins 9.30am, Liturgy 11am
Sunday 16th	Second Sunday of Lent - St Gregory Palamas	Liturgy 11am
Sunday 23rd	Third Sunday of Lent - Veneration of the Cross	Matins 9.30am, Liturgy 11am
Tuesday 25th	Annunciation of Our Most-Holy Lady, the Theotokos	Liturgy 11am
Sunday 30th	Fourth Sunday of Lent - St John Climacus	Liturgy 11am

### *Feast Day and other Services during April*

Sunday 6th	Fifth Sunday of Great Lent - Saint Mary of Egypt	Liturgy 11am
Sunday 13th	Feast of the Entry of Our Lord into Jerusalem - Palm Sunday	Matins 9.30am, Liturgy 11am
<i>Details of Holy Week services in the April edition</i>		
Saturday 19/20th	Holy Pascha - Easter - Feast of the Resurrection	Services begin <b>11.30pm</b>
Sunday 27th	Saint Thomas Sunday	Matins 9.30am, Liturgy 11am

**Summer time begins on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March – remember to alter your clocks!**



## Progress so far!

We have now received further quotes for the installation of a door to the porch. The Board will shortly discuss the quotes and, if one is approved, will require drawings to be submitted for presentation to the appropriate department of the Council. As our church is Grade Two listed we cannot proceed on this matter until such approval is received.

Internally, Marc is continuing to strip the old varnish from the Refectory screen. This is a long, slow and tedious job and one that cannot be hurried. It will mean some disruption in the near future as he turns his attention to the area behind the Library shelves. In preparation for this work, the books will have to be stacked in piles and the shelves pulled clear of the screen for the work to be carried out.

Off-site, the sales display is under preparation and should be assembled in the next week or so. It will not be brought

into use until the stripping and revarnishing of the screen is completed.

The toilet door continues to provide some difficulties for users with the present wet weather. Each time the door is eased the wood expands to confound us yet again! We will continue to work at this problem until it is solved. *At long last, this has now been fixed!*

The Vestry door, that has for many years stuck on the floor, should have received a short-term solution by the time you read this. In the long term we will have to re-seat the upper hinge pin for which the lead fastening has deteriorated. Another minor irritation that we will resolve in the fullness of time. *It has now received the 'short-term' solution!*

Fr Pancratios.



## Random Jottings

A Western missionary arrives at some Near Eastern village. He approaches a local and in broken Arabic says: ~ Greetings, brother! I came here to tell people of your village about Christ! ~ But we know about Christ already. ~ Then I will make you Christians! ~ But we are already Christians. ~ Really? Who did it? Baptists? Adventists? Pentecostals? ~ I don't know. I'll ask the elders. The man starts to talk to a few elderly men that were nearby.

He comes back after a while: ~ They say it was Paul.

# Closed Communion

by Ilias Levy

from the web page of the Archdiocese

People who are interested in knowing more about the Orthodox Church frequently ask about the practice of closed communion - that is, allowing only Orthodox Christians to receive Holy Communion in our churches.

To some Orthodox it may seem that this is a somewhat bizarre issue to think worthy of an article. Indeed, perhaps it ought to be. Unfortunately, however, it is something about which there appears to be a certain amount of ignorance and confusion - to the extent where there have been very troubling instances of non-Orthodox being given Communion in Britain and other places. Where this happens, it is of course a disciplinary issue which must be dealt with by the appropriate Hierarchs. However it is also true that for some people it is an issue which is very difficult to understand - and from this lack of understanding can come an understandable pastoral difficulty when people are told that, for instance, a Catholic or Protestant spouse or friend cannot be admitted to Communion.

It is therefore my intention to try to make this subject more widely understood and, hopefully, by increasing knowledge and understanding, removing the potential for insult or offence.

Part of the reason for this confusion is that other Christian denominations allow any Christian (and, occasionally, anyone at all) to receive the Precious Gifts. Whether this is in fact true is something to which I will come later. Indeed, it seems more likely that the reason is simply that there is a lack of knowledge about the significance of Communion. This Mystery is not a cause of unity, rather a result of it.

The act of receiving Communion is not something which brings someone into unity with the Church. In fact, the most serious penalty which the Church can put on its members is that of excommunication - refusing to allow an individual to receive the Gifts. This shows not only the importance of the Eucharist for Orthodox Christians, but also the fact that one must be a faithful member of the Church to take part in the Mystery.

The most significant reason for keeping a practice of closed communion is that it is vitally necessary for a communicant to have a correct understanding of the Holy Mystery from which he is partaking. As A.S. Frangopoulos explains in his book *Our Orthodox Christian Faith*, other Christians have an alternate - and therefore incorrect - understanding of the Eucharist. How, then, would it be at all reasonable to invite them to share, as Frangopoulos puts it, a common cup? This difference is most keenly felt when it comes to the vast majority of Protestant denominations.

The Orthodox doctrine is that the bread and wine used in the Eucharist truly become the Most Precious Body and Blood of our Saviour. Most Protestants, on the other hand, tend to see this as purely a symbolic matter, choosing to concentrate on the words of Christ - *Do this in remembrance of me*. This line is, of course, only a very small part of Christ's institution of the Eucharist.

In the account of the Last Supper in the Gospel of Saint John, Christ tells us that this sacrament is for the unity of the faith, that His disciples might be one. How, then, can we share this most sacred of Mysteries with those with whom we have no unity? A (rather strange, it must be said) response to this might be that "well, we are all Christians". Only in the most basic of senses, this may be true. But we, as Orthodox Christians, believe that the Orthodox Church holds, uniquely, the fullness of truth. It carries the traditions and faith of the Apostles, and therefore springs from the salvific teaching of Christ Himself. Any theological deviation from this faith is, by definition, lacking in truth.

Another scriptural justification for the practice of closed communion comes from St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians - *So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord*.

One of the reasons that this is apparently such a difficult issue in our modern, Western, society is the rise of the oppressive atmosphere of pluralism. This doctrine attempts to teach us that all opinions, beliefs and ideas are equally valid, and that it is in some sense morally wrong to question anyone else's views or to promote a known truth of your own. Of course, as Orthodox Christians we know that this simply cannot work. There can be no such thing as a pluralist Orthodoxy. This does not, of course, mean that we should be judgemental, prejudicial or condemnatory. We are clearly commanded in the Gospel to love our neighbours, and even our enemies. It is sometimes a difficult balance to achieve, but we are extremely fortunate that we have two millennia of Church Tradition and wisdom to draw upon.

Finally, I would like to quote an extract from an online article on this subject - "It is crucial to point out that the Orthodox practice of "closed" communion is not a judgement against a person or their standing in God's eyes or the potential of their salvation. It is not a way of saying that some are "good" and others are "bad". The practice of receiving communion together is the outward expression of having all things in common, in faith and worship. It is the fruit of unity."



# ***Lessons in Orthodox Faith and Theology at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of All Saints London***

**by Archimandrite Vassilios Papavassiliou**

***Father Vassilios offers these talks in English on a regular basis and he has recorded them for a wider audience. He is a most excellent speaker and you will find his talks illuminating and very understandable***

***To listen to them Ctrl-click to open the hyperlink***

- 1 [18.01.14-Old Testament Theology-Part 2](#)
- [11.01.14-Old Testament Theology-Part 1](#)
- [14.12.13-The Mother of God and Saints](#)
- [07.12.13-Marriage](#)
- [30.11.13-Prayer](#)
- [09.11.13-Sin and Holiness - Part 2](#)
- [26.10.13-Sin and Holiness - Part 1](#)
- [19.10.13-Baptism](#)
- [12.10.13-Ancestral Sin](#)
- [05.10.13-Divine Liturgy](#)
- [28.09.13-Holy Scripture](#)
- [21.09.13-Trinity & Incarnation](#)
- [26.01.13-Theology of the Old Testament: The Angel of the Lord](#)
- [26.05.12-Ecclesiology](#)
- [12.05.12-Praying For The Dead](#)
- [28.04.12-Resurrection](#)
- [24.03.12-7th Ecumenical Council and the Theology of the Icon](#)
- [17.03.12-The Greek Fathers and the Ecumenical and Local Councils](#)
- [03.03.12-Apostolic Fathers](#)
- [11.02.12-Priesthood](#)
- [28.01.12-The Theology of Genesis](#)
- [10.12.11-The Mother of God](#)
- [03.12.11-Sainthood](#)
- [26.11.11-Marriage & Monastic Life](#)
- [19.11.11-Confession & Repentance](#)





### A Greek Treasure

The cave of Agia Sofia is situated in the rocky region of Milopotamos, 10 miles, northwest of Kythera. It is one of the most beautiful Greek caves. It was named after the chapel of Agia Sofia, which stands at the cave's entrance. The chapel was built in 1785 in honour of Agia Sofia, whose corpse is said to have been found here. The cave's interior is separated into numerous chambers. In the chamber where the chapel is one can admire a small lake with beautifully coloured water. The walls are covered with lovely stalactites and stalagmites of several sizes, as well as well-preserved murals from the 11th and 12th centuries.



Two churches, joined by a belltower, are the Evangelistria and Agia Marina, Mykonos



# Troparion for the Feast of the Annunciation

(25<sup>th</sup> March)

Gabriel stood before you, O Maiden, revealing the preëternal counsel, saluting you and exclaiming: “Rejoice, O earth unsown! Rejoice, O bush unburnt! Rejoice, O depth hard to fathom! Rejoice, O bridge leading to the heavens and lofty ladder, which Jacob beheld! Rejoice, O divine jar of Manna food! Rejoice, annulment of the curse! Rejoice, restoration of Adam: the Lord is with you!”

## Scripture Reading Calendar for March

1	Meatfast	Rom 14:19-23, 16:25-27	Matthew 6:1-13	St David of Wales, Bishop (6 <sup>th</sup> C)
2	Meatfast	<b>Romans 13:11b-14:4</b>	<b>Matthew 6:14-21</b>	<b>St Nicholas Planas, Parish Priest in Athens (1932)</b>
3	Fast	Isaiah 1:1-20	Proverbs 1:1-20	St Piamoun, Virgin (337)
4	Fast	Isaiah 1:19-2:3	Proverbs 1:20-33	St Gerasmos of the Jordan (475)
5	Fast	Isaiah 2:3-11	Proverbs 2:1-22	St Mark the Ascetic of Egypt (5 <sup>th</sup> C)
6	Fast	Isaiah 2:11-21	Proverbs 3:1-18	The Forty Two Martyrs of Amorium in Phrygia (c845)
7	Fast	Isaiah 3:1-14	Proverbs 3:19-34	St Paul the Simple, disciple of St Anthony the Great (4 <sup>th</sup> C)
8	Fast**	Hebrews 1:1-12	Mark 2:23-3:5	Hieromartyr Theodoritus of Antioch (4thC)
9	<b>Fast**</b>	<b>Hebrews 11:24-26,32-40</b>	<b>John 1:43-51</b>	<b>The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (c320)</b>
10	Fast	Isaiah 4:2-5:7	Proverbs 3:34-4:22	St Athanasius the Patrician of Alexandria (567-568)
11	Fast	Isaiah 5:7-16	Proverbs 5:1-15	St Alexis of Goloseievsk (1917)
12	Fast	Isaiah 5:16-25	Proverbs 5:15-6:3	Righteous Phineas, Grandson of Aaron (c1500BC)
13	Fast	Isaiah 6:1-12	Proverbs 6:3-20	Martyr Christina of Persia (4thC)
14	Fast	Isaiah 7:1-14	Proverbs 6:20-7:1	St Benedict of Nursia (543)
15	Fast**	Hebrews 3:12-16	Mark 1:35-44	Martyr Nicander of Egypt (c302)
16	<b>Fast**</b>	<b>Hebrews 1:10-2:3</b>	<b>Mark 2:1-12</b>	<b>Apostle Aristobulus of the Seventy, Bishop of Britain (1<sup>st</sup> C)</b>
17	Fast	Isaiah 8:13-9:7	Proverbs 8:1-21	St Parthenius of Kiev (1855)
18	Fast	Isaiah 9:9-10:4	Proverbs 8:32-9:11	Martyrs Trophimus and Eucarpus of Nicomedia (c300)
19	Fast	Isaiah 10:12-20	Proverbs 9:12-18	Martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria at Rome (283)
20	Fast	Isaiah 11:10-12:2	Proverbs 10:1-22	Virgin Martyrs Alexandra, Claudia and those with them (310)
21	Fast	Isaiah 13:2-13	Proverbs 10:31-11:12	St Seraphim of Byritsa, Monk (Russia 1949)
22	Fast**	Hebrews 10:32-38a	Mark 2:14-17	Martyr Drosida, Daughter of Emperor Trajan (1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> C)
23	<b>Fast**</b>	<b>Hebrews 4:14-5:6</b>	<b>Mark 8:34-9:1</b>	<b>St Nikon, Abbot of the Kiev Caves (1088)</b>
24	Fast	Isaiah 14:24-32	Proverbs 11:19-12:6	St Zachariah the Recluse (Egypt, 4 <sup>th</sup> C)
25	Fast***	Hebrews 2:11-18	Luke 1:24-38	St Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow (1925)
26	Fast	Isaiah 26:21-27:9	Proverbs 12:23-13:9	Hieromartyr Irenaeus, Bishop of Sirmium in Hungary (304)
27	Fast	Isaiah 28:14-22	Proverbs 13:19-14:6	St John the Clairvoyant, Anchorite of Egypt (394 -395)
28	Fast	Isaiah 29:13-23	Proverbs 14:15-26	Martyr Boyan, Prince of Bulgaria (c830)
29	Fast**	Hebrews 6:9-12	Mark 7:31-37	St Diadochus, Bishop of Photice (5 <sup>th</sup> C)
30	<b>Fast**</b>	<b>Hebrews 6:13-20</b>	<b>Mark 9:17-31</b>	<b>Prophet Joad (10<sup>th</sup> C, BC)</b>
31	Fast	Isaiah 37:33-38:6	Proverbs 14:27-15:4	St Hypatius, Abbot of Rufinus in Chalcedon (c446)

\* 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 **Red**

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: Very Rev'd Protopresbyter Pancratios Sanders**  
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40 Ffordd Parc, Bodnant, Prestatyn. LL19 9LJ

**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.