



The Tower

Saint Barbara the Great Martyr Orthodox Church
<https://www.stbarbara.org.uk/>

Sunday 15th February 2026
Meatfare Sunday (Last Judgment)



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Saturday 14th of February was the Saturday of the Souls. Traditionally on Saturday before Meatfare Sunday we join together to serve the prayer for our departed relatives. It is also the moment when Orthodox Christians visit the graves and commemorate them. May God have mercy on all your departed relatives.

This Sunday is also the the Feast of St. John Climacus who wrote the classic work of the spiritual Christian tradition "The Ladder of the Divine Ascent" and the Sunday of the Last Judgment. This Sunday sets before us the eschatological dimension of Lent: the Great Fast is a preparation for the Second Coming of the Savior, for the eternal Passover in the Age to Come, a theme that is also the focus of the first three days of Holy Week. Besides this, since we make commemoration tomorrow of the Second Coming of Christ, and since the reposed have neither been judged, nor have received their complete recompense (Acts 17:31; II Peter 2:9; Heb. 11:39-40), the Church rightly commemorates the souls today, and trusting in the boundless mercy of God, she prays Him to have mercy on sinners. This Sunday is also called Meatfare Sunday. At this week we stop eating meat and gradually continue our preparation to the Great Lent.

On Monday the 9th of February for the Feast of St. Haralamdos of Magnesia we served in the church Vigil from 5.30pm in the evening. It was great to see about 10 people who came and stay until the end of the long service.

During the first week of the Great Lent we will serve The Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete and the Great Compline with the Akatist of the Theotokos. Please come and participate this great services. The Great Lent is also the time when we will start to serve the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on Wednesday and

Friday. During the Great Lent we don't serve divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, instead we have Presanctified Liturgy which is Vespers Service that combine Vespers with the very famous prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian with Prostrations and Finish with Holy Communion consecrated the previous Sunday. This Service is known as masterpiece of the Orthodox Piety and it is great help for the Christians in the long and tiring fasting period.

Fr. John



Announcements

- There is still time to register your child for the summer camps. Please visit the website to learn more. The application form is available at <https://thyateirayouthcamps.org.uk/camp-saint-bega/>
- On Sundays many people come to church by car and park in the cemetery. Please avoid parking in the middle section around the Cenotaph and always leave enough space for another car to pass.
- The 22nd of February is Forgiveness Sunday. Straight after the Divine Liturgy we will have kneeling prayers, ask forgiveness from one another, and begin the Great Lent.
- The 1st of March is the Sunday of Orthodoxy. Please bring an icon from home, or take one from the church and return it to the same place. We will have a small procession around the church with prayers at the four sides.

Upcoming Services

15 February Sun 10.00am Matins
11.00am Divine Liturgy

Judgement Sunday
Meatfare Sunday

18 February Wed 6.30pm Vespers
7.15pm Catechesis

Ap. from the 70 Archippus and Philemon

21 February Sat 5.30pm Great Vespers

Uncovering the Relics of Evgenius

22 February Sun 10.00am Matins
11.00am Divine Liturgy
Vespers

Forgiveness Sunday
The beginning of Great Lent

Beginning of Great Lent

23 February Mon 6.00pm Great Compline

The Canon of St Andrew of Crete, Pt 1

24 February Tue 6.00pm Great Compline

The Canon of St Andrew of Crete, Pt 2

25 February Wed 6.00pm Pre Sanctified Liturgy
Great Compline

The Canon of St Andrew of Crete, Pt 3

26 February Thu 6.00pm Great Compline

The Canon of St Andrew of Crete

27 February Fri 6.00pm Pre Sanctified Liturgy
Great Compline

Akathist of Theotokos

28 February Sat 6.00pm Great Vespers

1 March Sun 10.00am Matins
11.00am Divine Liturgy

Sunday of Orthodoxy

Orthodox Women of Britain

Women's Ministry in the Orthodox Church



Online Forum with Dr Elena Narinskaya

Orthodox theologian and biblical scholar
Founder, *Women's Ministries Initiative*

Chair, *IOTA Women in the Orthodox Church Group*

Date: 20 February 2026

Time: 8pm

Online: Zoom

Orthodox Women of Britain
Formed with the blessing of His
Grace,
Bishop Maximos of Melitene

Email: Melangell.tmes@gmail.com

Orthodox Women of Britain invites you to a moderated online forum with Dr Elena Narinskaya, who's work explores women's ministry as a lived ecclesial vocation, rooted in Orthodox tradition and continuity.

What does women's ministry mean in the Orthodox Church?

How should Scripture, history, and theology shape women's vocation in the Church today?

A story from internet

The ladder has thirty steps or rungs, one for each year of Christ's hidden life before His baptism. Saint John's vivid ladder image quickly engages the reader and gives the work a unified character. This symbol soon became rooted in the spiritual life of the Christian East, often shown in icons, frescoes, and illuminated manuscripts. Saint John is commonly depicted near the base, holding a scroll and pointing upward. Monks climb with great effort, while Christ at the top extends His arms to greet those who complete the ascent. Angels on the right support the climbers; demons on the left try to hinder them. At the base, the dragon of the abyss waits with open jaws. The steps are clearly arranged with intention, following a specific pattern.

The work has three main sections of different lengths. The first three steps describe the break with the "world," the outward and inward renunciation needed for spiritual progress. The long middle section (steps 4–26) explains the "active life," the practice of the virtues and the passions to be overcome. The final four steps focus on the "contemplative life," centered on stillness, prayer, and union with God.

The outline of the thirty steps is:

- I. The Break with the World
 1. Renunciation
 2. Detachment
 3. Exile
- II. The Practice of the Virtues ("Active Life")
 - (i) Fundamental Virtues
 4. Obedience
 5. Penitence
 6. Remembrance of Death
 7. Sorrow
 - (ii) The Struggle Against the Passions
 - (a) Primarily Non-Physical Passions
 8. Anger
 9. Malice
 10. Slander
 11. Talkativeness
 12. Falsehood
 13. Despondency
 - (b) Physical and Material Passions
 14. Gluttony
 15. Lust
 - 16–17. Avarice
 - (c) Non-Physical Passions (continued)
 - 18–20. Insensitivity
 21. Fear
 22. Vainglory
 23. Pride (also Blasphemy)

- (iii) Higher Virtues of the "Active Life"
 24. Simplicity
 25. Humility
 26. Discernment

- III. Union with God (Transition to the "Contemplative Life")
 27. Stillness
 28. Prayer
 29. Dispassion
 30. Love



The Ladder as a whole is a basic progression from human effort to divine gift, from *kopos* (labor) to *charisma* (gift). Certainly, God's grace is absolutely indispensable for the attainment of any virtue, however humble. Yet, while both the divine and the human elements are present throughout the ascent of the ladder, on the earlier rungs we are chiefly conscious of our toil and struggle, while on the higher rungs we are more and more aware of the freely granted grace of God. What begins as painful warfare ends as spontaneous joy. At the beginning of our religious life, we cultivate the virtues with toil and difficulty. As we progress, we lose much of that grief. And when our mortal intelligence turns to zeal and is mastered by it, we work with full joy, determination, desire, and a holy flame. Saint John Climacus often warns us not to attempt too much too soon; we cannot climb the entire ladder in a single stride. When, in the monastery at Alexandria, Saint John tried to start a discussion about stillness or inner silence (*hesychia*), he was kindly but firmly rebuked by his hosts.

"Father John [they said], we are corporeal beings and we lead a corporeal lead. Knowing this, we choose to wage war according to the measure of our weakness."

**This material is extracted and slightly edited from
<https://orthodoxchristianethos.com/2025/03/29/the-ladder-of-divine-ascent-2/>*

The following readings and sermon have been extracted from the Archdiocese of Thyateira & Great Britain news bulletin.

To access the full bulleting, please visit: www.thyateira.org.uk.

ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Α΄ Κορ. η΄, 8-13 - θ΄, 1-2
Ἀδελφοί, βρῶμα ἡμᾶς οὐ παρίστησιν τῷ Θεῷ· οὔτε γὰρ ἐὰν φάγωμεν περισσεύομεν, οὔτε ἐὰν μὴ φάγωμεν ὑστερούμεθα. Βλέπετε δὲ μήπως ἡ ἐξουσία ὑμῶν αὕτη πρό-σκομμα γένηται τοῖς ἀσθενοῦσιν. Ἐὰν γὰρ τις ἴδῃ σε τὸν ἔχοντα γνῶσιν ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατα-κείμενον, οὐχὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτοῦ ἀσθενοῦς ὄντος οἰκοδομηθήσεται εἰς τὸ τὰ εἰδωλόθута ἐσθίειν; Καὶ ἀπολείται ὁ ἀσθενῶν ἀδελφός ἐπὶ τῇ σῆ γνώσει, δι' ὃν Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν; Οὕτως δὲ ἁμαρτάνοντες εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφούς, καὶ τύπτοντες αὐτῶν τὴν συνείδησιν ἀσθενοῦσαν, εἰς Χριστὸν ἁμαρτάνετε. Διόπερ εἰ βρῶμα σκανδαλίζει τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, οὐ μὴ φάγω κρέα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἵνα μὴ τὸν ἀδελφόν μου σκανδαλίσω. Οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος; Οὐκ εἰμι ἐλεύθερος; Οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν Κύριον ἠμῶν ἑώρακα; Οὐ τὸ ἔργον μου ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν Κυρίῳ; Εἰ ἄλλοις οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος, ἀλλὰ γε ὑμῖν εἰμι· ἡ γὰρ σφραγὶς τῆς ἐμῆς ἀποστολῆς ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν Κυρίῳ.

EPISTLE READING

1 Cor. 8: 8-13 ; 9: 1-2
Brethren, food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if any one sees you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol's temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall. Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Ματθ. κε΄, 31-46
Ἐἶπεν ὁ Κύριος· Ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι ἄγγελοι μετ' αὐτοῦ, τότε καθίσει ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ, καὶ συναχθήσεται ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ ἀφοριεῖ αὐτοὺς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων ὡσπερ ὁ ποιμὴν ἀφορίζει τὰ πρόβατα ἀπὸ τῶν ἐρίφων, καὶ στήσει τὰ μὲν πρόβατα ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ, τὰ δὲ ἐρίφια ἐξ εὐωνύμων.

GOSPEL READING

Matt. 25: 31-46
The Lord said, When the Son of man comes in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those

τότε ἐρεῖ ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῖς ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ· δεῦτε οἱ εὐλογημένοι τοῦ πατρὸς μου, κληρονομήσατε τὴν ἡτοιμασμένην ὑμῖν βασιλείαν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου. ἐπέειπασα γάρ, καὶ ἐδώκατέ μοι φαγεῖν, ἐδίψησα, καὶ ἐποτίσατέ με, ξένος ἦμην, καὶ συνηγάγετέ με, ἐπεσκεψασθέ με, ἐν φυλακῇ ἦμην, καὶ ἤλθετε πρὸς με. τότε ἀποκριθήσονται αὐτῷ οἱ δίκαιοι λέγοντες· κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν πεινῶντα καὶ ἐθρέψαμεν, ἢ διψῶντα καὶ ἐποτίσαμεν; πότε δέ σε εἶδομεν ξένον καὶ συνηγάγομεν, ἢ γυμνὸν καὶ περιεβάλομεν; πότε δέ σε εἶδομεν ἀσθενῆ ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ, καὶ ἦλθομεν πρὸς σε; καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐρεῖ αὐτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐφ' ὅσον ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων, ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε. τότε ἐρεῖ καὶ τοῖς ἐξ εὐωνύμων· πορεύεσθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ οἱ κατηραμένοι εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον τὸ ἡτοιμασμένον τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ. ἐπέειπασα γάρ, καὶ οὐκ ἐδώκατέ μοι φαγεῖν, ἐδίψησα, καὶ οὐκ ἐποτίσατέ με, ξένος ἦμην, καὶ οὐ συνηγάγετέ με, γυμνός, καὶ οὐ περιεβάλατέ με, ἀσθενῆς καὶ ἐν φυλακῇ, καὶ οὐκ ἐπεσκεψασθέ με. τότε ἀποκριθήσονται αὐτῷ καὶ αὐτοὶ λέγοντες· Κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν πεινῶντα ἢ διψῶντα ἢ ξένον ἢ γυμνὸν ἢ ἀσθενῆ ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ, καὶ οὐ διηκονήσαμεν σοι; τότε ἀποκριθήσεται αὐτοῖς λέγων· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐφ' ὅσον οὐκ ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων, οὐδὲ ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε. καὶ ἀπελεύσονται οὗτοι εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον, οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.





The Ladder of St. John Climacus echoes Jacob's dream of a ladder rising from earth to heaven, with angels moving up and down. This image reflects the soul's climb toward spiritual growth. At the top, Christ blesses the monk who reaches Him, holding a scroll that represents His Gospel. This heavenly ascent is an inner journey that lifts the mind from earthly things toward God.

Along the ladder, monks rise at different stages. Some climb steadily, while others struggle as demons try to pull them down. One falls into the jaws of a dragon, a sign of Hell. The demons show the reality of harmful thoughts and the pull of sin, while the angels show the power of good, guiding the climbers with qualities like hope, love, and humility.

SERMON ON THE GOSPEL READING

Today, on the Sunday of the Last Judgement, the Church gives us a Gospel reading which places reality starkly before our eyes.

This reality is that 'all the nations' will finally meet Jesus in the glory of His divinity, as the 'Son of man' seen by Daniel (7:13-14). Jesus will separate us for eternity into two groups: those whom He calls 'blessed of my Father', 'the righteous', who will 'inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world', and the 'cursed' ones, who will be sent 'into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels'.

St John Chrysostom explains that, by 'all the nations', Jesus means all of humankind (Homily 79 on Matthew), while St Paul makes clear that the Lord will not differentiate between those living when He returns and those who have died (1 Thessalonians 5:10).

At this final separation, what will decide to which of these two groups we shall belong? It is how we have acted towards those whom Jesus calls 'the least of these my brethren', whom Chrysostom identifies as those in need, those from whom we have apparently nothing to gain (Homilies 50 & 79 on Matthew). Unspectacular, day-to-day acts of love for those who are hungry, thirsty, a stranger, people unable to feed and or clothe themselves, the sick and imprisoned, are acts of love for Christ the Suffering Servant, who had nothing to attract our notice or admiration (Isaiah 53:2-3 LXX). Christ the glorious Son of man identifies with these and, in meeting them, we meet Him. When we are broken, in need, marginalised or unable to take care of ourselves, the same is true: how others relate to us, in whom the image of Christ's divinity lies hidden, determines their relationship with Him when He appears in glory.

Now, however, as several of the holy Fathers observe, we are mixed together – just and unjust, sheep and goats – and only Christ, not we ourselves, has the job of separating us into these two groups.

Chrysostom draws attention also to the honour shown to us not only in being offered the way to inherit the kingdom, but in being allowed to feed and care for Jesus Christ in those in need (Homily 79 on Matthew).

Christ in glory and Christ in need are placed together in his fiftieth sermon on Matthew, from which is likely drawn the widely quoted paraphrase, "If you cannot find Christ in the beggar at the church door, you will not find Him in the chalice." The Divine Liturgy, in particular, commits us to the poor and the marginalised, and the same Jesus Christ is welcomed or rejected by us in the Holy Eucharist and in those in need.

An influential interpretation of this passage holds that the phrase 'all the nations' refers only to those outside the Church, and that the nations will be judged on how they have acted towards us who are members of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. While this understanding helpfully emphasises the seriousness of our responsibility as Orthodox Christians to be true representatives of Jesus Christ to the world, it is important to note that this is not how holy Fathers such as St John Chrysostom, St Jerome, and St Augustine understand the passage. We, too, are judged on our love for Christ Whom we meet in those in need.

How then, shall we fast and repent? Saint Paul in today's Epistle turns our focus to the 'inner conscience', taking care over the state of our own conscience and over how we treat the consciences of our brothers and sisters. We take up now the disciplines of the Church's Great Fast remembering that 'food will not commend us to God', but our love for our neighbour, which is inseparable from our love for God.

John Shinkwin

This little detailed picture is from the Vigil for Saint Haralambos of Magnesia, which we served on Monday, 9 February 2025, until late in the evening.

This moment is from the Artoklasia (Breaking of the Bread) service earlier that night. The bread was prepared and baked by our Reader, my son Jordan, on Sunday night. Everyone who tasted it said it was really good. If you would like to try Jordan's bread, come to our Vespers and Vigils... it is truly very good.



Christian Orthodox Thyateira Youth (COTY)

COTY is the official youth ministry of the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain, for ages 16-35.

To learn more visit: www.coty.org.uk.

Instagram: [COTY_org](https://www.instagram.com/COTY_org)



Synaxarion Saint Theodore of Amasia the Recruit



Saint Theodore of Amasia was a Christian soldier during the great persecution of 303. Stationed near Euchaita, he learned of a dragon threatening the region. Guided by a Christian woman named Eusebia, he found the creature's lair, armed himself with the sign of the Cross, and killed it. Taking this as a sign from God, he openly professed his faith. He refused to worship pagan gods, destroyed a pagan altar, and was brought before the governor Publius. Despite threats and torture, he stood firm. Christ appeared to him in prison and strengthened him. He refused earthly food, trusting in Christ. Condemned to be burned, he walked freely into the flames, unharmed, and surrendered his soul to God. Eusebia recovered his body for burial.

Later, during Julian's rule, Saint Theodore appeared in a vision to warn that the city's food had been defiled with pagan sacrifices. He instructed Christians to eat boiled wheat instead, an event still remembered on the first Saturday of Great Lent. He continued to work miracles, protect the faithful, and rescue those in danger.



Please consider donating!

Our parish is a self-supporting charitable community, relying solely on the generosity of our faithful, with no supplementary funding from external bodies. We rely on your donations for everything you see in the church including small salary for the priest, and don't forget all charitable work of the church and all the fundraisings organised from the Archdiocese. Remember that all our finances are in your hands. You are the owners of everything in the church including of the building and all the bills.

If you are a UK taxpayer, please complete the Gift Aid Form alongside each donation as this allows the church to receive an additional 25p for every £1 you donate, at no extra cost to you. Please use yellow envelopes located at the entrance if the church. If you use card payment for your donations, and you like to Gift aid your payment, please put your receipt in the yellow envelope and sing it. Thank you for your support !



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