



The Tower

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

Sunday 1st March 2026
Sunday of Orthodoxy



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We have completed the first week of the Great Lent. Last Sunday, Forgiveness Sunday, marked the beginning of this period, and we had a great number of people in the church. Most importantly, everyone stayed until the end of the service to ask for forgiveness of each other. This is an important act, marking the beginning of our journey to repentance during this fasting period. The first week of the Great Lent is also the busiest week in the church as we have services every day. We started with the Great Compline and the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete in four parts from Monday to Thursday, followed by the Compline with the Akathist of Thetokos on Friday. On Wednesday and Friday evening we served the Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts. The attendance was great and many people came on Friday especially for this service. We finished with over 20 people in the church and most stayed until the end of the Akathist of the Theotokos. This is a great and positive sign. For some people, this was their first experience of the Lenten Liturgical life of the church. Our services are very rich and the only way to understand them is to be part of the services.

Looking forward, this Sunday is the Sunday of Orthodoxy. I hope many of you will come and bring icons from home. After the first Lenten Liturgy of St. Basil, we will have a small procession with the icons around the church, stopping on each of the four sides of the church and reading a prayer. At the end we will raise the icons and will proclaim that this is the faith of Orthodoxy, and will follow our Patristic tradition. This is the time when we celebrate the returning of the icons to the churches after the iconoclasm. The iconoclasm in the Orthodox church started in Constantinople and lasted over 100 years in the 8th and 9th century. Iconoclasts (those who break images) opposed the veneration of images, which they considered to be a form of idolatry that inappropriately separated or confused the divine and human natures of Christ. After 100 years of persecution of the iconoduls (those who

venerate the icons), the divine images were returned to the churches and today the icons are a unique part of the Orthodox church and are the living teachers of the Orthodox faith. Our church is very rich in icons thanks to the generous donations of the people and the churches around the UK. We still have plenty of icons that are not on the walls; some of them are very big and I'll need your help to fix them to the walls. Our church is full of icons, and this is not unnoticed from visitors. Most of them will say something like: "Wow... I've never seen a church with so many icons". Even people who are Orthodox and visit our community notice the icons in our church. This is the richness of the Patristic tradition, and we have to keep it.

Fr. John



Announcements

- Today (1st March) is the Sunday of Orthodoxy. Please bring an icon from home as we will have a small procession around the church.
- We are very fortunate to have many people attending church on Sundays, however, due to the limited space, the church is becoming overcrowded. Please stand further forwards, so that we can make room for more people.
- Soon we will begin to prepare the church for Easter. We will be accepting donations for flowers, as we need plenty of flowers in the church during this period.
- We would also greatly appreciate volunteers to assist with the Easter preparations. This could involve, cleaning and tidying the church, arranging overnight parking for the people on Easter etc. Please contact Fr John or Theodoros if you'd like to get involved.

Upcoming Services

Date	Time	Service	Notes
1 March Sun	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	Sunday of Orthodoxy
4 March Wed	6.00pm	Pre Sanctified Liturgy	
6 March Fri	6.00pm	Pre Sanctified Liturgy Akathist of the Theotokos Pt 2	
7 March Sat	5.30pm	Great Vespers	
8 March Sun	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	St. Gregory Palamas



LENTEN GATHERING

Greek Orthodox Church Of The
Holy Trinity & St Luke
Birmingham, B23 7SJ

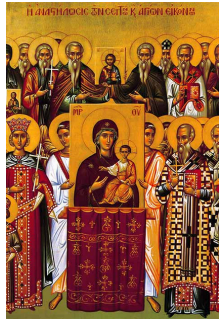


On Saturday 7th March 2026, with the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas, a youth 'Lenten Gathering' will take place at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Trinity and St Luke in Birmingham, B23 7SJ. The event will consist of two talks, by His Grace Bishop Maximos of Melitene and the Revd Dr Fr Nikitas Banev. A Lenten lunch will be graciously provided by our community in Birmingham. The event itself will commence at 12:00 midday.

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/birmingham/greek-orthodox-church-of-the-holy-trinity-st-luke/coty-lenten-gathering-birmingham/e-grorad>

A story from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America website

The Sunday of Orthodoxy is the first Sunday of Great Lent. The dominant theme of this Sunday since 843 has been that of the victory of the icons. In that year the iconoclastic controversy, which had raged on and off since 726, was finally laid to rest, and icons and their veneration were restored on the first Sunday in Lent. Ever since, this Sunday has been commemorated as the "Triumph of Orthodoxy."



The Seventh Ecumenical Council dealt predominantly with the controversy regarding icons and their place in Orthodox worship. It was convened in Nicaea in 787 by Empress Irene at the request of Tarasios, Patriarch of Constantinople.

The Council was attended by 367 bishops. Almost a century before this, the iconoclastic controversy had once more shaken the foundations of both Church and State in the Byzantine empire. Excessive religious respect and the ascribed miracles to icons by some members of society, approached the point of worship (due only to God) and idolatry. This instigated excesses at the other extreme by which icons were completely taken out of the liturgical life of the Church by the Iconoclasts. The Iconophiles, on the other-hand, believed that icons served to preserve the doctrinal teachings of the Church; they considered icons to be man's dynamic way of expressing the divine through art and beauty.

The Council decided on a doctrine by which icons should be venerated but not worshipped. In answering the Empress' invitation to the Council, Pope Hadrian replied with a letter in which he also held the position of extending veneration to icons but not worship, the last befitting only God. The decree of the Council for restoring icons to churches added an important clause which still stands at the foundation of the rationale for using and

verenerating icons in the Orthodox Church to this very day: "We define that the holy icons, whether in colour, mosaic, or some other material, should be exhibited in the holy churches of God, on the sacred vessels and liturgical vestments, on the walls, furnishings, and in houses and along the roads, namely the icons of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, that of our Lady the Theotokos, those of the venerable angels and those of all saintly people. Whenever these representations are contemplated, they will cause those who look at them to commemorate and love their prototype. We define also that they should be kissed and that they are an object of veneration and honour (timitiki proskynisis), but not of real worship (latreia), which is reserved for Him Who is the subject of our faith and is proper for the divine nature. The veneration accorded to an icon is in effect transmitted to the prototype; he who venerates the icon, venerated in it the reality for which it stands".

An Endemousa (Regional) Synod was called in Constantinople in 843. Under Empress Theodora. The veneration of icons was solemnly proclaimed at the Hagia Sophia Cathedral. The Empress, her son Michael III, Patriarch Methodios, and monks and clergy came in procession and restored the icons in their rightful place. The day was called "Triumph of Orthodoxy." Since that time, this event is commemorated yearly with a special service on the first Sunday of Lent, the "Sunday of Orthodoxy".

The Sunday of Orthodoxy is commemorated with the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, which is preceded by the Matins service. At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, a service is conducted in commemoration of the affirmations of the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787 and the restoration of the use of icons in 843. Orthodox faithful carry icons in a procession, while the clergy offer petitions for the people, civil authorities, and those who have reposed in the faith. Following is a reading of excerpts from the Affirmation of Faith of the Seventh Ecumenical Council and the singing of the Great Prokeimenon.

For access to the full article, please visit: <https://www.goarch.org/sunday-of-orthodoxy-learn>

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

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

ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Έβρ. ια´, 24-26 , 32-40

Άδελφοί, πίστει Μωϋσῆς μέγας γενόμενος ἠρνήσατο λέγεσθαι υἱὸς θυγατρὸς Φαραώ, μάλλον ἐλόμενος συγκαουχεῖσθαι τῷ λαῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἢ πρόσκαιρον ἔχειν ἀμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσι· μείζονα πλοῦτον ἠγησάμενος τῶν Αἰγύπτου θησαυρῶν τὸν ὄνειδισμόν τοῦ Χριστοῦ· ἀπέβλεπεν γάρ εἰς τὴν μισθοποδοσίαν. Καὶ τί ἔτι λέγω; Ἐπιλείπει γάρ με διηγούμενον ὁ χρόνος περὶ Γεδεών, Βαράκ τε καὶ Σαμψών καὶ Ἰεφθάε, Δαυὶδ τε καὶ Σαμουὴλ καὶ τῶν προφητῶν· οἱ διὰ πίστεως κατηγωνίσαντο βασιλείας, εἰργάσαντο δικαιοσύνην, ἐπέτυχον ἐπαγγελῶν, ἔφραξαν στόματα λεόντων, ἔσβεσαν δύναμιν πυρός, ἔφυγον στόματα μαχαίρας, ἐνεδυναμώθησαν ἀπὸ ἀσθενείας, ἐγενήθησαν ἰσχυροὶ ἐν πολέμῳ, παρεμβολὰς ἔκλιναν ἀλλοτρίων. Ἔλαβον γυναῖκες ἐξ ἀναστάσεως τοὺς νεκροὺς αὐτῶν· ἄλλοι δὲ ἐτυμpanισθησαν, οὐ προσδεξάμενοι τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, ἵνα κρείττονος ἀναστάσεως τύχωσιν· ἕτεροι δὲ ἐμπαυγμῶν καὶ μαστίγων πείραν ἔλαβον, ἔτι δὲ δεσμῶν καὶ φυλακῆς· ἐλιθάσθησαν, ἐπρίσθησαν, ἐπειράσθησαν, ἐν φόνῳ μαχαίρας ἀπέθανον· περιήλθον ἐν μηλωταῖς, ἐν αἰγείοις δέρμασιν, ὑστερούμενοι, θλιβόμενοι, κακουχούμενοι· ὧν οὐκ ἦν ἄξιος ὁ κόσμος· ἐν ἐρημίαις πλανώμενοι καὶ ὄρεσιν καὶ σπηλαίοις καὶ ταῖς ὄπαῖς τῆς γῆς. Καὶ οὗτοι πάντες, μαρτυρηθέντες διὰ τῆς πίστεως, οὐκ ἔκομίσαντο τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν, τοῦ Θεοῦ περὶ ἡμῶν κρείττον τι προβλεψαμένου, ἵνα μὴ χωρὶς ἡμῶν τελειωθῶσιν.

EPISTLE READING

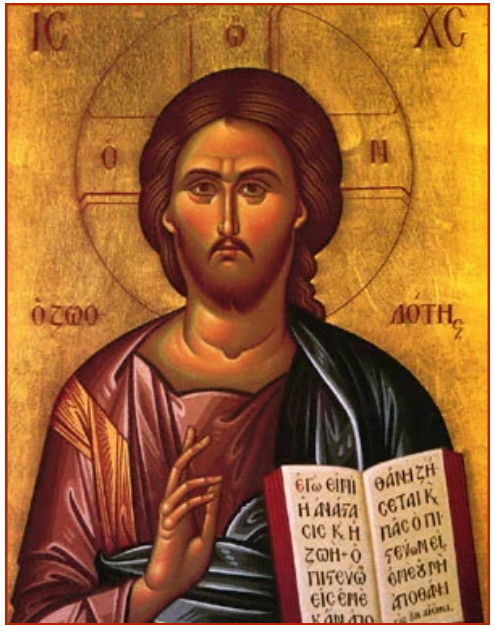
Heb. 11: 24-26 ; 32-40

Brethren, by faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered abuse suffered for the Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he looked to the reward. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign enemies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated - of whom the world was not worthy - wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Ἰωάν. α', 44-52

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἠθέλησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐξελθεῖν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν· καὶ εὗρισκε Φίλιππον καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· ἀκολούθει μοι. ἦν δὲ ὁ Φίλιππος ἀπὸ Βηθσαϊδά, ἐκ τῆς πόλεως Ἀνδρέου καὶ Πέτρου. εὗρισκε Φίλιππος τὸν Ναθαναὴλ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· ὃν ἔγραψε Μωϋσῆς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ καὶ οἱ προφῆται, εὐρήκαμεν, Ἰησοῦν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἀπὸ Ναζα-ρέτ. καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Ναθαναὴλ· ἐκ Ναζαρέτ δύναται τι ἀγαθὸν εἶναι; λέγει αὐτῷ Φίλιππος· ἔρχου καὶ ἴδε. εἶδεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν Ναθαναὴλ ἐρχόμενον πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ λέγει περὶ αὐτοῦ· ἴδε ἀληθῶς Ἰσραηλίτης, ἐν ᾧ δόλος οὐκ ἔστι. λέγει αὐτῷ Ναθαναὴλ· πόθεν με γινώσκεις; ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· πρὸ τοῦ σε Φίλιππον φωνῆσαι, ὄντα ὑπὸ τὴν συκὴν εἶδόν σε. ἀπεκρίθη Ναθαναὴλ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· βαββί, σὺ εἶ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, σὺ εἶ ὁ ῥαββί, τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ. ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ὅτι εἶπόν σοι, εἶδόν σε ὑποκάτω τῆς συκῆς, πιστεύεις; μείζω τούτων ὄψει. καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἀπ' ἄρτι ὄψεσθε τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεωγῆτα, καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀναβαίνοντας καὶ καταβαίοντας ἐπὶ τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.



GOSPEL READING

John 1: 44-52

At that time, Jesus decided to go to Galilee. And he found Philip and said to him, Follow me. Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael, and he said to him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. Nathanael said to him, Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Philip said to him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said of him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael said to him, How do you know me? Jesus answered him, Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you. Nathanael answered him, Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel! Jesus answered him, Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these. And he said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.





This is a picture from years ago, around 2019 when I was still a Deacon at the Church. It was a Saturday of the Souls service, served by Fr Pancratios. The Deacon plays a very important role in the Orthodox services. Our Services are built to have deacon. He is the one who will say all the petitions and the priest will have time to read all the prayers and not to rush through the text of the services. To be a deacon is good and profitable time of preparation and learning to become a priest. It will be nice to see a deacon again in our church.

SERMON ON THE GOSPEL READING

Today is the first Sunday of Great and Holy Lent, the Sunday of Orthodoxy. We celebrate, most vividly, the restoration of our Holy Icons and the triumph of the truth over the false doctrine of iconoclasm. The name of this Sunday highlights the importance of Holy Icons to our Faith and our Church. Holy Icons are required; they are not optional. They are a consequence of our Faith, and of the Incarnation of our Lord. They express in shape and colour the theology sung in our hymnography. They confess the truth and reality of the Incarnation and the possibility of man's union with God in theosis. Our Holy Icons tell of God Incarnate and man transfigured, man deified. As the great theologian Vladimir Lossky wrote, '...the Icon transmits visually the realisation of the patristic formula...: "God became Man so that man might become god."'

Therefore, we celebrate the triumph of the fundamental truth of our Orthodox Faith, it is the Sunday of correct belief. We do not celebrate the triumph of Orthodox Christians over some other group of people. Rather, we rejoice and offer doxology for the triumph of the divine truth over human error, and for the transformative grace that is freely given to us as members of our One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church - our Orthodox Church. The darkness of the error of iconoclasm has been obliterated from our hearts and replaced by the glory and divine light of the truth of Christ. And this indwelling light illuminates for each of us a path of prayerful and transformative pilgrimage, the ultimate destination of which is theosis, union with God.

To again quote Vladimir Lossky, 'Through the Incarnation of the Son of God, man receives the possibility not only to restore his likeness to God with the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit, that is, to make an icon of himself by inner doing, but also to reveal his grace-given State to others in...visual images.' Our Saints call out to us from their Holy Icons, come and see, join us, partake of this glory! The illumination of man, by divine grace, is the manifestation of man as a living Icon of God; we are made to become Holy Icons of our Lord.

In the Kontakion of the Feast today, we confess, 'The undepictable Word of the Father became depictable when He took flesh of you, O Theotokos; and when He had restored

the defiled image to its ancient state, He suffused it with divine beauty.' This is the great triumph we celebrate. Let us remember it today when we make our processions, joyfully bearing our Holy Icons of our beloved Saints. Let's not just look into the painted faces of our heroes on gilded backgrounds, but also into the eyes of our brothers and sisters who hold them and allow ourselves to 'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!' (John 1:47) The true and most wondrous Icon of our Lord, man. The one made in the Image and Likeness of God.

May we allow the true Triumph of Orthodoxy to take hold of our hearts, and see our brothers and sisters, as they may be, perfected in Christ. May we become what we already are, '...as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.' (1 Cor. 15:49) This glorious truth, this joyful hope, this noble potential, this sublime victory in Christ is amongst our greatest joys. So let us commemorate the Triumph of the restoration of the true Icon of our Lord, man, by divine grace through our Lord Jesus Christ, who via His Incarnation has wondrously revealed Himself as 'the way, the truth, and the life' (John 14:6) and together cry out with gratitude, 'You have filled all things with joy, O our Saviour, by coming to save the world.' Amen!

Presbyter Charalambos Clark

St. David of Wales (commemorated 1st March), known in Welsh as 'Dewi Sant', was a 6th century bishop and monastic founder in Wales and is its patron saint.

Ordained to the priesthood, he studied under the tutorship of a disciple of Saint Germanus, who later became Bishop of the Isle of Man, and engaged in missionary work and the building of churches in many places. Eventually, he settled in the southwest corner of Wales, at Menevia (Mynyw in Welsh). There he founded a monastery known for its extreme austerity, in imitation of the desert fathers. Eventually he was consecrated Bishop of the primatial See of Wales, Menevia, afterwards known as Saint David's in his honor.

The best-known miracle associated with St. David is said to have taken place on an occasion when he was preaching in the middle of a large crowd, the ground on which he stood is reputed to have risen up to form a small hill so that everyone could see him. The village which is said to stand on the spot today is known as Llanddewi Brefi.



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)



St Melangell



Saint Melangell was an Irish princess who left her native land over 1,400 years ago and came, no doubt with her companions and servants, to Britain and to the Tanat valley, seeking and finding a place to live her life in quiet prayer and devotion to God.

Her legend (translated from a 17th Century manuscript by Professor Oliver Davies of Saint David's College, Lampeter) tells of the illustrious Prince Brychwel Ysgithrog of Pengwern Powys who in AD 604 whilst hunting in a place called Pennant started a hare and with his hounds gave chase. They came to a thicket of brambles and thorns wherein he found a beautiful maiden, given up to divine contemplation, with the hare lying boldly under the hem of her garments.

Moved by her piety and her serenity the prince endowed Melangell, daughter of King Jowchel of Ireland, with land and built for her a place of sanctuary for the service of God that it may be a 'perpetual asylum, refuge and defence', saying unto her: "O most worthy Melangell, I perceive that thou art the handmaiden of the true God. Because it hath pleased Him for thy merits to give protection to this little wild hare from the attack and pursuit of the ravening hounds, I give and present to thee with willing mind these my lands for the service of God, to be a perpetual asylum and refuge. If any men or women flee hither to seek thy protection, provided they do not pollute thy sanctuary, let no prince or chieftain be so rash towards God as to attempt to drag them forth." Melangell passed the rest of her days in this lonely place, sleeping on bare rock. Many were the miracles which she wrought for those who sought refuge in her sanctuary with pure hearts.



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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