



# The Tower

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

**Sunday 08<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

**2nd Sunday of Lent (of Gregory Palamas)**



## Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We've approached the second Sunday of the Great Lent. Last Sunday was the Sunday of Orthodoxy; we served the Matins and Divine Liturgy for the feast and many people came and brought their home icons to participate in the procession around the church. It was very nice to see that many of the children were very keen to show their icons and speak about them. As you heard in the procession prayers and petitions, the icons are an important part of our faith and we confess and affirm our faith by raising them during the procession. We read the following prayer, The Synodicon of the 7<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council:

*“As the prophets beheld, as the apostles have taught, as the Church has received, as the teachers have declared, as the world has agreed, as grace has shown forth, as truth has been revealed, as falsehood has been dispelled, as wisdom has become manifest, as Christ awarded; Thus we declare; thus we affirm; thus we proclaim Christ our true God, and honour His saints in words, writings, thoughts, sacrifices, churches, and holy icons; On the one hand, worshiping and reverencing Christ as God and Lord, and on the other, honouring the saints as true servants of the same Lord of all, and offering them proper veneration. This is the faith of the apostles. This is the faith of the fathers. This is the faith of the Orthodox. This is the faith on which the world is established. Therefore, with fraternal and filial love we praise the heralds of the faith, those who with glory and honour have struggled for the faith, and we say: to the champions of Orthodoxy, faithful emperors, most-holy patriarchs, hierarchs, teachers, martyrs, and confessors: May your memory be eternal.”*

On Wednesdays and Fridays during the Great Lent we also offer the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. The services take place at 6pm and have an average attendance of about 20 people. On Fridays we also serve the Small Compline with the

Akathist of the Theotokos. It's very nice to hear the famous “O, Champion General...” chanted in different languages, English, Greek, Romanian and Church Slavonic. Come and join us for these midweek services, they're very spiritually lifting and profitable. We will continue with the same pattern of services for the next few weeks.

This Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> of March, we celebrate the memory of the Ecumenical Teacher, St. Gregory Palamas. This saint holds a very special place in the Orthodox Church and is always Celebrated on the second Sunday of the Great Lent, after the Sunday of Orthodoxy. His theological works ‘Triads’ are very well known and have been translated in many languages.

Fr. John



## Announcements

- There is still time to enrol your child into the summer camps. Please visit the archdiocese website for further information. The application form is available at: <https://thyateirayouthcamps.org.uk/camp-saint-bega/>
- 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 tiding 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
8 March Sun	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas
11 March Wed	6.00pm	Pre Sanctified Liturgy	
13 March Fri	6.00pm 7.15pm	Pre Sanctified Liturgy Akathist of Theotokos Pt.3	
14 March Sat	5.30pm	Great Vespers	
15 March Sun	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	Sunday of the Holy Cross

## Parish Library



*Did you know that you can borrow a book from the library in the church? There are plenty of nice books available that can help you to grow spiritually in the Orthodox Faith and have a deeper understanding and knowledge of the services. The only thing that you have to do is to drop an email to: [library@stbarbara.org](mailto:library@stbarbara.org) with the name of the book you'd like to borrow. And don't forget to return it when finished, please!*

## A story about St Gregory Palamas

Saint Gregory Palamas holds a special place in the heart of the Eastern Orthodox Church. His defence of hesychasm and his clear teachings on how to truly commune with God greatly shaped Orthodoxy as it developed apart from the Roman West. After Palamas' initial criticism of Barlaam, Barlaam replied with a vicious attack on the hesychastic life of the Athonite monks. In rebuttal, Saint Gregory wrote the *Triads* in defence of the Holy Hesychasts (c. 1338), a brilliant work affirmed by his fellow Hagiorites. A synod held in Constantinople in A.D. 1341 supported Palamas' views, condemning Barlaam. Three years later, the opponents of hesychasm in the West secured a condemnation for heresy and excommunication for Saint Gregory. This is why we remember him during Great Lent, a time when returning to God is the entire purpose of spiritual struggle. Perhaps the most important contribution Palamas made to Orthodox Christian theology was his distinction between the essence and energies of God. While we cannot know God in His essence (God in Himself), we can know Him in His energies (the work of God's grace in our lives, and who God is in relation to the creation and mankind). Both essence and energies are fully God. Therefore, when interacting with God's energies, we interact with the uncreated God Himself, while His essence still remains unknowable and unreachable. Imagine that God is the sun. We all experience the power and energy of the sun every day. We experience its warmth and light (both of which are energies) through the rays that shine down on us. These rays don't give us a mere impression of what the sun is; they are not a substitute for the sun, nor do they merely illustrate what the sun is like. They are a real participation in the very energies of the sun itself. In other words, by our contact with the sun's rays, real changes occur in our human chemistry. At the same time, however, we cannot participate in or experience the essence of the sun. If we tried to approach the essence of the sun, it would overwhelm and annihilate us.

So it is with God and His grace. God's grace is not a participation in the transcendent and unknowable essence of God. However, it is a real experience of God through His divine energies. And it is these energies that were experienced:

- in the burning bush (Ex. 3:2) and on Mount Sinai (Ex. 24:16)
- by the priests in the ark of the tabernacle of testimony (1 Kings 8:10)
- as a cloud and pillar of fire in the wilderness (Ex. 13:21)
- upon the dedication of the Jerusalem temple (2 Chronicles 7:1)
- by Saul when a blinding light knocked him from his horse (Acts 9:3-4)
- by Peter, James, and John on Mount Tabor during the Lord's Transfiguration (Matt. 17)
- And on many other occasions



In fact, according to Saint Gregory Palamas and many other theologians, the Apostles actually witnessed the uncreated light of God; and it is possible for others to see that same uncreated light of God with the help of repentance, spiritual discipline and contemplative prayer.

Saint Gregory Palamas holds a special place in the heart of the Eastern Orthodox Church. His defense of hesychasm and his clear teachings on how to truly commune with God greatly shaped Orthodoxy as it developed apart from the Roman West. This is why we remember him during Great Lent, a time when returning to God is the entire purpose of spiritual struggle. Through the intercessions of our Father among the Saints, Gregory Palamas, Lord have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.

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

## ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Ἐβρ. α΄, 10-14 - β΄, 1-3

Κατ' ἀρχάς, Κύριε, τὴν γῆν ἐθεμελίωσας, καὶ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου εἰσιν οἱ οὐρανοί· αὐτοὶ ἀπολούνται, σὺ δὲ διαμένεις· καὶ πάντες ὡς ἱμάτιον παλαωθήσονται, καὶ ὡσεὶ περιβόλαιον ἐλίξεις αὐτούς, αἱ ἀλλαγῆσονται· σὺ δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς εἶ, καὶ τὰ ἔτη σου οὐκ ἐκλείψουσιν. Πρὸς τίνα δὲ τῶν ἀγγέλων εἶρηκέν ποτε, Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου, ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου; Οὐχὶ πάντες εἰσὶν λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα, εἰς διακονίαν ἀποστελλόμενα διὰ τοῦ μέλλοντος κληρονομεῖν σωτηρίαν; Διὰ τοῦτο δεῖ περισσοτέρως ἡμᾶς προσέχειν τοῖς ἀκουσθεῖσιν, μήποτε παραρρῶμεν. Εἰ γὰρ ὁ δι' ἀγγέλων λαληθεὶς λόγος ἐγένετο βέβαιος, καὶ πᾶσα παράβασις καὶ παρακοή ἔλαβεν ἔνδικον μισθαποδοσίαν, πῶς ἡμεῖς ἐκφευξόμεθα τηλικαύτης ἀμελήσαντες σωτηρίας; Ἦτις, ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσα λαλεῖσθαι διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου, ὑπὸ τῶν ἀκουσάντων εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐβεβαίωθη.

## EPISTLE READING

Heb. 1: 10-14 ; 2: 1-3

In the beginning, Thou, Lord, didst found the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; they will perish, but thou remainest; they will all grow old like a garment, like a mantle thou wilt roll them up, and they will be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years will never end. But to what angel has he ever said, Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation? Therefore we must pay closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him.

## ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΜΟΝ ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ

Ἦχος πλ. β΄

Ἀγγελικαὶ δυνάμεις ἐπὶ τῷ μνημῆμά σου, καὶ οἱ φυλάσσοντες, ἀπενεκρώθησαν· καὶ ἴστατο Μαρία ἐν τῷ τάφῳ, ζητοῦσα τὸ ἄχραντόν σου σῶμα. Ἐσκύλευσας τὸν Ἄϊδην, μὴ πειρασθεὶς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ· ὑπήντησας τῇ Παρθένῳ, δωροῦμενος τὴν ζωὴν. Ὁ ἀναστάς ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, Κύριε δόξα σοι.

## RESURRECTION APOLYTIKION

Plagal of the 2nd Mode

Angelic Powers were at your grave, and those who guarded it became as dead, and Mary stood by the tomb, seeking your most pure Body. You despoiled Hell and emerged unscathed; you met the Virgin and granted life. Lord, risen from the dead, glory to you!

## ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Μάρκ. β΄, 1-12

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, εἰσῆλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς Καπερναοὺμ δι' ἡμερῶν καὶ ἠκούσθη ὅτι εἰς οἶκόν ἐστι. καὶ εὐθέως συνήχθησαν πολλοί, ὥστε μηκέτι χωρεῖν μηδὲ τὰ πρὸς τὴν θύραν· καὶ ἐλάλει αὐτοῖς τὸν λόγον. καὶ ἔρχονται πρὸς αὐτὸν παραλυτικὸν φέροντες, αἰρόμενον ὑπὸ τεσσάρων· καὶ μὴ δυνάμενοι προσεγγίσει αὐτῷ διὰ τὸν ὄχλον, ἀπεστέγασαν τὴν στέγην ὅπου ἦν, καὶ ἐξορύξαντες χαλῶσι τὸν κράβαττον, ἐφ' ᾧ ὁ παραλυτικὸς κατέκειτο. ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ· τέκνον, ἀφένται σοι αἱ ἀμαρτίαι σου. ἦσαν δὲ τινες τῶν γραμματέων ἐκεῖ καθημένοι καὶ διαλογιζόμενοι ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν· τί οὕτως οὕτως λαλεῖ βλασφημία; τίς δύναται ἀφιέναι ἀμαρτίας εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ Θεός; καὶ εὐθέως ἐπιγνοῦς ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ πνεύματι αὐτοῦ ὅτι οὕτως αὐτοὶ διαλογίζονται ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· τί ταῦτα διαλογίζεσθε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν; τί ἐστὶν εὐκοπώτερον, εἰπεῖν τῷ παραλυτικῷ, ἀφένται σοι αἱ ἀμαρτίαι, ἢ εἰπεῖν, ἔγειρε καὶ ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει; ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀφιέναι ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀμαρτίας -λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ· σοὶ λέγω, ἔγειρε καὶ ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ ὑπάγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου. καὶ ἠγέρθη εὐθέως, καὶ ἄρας τὸν κράβαττον ἐξῆλθεν ἐναντίον πάντων, ὥστε ἐξίστασθαι πάντας καὶ δοξάζειν τὸν Θεὸν λέγοντας ὅτι οὐδέποτε οὕτως εἶδομεν.

## GOSPEL READING

Mark 2: 1-12

At that time, Jesus entered Capernaum and it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, My son, your sins are forgiven. Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, Why does this man speak thus? It is a blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone? And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, Why do you question thus in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins -he said to the paralytic- I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home. And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, We never saw anything like this!





*This picture shows a small portion of the servants and people taking part in our procession for the Sunday of Orthodoxy. We had a patch of dry and sunny weather.*

*“We venerate Your immaculate icon, O good Lord, and entreat You to forgive our offenses, O Christ our God. By Your own choice you were pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh, to deliver us, whom You created, from our slavery to the foe. Therefore we cry to You with gratitude: You have filled all things with joy, O our Saviour, by coming to save the world.”*

## SERMON ON THE GOSPEL READING

In today’s Gospel reading, we see Christ entering Capernaum, meaning the city of Nahum, which in turn means ‘comfort’. The Holy Fathers understand this place of comfort, and the house to which the people flocked to encounter Jesus, as being the Church.

Our Lord does not encounter the paralytic alone, but he is brought to him by four men. And when he forgives the man his sins, he does so because he saw their faith; not only the faith of the paralytic himself, but also the faith of the four men.

While every single human person is uniquely and infinitely valuable in the eyes of God who created them in his own image, that image is ultimately the image of a God who is Triune, an eternal communion of three divine Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is why the first thing Scripture says about the human being is that it is not good for man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18), and why we are commanded to “love one another” (John 13:34), to “bear one another’s burdens” (Galatians 6:2), “to confess [our] sins to one another and pray for one another, that [we] may be healed, [for] the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16).

Today’s Gospel reading shows us that we are not saved as isolated individuals, but as persons in communion. The Lord tells us where to find him: “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). We find him where the crowds are gathered to hear his preaching, but we cannot enter if we do not humbly accept the involvement of others. Specifically, we do not enter unless the roof of our haughtiness is removed and we allow others to lower us down and to lay us at the feet of Christ.

And here it is important to note that, it is not only the people who lift us up and carry us that we are to accept, but also those who challenge us, who test us, who disappoint us. The path to Christ is the path of Christ, who emptied himself of his glory, lowered himself to the earth by taking the form of a servant, and lowered himself further into the grave and Hades by embracing the Cross.

When the Lord tells us to “Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you” (Luke 6:27-28), he is not calling us to some heroic feat of repression. Rather, the person who understands that every such encounter is an opportunity to follow Christ on this path will regard those who lower him down as his helpers and benefactors and will naturally love them, do good to them and pray for them. This is how we are healed.

We may hear this and respond, much as did the Scribes, “This is too difficult. This is unrealistic. Who is able to accomplish such a thing?”. To these doubts, Jesus answers, “Why do you question these things in your hearts?” He reads the hearts of the Scribes, heals the paralysis of the man, and further gives him the strength to carry the bed on which he was carried, in order to expel every doubt about his ability also to heal the hidden sicknesses of the soul, not only from their minds but from ours.

What reason, then, do we have to fear a path he has already trodden? Why should we fear embracing others, knowing that, if we do, we will end up at the feet of Christ who embraces and heals us?

“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out all fear” (1 John 4:18). Therefore, let us love one another, that with one mind we may confess Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Trinity consubstantial and undivided.

Oeconomos Kristian Akselberg



### 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](http://www.coty.org.uk).

Instagram: COTY\_org

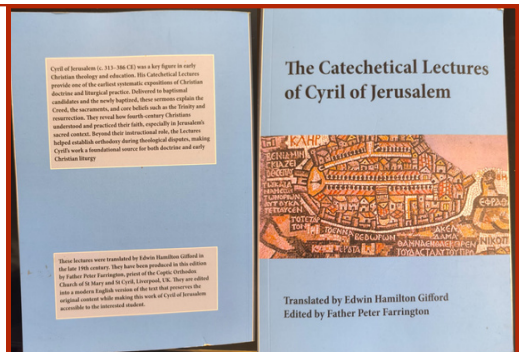


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### Book recommendation from the Parish Library

This book, ‘The Catechetical Lectures of Cyril of Jerusalem’ has been recommended by Father John as a very interesting catechetical book which is easy to read.

Cyril of Jerusalem (c.313-386 CE) was a key figure in early Christian theology and education. His Catechetical Lectures provide one of the earliest systematic expositions of Christian doctrine and liturgical practice....



## Synaxarion Saint Aristobulus of Britannia



The Holy Apostle Aristóboulos of the Seventy was born on Cyprus. He and his brother, the Apostle Barnabas (June 11), accompanied Saint Paul on his missionary journeys. Saint Aristóboulos is mentioned by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans (Romans 16:10).

There are several conflicting narratives about the hierarch's life before he went to Britain. Some identify him with Zebedee, the father of the Apostles James and John. Others say that he was the father-in-law of the Apostle Peter. Most of these are unreliable, however.

Saint Paul made Aristóboulos a bishop and sent him to preach the Gospel in Britain, Scotland, and Hibernia (Ireland), where he converted many people to Christ.

He also had to endure many torments and afflictions from hostile pagans, who beat him and mocked him. Eventually, he won them over and brought them to Christ as well.

Saint Aristóboulos reposed peacefully in Britain among the people he had evangelized. Some sources say he suffered a martyr's death in Wales at an advanced age.



### 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 of 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. Please also consider becoming one of our valued regular donors via standing order.

Thank you for your support !



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