



# The Tower

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

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Great Lent (Veneration of the Holy Cross)



## Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We've approached the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the Great Lent, Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross. This is another important day of our very rich Liturgical life. After learning and confessing our faith on the Sunday of Orthodoxy and on the Sunday of St, Gregory Palamas, we approach yet another very important moment in Orthodoxy, and this is the veneration of the Holy Cross. As we know, as Orthodox Christian we all carry a cross over our necks which has been given to us during the time of our Baptism. Every single time we are in distress or in need or in prayer and worship services we make the sign of the cross multiple times. Veneration of the holy cross is important and specific for the Orthodox faith.

Soon we'll also have a church board and trustee meeting, to start preparing and organising our services for the Holy Week. As with every year, we will need many things and plenty of helping hands. Please come and speak to me if you can and would like to help with the preparation of the Feast of the Feasts. As with every year, we will need plenty of flowers and people to arrange the Sepulchre on Holy Friday. Please come and help. Also, a time for deep cleaning the church will be arranged soon, so please come and help; there are plenty of things to do.

Over the last few days we had the traditional yearly visit of the theology students from Chester University. We had an hour long presentation of the church space, and quick explanation of our worship services and Orthodox beliefs. The students were very interested in everything and as usual, a few of them wanted to come and participate in our Services. Don't be surprised if you see some of them in the church over the next few weeks. They will make notes during the services and may ask some questions after the services, so please be welcoming to them and answer their questions as their final essay is based on what they hear and see in our church. Let us help them to achieve good marks.

On this Sunday we also celebrate a great and very important saint for this land. He is not very popular and is usually hidden between the big feast and the very busy liturgical life of the Great Lent. Holy Apostle Aristobulus is commemorated as one of the Seventy Disciples and the first Bishop of Britain. Born in Cyprus, he was the brother of the Apostle Barnabas and a frequent companion of the Apostle Paul, who specifically greets his household in his Epistle to the Romans (Rom 16:10). He was ordained by St Paul and sent to preach to the "savage" and pagan tribes of Britain. He is often cited as the founder of the British Church. Traditions vary on his end; some accounts state he died peacefully at an advanced age, while others claim he was martyred in Wales.

## Fr. John



## Announcements

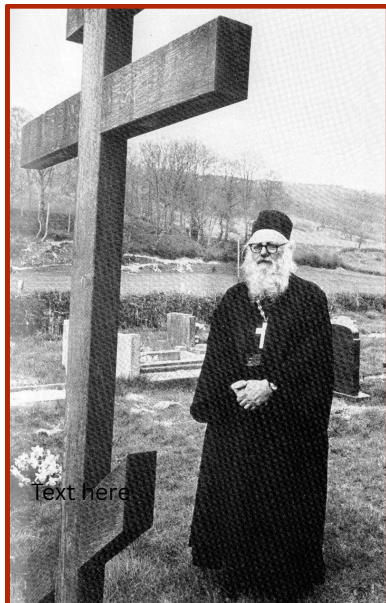
- We have plenty of children in the church and very often they play around the church near the graves. Please be careful because some of the grave stones are not secured and some of them may fall onto the children. Please speak to your children about this danger.
- Next Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2026, we will go to the grave of Archimandrite Barnabas near Welshpool, and will serve Memorial Service for 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. Please come if you can. The address is Manafon Church, 4 Glanrhiw, Manafon, Welshpool, SY21 8BL
- We are collecting donations for the orphanage in Uganda that we traditionally support. Please donate in the church basket or online to the church account and leave a note that is for the orphanage in Uganda. Thank you!

## Upcoming Services

15 March Sun	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	Sunday of the Holy Cross
18 March Wed	6.00pm	Pre Sanctified Liturgy	
20 March Fri	6.00pm 7.15 pm	Pre Sanctified Liturgy Akathist of Theotokos, Pt.4	
21 March Sat	5.30pm	Great Vespers	
22 March Sun	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	Sunday of St. John Climacus

## 30-year memorial of Archimandrite Barnabas

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2026, 3pm



*On the 21st of March at 3pm we will serve a memorial services at the grave of Archimandrite Barnabas at Manafon Church, 4 Glanrhwi, Manafon, Welshpool, SY21 8BL*

*Please come and be part a of this service. Archimandrite Barnabas was the founder of our community in 1985 and was one of the most influential Orthodox clergy in the area.*

*Many of the communities around us were created by him. Let us all honour and pay respect to this great man and Orthodox clergy who did so much for the spreading of orthodoxy in modern Britain. May his memory be eternal!*

## A story from the Internet

The Holy Apostle Aristobulus of the Seventy was born on Cyprus. He and his brother, the holy Apostle Barnabas of the Seventy, accompanied the holy Apostle Paul on his journeys. Saint Aristobulus is mentioned by the Apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Romans (Rom 16:10). Saint Paul made Aristobulus a bishop and sent him to preach the Gospel in Britain, where he converted many to Christ. He endured the torments and malice of the pagans, and eventually baptized them. Saint Aristobulus died in Britain among the people he had evangelized.

Archpriest Andrew Phillips writes of the apostle Aristobulus in Orthodox England (vol. 8,4):

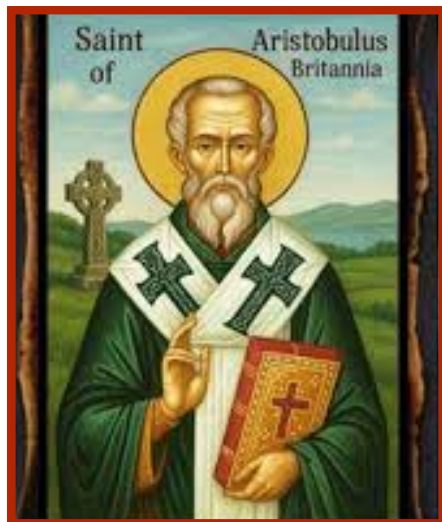
From Cyprus and one of the Seventy, he [the Apostle Aristobulus] was the brother of St Barnabas and is mentioned in Romans 16, 10. Some say that he was the father-in-law of the Apostle Paul. In any case, the Eastern Lives of the Saints quite specifically affirm that he was sent by the Apostle Paul to preach in Britain, inhabited by “a very warlike and fierce race,” in particular in the Isles of Scilly and Cornwall. Here he toiled much and suffered from cruel and unbelieving people. He was beaten, dragged as a criminal along streets and suffered misfortune, malice and mockery. Finally, local people accepted from him the Light of Christ. He taught them the Faith, baptised them, built churches and ordained priests and deacons, reposing in Britain. Some sources add that he was also martyred in Britain, but we do not need to believe the Cypriot folklore that he was eaten by cannibals. Accounts of these events can be found in the writings of Haleca, Bishop of Augusta, and Dorotheus of Tyre.

As regards folk memory, the British Achau, or Genealogies of the Saints, say that St Aristobulus was known as Arwystli

Hen (the Elder) and that he came to Britain with others, Jewish converts, and also his own son, called ‘Manaw’. An area on the River Severn in what was Montgomeryshire in Wales used to be called ‘Arwystli’, for this was said to be the site of his martyrdom. St Aristobulus is feasted on 15 March in the Greek Churches

Though Wales may possibly be the regional location of St. Aristobulus’ death and burial, we have no date or account of how he died. As such some have held that he died in peace there among the church that he founded, but there’s also a long tradition that he did die as a martyr. Whatever the physical and historical circumstances of his death, he certainly lived as a martyr to Christ, and he died in the peace of Christ, even if at the violent hands of pagans. Because of his faithfulness to the Lord, the gospel of Christ had been preached and the Church established in the British Isles within only a decade or two after Christ’s death and resurrection.

“Pray unto God for us, O holy Saint Aristobulus, well-pleasing to God: for we turn unto you who are the speedy helper and intercessor for our souls.” Amen.



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

## ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Έβρ. δ´, 14-16 - ε´, 1-6

Άδελφοί, έχοντες οὖν ἀρχιερέα μέγαν, διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, Ἰησοῦν τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας. Οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα μὴ δυνάμενον συμπαθῆσαι ταῖς ἀσθενείαις ἡμῶν, πεπει- ραμένον δὲ κατὰ πάντα καθ' ὁμοιότητα, χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας.

Προσερχώμεθα οὖν μετὰ παρρησίας τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος, ἵνα λάβω- μεν ἔλεον, καὶ χάριν εὐρωμεν εἰς εὐκαίρον βοήθειαν.

Πᾶς γὰρ ἀρχιερεὺς, ἐξ ἀνθρώπων λαμβανόμενος, ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων καθίσταται τὰ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, ἵνα προσφέρῃ δῶρα τε καὶ θυσίας ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν·

μετριοπαθεῖν δυνάμενος τοῖς ἀνομοῦσιν καὶ πλανωμέ- νοις, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς περικείται ἀσθένειαν· καὶ διὰ ταύτην ὀφείλει, καθὼς περὶ τοῦ λαοῦ, οὕτως καὶ περὶ ἑαυτοῦ, προσφέρειν ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν. Καὶ οὐχ ἑαυτῷ τις λαμβάνει τὴν τιμὴν, ἀλλὰ καλούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καθά- περ καὶ Ἀαρών. Οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδόξασεν γεννηθῆναι ἀρχιερέα, ἀλλ' ὀλαλήσας πρὸς αὐτόν, Υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἐγώσῃμερον γεγέννηκά σε. Καθὼς καὶ ἐν ἐτέρῳ λέγει, Σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδέκ.

## EPISTLE READING

Heb. 4: 14-16 ; 5: 1-6

Brethren, since we have a high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee; as he says also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek.

## ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Μάρκ. η´, 34-38 - θ´, 1

Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος· Εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἔλθειν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀκολουθεῖτω μοι. ὃς γὰρ ἂν θέλῃ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ σῶσαι, ἀπολέσει αὐτήν· ὃς δ' ἂν ἀπολέσῃ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, οὗτος σώσει αὐτήν.

τί γὰρ ὠφελησεί ἄνθρωπον ἐὰν κερδήσῃ τὸν κόσμον ὅλον, καὶ ζημιωθῇ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ; ἢ τί δώσει ἄνθρωπος ἀνάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ; ὃς γὰρ ἐὰν ἐπαισχυνθῇ με καὶ τοὺς ἐμοὺς λόγους ἐν τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ τῇ μοιχαλίδι καὶ ἁμαρτωλῷ, καὶ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπαισχυθήσεται αὐτὸν ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ Πατρὸς αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν ἁγίων. Καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· ἀμήν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰσὶ τινες τῶν ὧδε ἐστηκότων, οἵτινες οὐ μὴ γεύσονται θανάτου ἕως ἂν ἴδωσι τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐληλυθυῖαν ἐν δυνάμει.

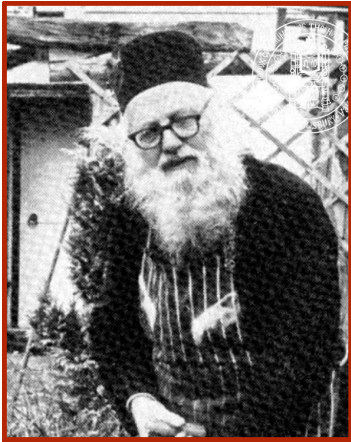


## GOSPEL READING

Mark 8: 34-38 ; 9: 1

The Lord said, If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. And he said to them, Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power.





*Ian Burton was born on 3 September 1915 in Pennal, Meirionethshire, the second of four children of Peter Jones Burton (1883-1956), a stonemason, and his wife Margaret (née Latham, b. 1878). He first language was Welsh, and he spoke little English in his early years. He attended the village school, before passing the scholarship examination to go to Tywyn Grammar School.*

*Archimandrite Barnabas' lifelong wish was to establish an Orthodox monastic tradition in Britain. He moved back to Wales in 1973, settling in New Mills, between Newtown and Llanfair Caereinion, the next year. He established a monastery, Mynachdy Sant Elias, in an old farmhouse there. In the 1980s, Archimandrite Barnabas moved to Aberfan, where he became a familiar figure walking the streets in his long black robes. After this, he was called to serve in Cardiff; he died there on 14 March 1996.*

## SERMON ON THE GOSPEL READING

Today's Gospel reading may sound too demanding for us, who are brought up by a society that inspires us to build our lives on achievement, comfort, affluence, success. Christ's calling seems to undermine all our modern aspirations: 'to deny oneself', to 'take up our cross' and even more disturbing 'to lose our lives for Christ's sake and the gospel's'. Together with the disciples we may object: 'Who then can be saved?' (Matthew 19:25).

However, the words of Christ already constitute an implicit principle of our lives: Christ is in fact articulating the truth of our daily reality. Indeed, if we consider our daily lives, our relationships with our family, friends, and colleagues, we observe that it is impossible to build any life at all on a foundation of egoism and a refusal of self-denial. We may ask ourselves: 'Is it possible to build a loving relationship with your spouse without sacrificing your ego? Or to raise children, who demand your total care, without self-sacrifice? Or to grow up as a valuable member of society, of any community? Or to build a relationship with other people? Or to develop in general as a person? And ultimately – without selfless love is it possible to be called 'human'? These words of Christ 'to deny oneself' in fact define the very essence of 'humanity' after the image and likeness of God, that distinguishes us from the animal world, where primitive egoism is a weapon in the struggle for individual survival.

'Love is the meaning of life', St Sophrony used to say. Without love man finds himself disengaged from the rest of humanity in the outer darkness of loneliness, in the prison of his abject ego, of which he has become a victim. And even though we may be allured by the examples of those who do not open themselves to love and seem to live more comfortably, this is a misleading aberration: 'a happy egoist' does not exist. As Christ says: 'For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' (Mark 8:36-37). He shall in fact gain only a profound loss of self, devoid of any purpose in life. He will be doomed to a 'soulless' existence, in deep emptiness and detachment from the rest of humanity.

Today's Gospel offers us salvation from this hell of selfishness and there is only one door that leads out of it – Christ: 'I am the door: by Me if any man enters in, he shall go forth and find pasture' (John 10:9). Paradoxically, through Christ's commandment, he who 'denies himself', in fact 'finds himself', that is his own personality, by opening up to the infinite horizons of the true life – 'life in abundance' (John 10:10). The disciples represent a good example here: they accepted the words of Christ – 'denying their own self', and found themselves on the heights of Mt Tabor, seeing 'the Kingdom of God come in power' (Mark 9:1), when they experienced the abundant splendour of Divine Love shining upon them, saying together with St Peter: 'It is good for us to be here' (Mark 9:5).

Today's Gospel can be seen as the summary of the whole teaching of Christ, Who taught us how to turn away from oneself and transfer all our concern on to our fellow-humans, so that they become the very content of our lives. Once we attune our heart to this way – the way of love – these words of Christ, from seemingly sombre and negative, become not only natural for us, but also inspiring and life-giving according to the unfailing promise of Christ: 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you... for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light' (Matthew 11:29-30).

Hieromonk Nikolai Sakharov

### Book recommendation from the Parish Library

*This autobiography book written by Fr. Barnabas is available to download online*

*<https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2234056>*

*This is a story of a journey to a country less well known in the West and though it is not intended in any way as propaganda, nevertheless I hope that it may awaken in my readers something of the vitality and viability of Orthodoxy. The Church can draw people in many ways: its music, worship, spirituality, icons, doctrine, antiquity, continuity and certainty. But all should realize that to belong to the Orthodox Church is indeed to tread the narrow way that leads to life eternal (Matt VII: 14) and a real taking up of the Cross and a following of the Master, for its demands in the way of discipline, prayer and fasting are very great.*

### Strange Pilgrimage

Archimandrite Barnabas



### 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](https://www.instagram.com/COTY_org)



Archdiocese of Thyateira & Great Britain, 5 Craven Hill, London W2 3EN  
Tel.: 020 7723 4787 • E-mail: [archthyateira@gmail.com](mailto:archthyateira@gmail.com) • Website: [www.thyateira.org.uk](http://www.thyateira.org.uk)



## Synaxarion

### Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross

On this day, the third Sunday in Great Lent, we celebrate the veneration of the precious and Life-giving Cross.

As we have “crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5:24), and will have mortified ourselves during these forty days of the Fast, the precious and Life-giving Cross is now placed before us to refresh our souls and encourage us who may be filled with a sense of bitterness, resentment, and depression.

The Cross reminds us of the Passion of our Lord, and by presenting to us His example, it encourages us to follow Him in struggle and sacrifice, being refreshed, assured, and comforted. In other words, we must experience what the Lord experienced during His Passion – being humiliated in a shameful manner. The Cross teaches us that through pain and suffering we shall see the fulfillment of our hopes: the heavenly inheritance and eternal glory.

As they who walk on a long and hard way and are bowed down by fatigue find great relief and strengthening under the cool shade of a leafy tree, so do we find comfort, refreshment, and rejuvenation under the Life-giving Cross, which our Holy Fathers “planted” on this Sunday. Thus, we are fortified and enabled to continue our Lenten journey with a light step, rested and encouraged. Or, as before the arrival of the king, his royal standards, trophies, and emblems of victory come in procession and then the king himself appears in a triumphant parade, jubilant and rejoicing in his victory and filling those under him with joy, so does the feast of the Cross precede the coming of our King, Jesus Christ. It warns us that He is about to proclaim His victory over death and appear to us in the glory of the Resurrection. His Life-giving Cross is His royal scepter, and by venerating it we are filled with joy, rendering Him glory. Therefore, we become ready to welcome our King, who shall manifestly triumph over the powers of darkness.

The present feast has been placed in the middle of Great Lent for another reason. The Fast can be likened to the spring of Marah whose waters the children of Israel encountered in the wilderness. This water was undrinkable due to its bitterness but became sweet when the Holy Prophet Moses dipped the wood into its depth. Likewise, the wood of the Cross sweetens the days of the Fast, which are bitter and often grievous because of our tears. Yet Christ comforts us during our course through the desert of the Fast, guiding and leading us by His hand to the spiritual Jerusalem on high by the power of His Resurrection.

Moreover, as the Holy Cross is called the Tree of Life, it is placed in the middle of the Fast, as the ancient tree of life was placed in the middle of the garden of Eden. By this, our Holy Fathers wished to remind us of Adam’s gluttony as well as of the fact that through this Tree has condemnation been abolished. Therefore, if we bind ourselves to the Holy Cross, we shall never encounter death but shall inherit life eternal.

### 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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