



# The Tower

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women  
Saint Barbara the Great Martyr Orthodox Church  
Issue 017



## Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Christ is Risen!

On the second Sunday after Pascha we commemorate the Myrrh-bearing women. Last Sunday was Thomas Sunday, and in between we had St. George's day. On Wednesday in the evening we had full Vigil for the Feast of the Great Martyr George. We started at 6.30pm with Vespers and then continued through Matins and the Divine Liturgy finished by 10pm. It was nice to see that a few people stayed until the end of the service. I think that we can offer a Vigil more often for the big feasts during the Liturgical year instead of Matins and Divine Liturgy early in the morning on the Feast day as I think people would attend the services in the evening.

St. George the Great Martyr is a very popular Feast in the Orthodox church and is also the patron saint of this land. It's nice when all Christian groups celebrate the Feast at the same time as the Orthodox, Catholic and Anglican churches all commemorate it on this day. In some cases St. George's day could fall on a different day in the Orthodox church, if the Feast of St. George occurs during Great Lent or Holy Week, the feast is transposed to the Monday after Pascha, the Monday of Bright Week. This is done because the Divine Liturgy is not conducted on the weekdays of Lent, and also because many of the hymns of the Feast are Paschal in nature. Some of the local orthodox churches like the Bulgarian church who use the new calendar move this feast to the old calendar on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May and in this case it always falls outside of Pascha. Nevertheless this is a great feast of very popular Saint, the patron Saint of England.

The Apolytikion hymn for the feast tells in very short version who St. George is:  
*"Liberator of captives, defender of the poor, physician of the sick, and champion of kings*

*O trophy-bearer, Great Martyr George, intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved."*

After Pascha I have received another few emails from people who are interested in Orthodoxy and some of them have already start coming to our services regularly. Glory to God that the young people are interested in the Orthodox church and search for the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I welcome them all and wish that they keep their faith until the last day of their life and may God guide them all.

Fr. John



## Announcements

- His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew will visit our Archdiocese for the Name day of His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2026. More details to follow.
- Online Catechesis group organised by the Archdiocese will restart from 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2026. There is very high interest in this catechesis group. The last cycle started with hundreds of people participating every Tuesday at 7.30pm. Please subscribe earlier via [discoverorthodoxygb@gmail.com](mailto:discoverorthodoxygb@gmail.com)
- I'd really like to introduce a choir training on Saturdays after the Great Vespers for an hour. It will be great if we gather together before the Sunday services and practice a little bit. I understand that it is difficult to join every Saturday after busy work and family responsibilities but I will be in the church every Saturday evening after Vespers (which finishes around 6.30pm) starting from next Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2026. Please come if you can.

## Upcoming Services

|                     |                            |                                  |  |
|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>26 April Sun</b> | <b>10.00am<br/>11.00am</b> | <b>Matins<br/>Divine Liturgy</b> | <b>Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women</b> |
| 29 April Wed        | 6.30pm<br>7.15pm           | Vespers<br>Catechesis            | Apostle James the brother of St John     |
| 2 May Sat           | 5.30pm                     | Great Vespers                    | Martyr Thimoty and Maura                 |
| <b>3 May Sun</b>    | <b>10.00am<br/>11.00am</b> | <b>Matins<br/>Divine Liturgy</b> | <b>Sunday of the Paralytic</b>           |

### A story from Internet

The Sunday of the myrrh bearing women, or ointment-bearing women, is that of the second Sunday after Easter in the Orthodox Church. A group of women accompanied Christ and some ministered to Him out of their own resources. On the morning of the third day after His death they came to the tomb bearing ointments they had prepared to embalm His body. Hence they are called the Ointment-bearing women or Myrrh-bearing women. In the scriptures seven are known by name: Mary Magadalen; Mary the mother of James and wife of Clephas; Joanna, the wife of Chusa, who was steward to Herod Antipas; Salome, the mother of the sons of Zebedee; Suzanna; and Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus.

This icon is a straightforward representation of the Gospel account. We usually see two women bringing their prepared ointments in flasks and an angel, dressed in white sitting on the stone or stone slab at the entrance to the tomb, and pointing to the empty white linen shroud in the tomb and proclaiming the resurrection. Until the seventh century this was probably the most popular iconographic allusion to the resurrection. Its first surviving occurrence was found in the early third century baptistery of the house of Dura Europas. During the course of the seventh century, the icon of the ointment-bearing women at the sepulchre gave way to the image of the victorious Christ harrowing hell and raising Adam and Eve. It also came to be

embodied in the developed narrative iconographic sequence of the Passion images, following the deposition and entombment. An introduction to the feeling of the women as they approach the tomb is found in one of the hymns:

The women bringing spices came to your tomb, O Christ, saw its seals but did not find your undefiled body. Lamenting they made anxious haste and said: "Who has taken our hope away? Who has taken Him dead, naked and anointed, His mother's only consolation? Oh how was He slain, who raised the dead? He who despoiled hell, who was he buried. But rise from the dead Saviour, by your own power, on the third day as you said, and save us."

And elsewhere:

They were startled and seized with terror and intended to flee. But the young man said to them: "Do not be afraid"

In yet another place:

"The holy women carried myrrh to Your tomb with fervour and their souls rejoiced at the sight of a radiant angel."

Some of the themes occurring in the texts There are a number of themes to be found in the poetic hymns used in Vespers, Matins and Lauds on this day. A number are reflections on the womens' reactions on encountering the angel at the tomb and the assurance that Christ is risen. Also quite a few hymns contemplate the angel speaking to the women and exhorting them to announce the good news of Christ's resurrection to the disciples.

### The encounter with the angel

When early in the morning the ointment-bearing women stood before the tomb of the Giver of Life, they saw an angel sitting on the stone. He spoke to them saying: "Why do you seek the living One among the dead? Why do you mourn as if the incorruptible One has suffered corruption? Go to the disciples and proclaim the glad tidings!"

"Ointment-bearing women why have you come to the tomb? Why do you seek the living among the dead? Take courage for the Lord has risen!" Thus spoke the radiant angel.

"Why do you weep as you seek the living One among the dead, since He is Almighty and gives life and immortality, light and great mercy to all."

"Why do you mingle tears with your ointments? The stone has been rolled away, the tomb is empty. Behold corruption has been trampled down by life! Behold the grave seals bear a radiant witness! The guards sleep. All the dead are saved by God. Hades is in mourning! Hasten! With joy, go to the Apostles and tell them: "Christ the firstborn from the dead, He has caused death to die, shall go before you into Galilee."

Behold an angel, bright as lightening, spoke to the women and said: "Why do you seek the living One among the dead, since He is Almighty and grants life and immortality, light and great mercy to all."

A radiant angel, dazzling in beauty, said to the ointment-bearing women "Why are you seeking the living One among the dead? He is risen and has left the tomb empty. Understand that the immutable One has changed corruption into incorruption, and say to God: "How immutable are your works, O God, for you have saved the Human race."

Run to tell the disciples

The news is so awesome and great that the angel reassures the women not to be afraid but RUN to tell the disciples the good news:

"Do not be afraid! The One you are seeking has risen! Come and see the place where the body of Jesus lay! Run to tell the disciples. Tell them: 'The Saviour has risen from the tomb!'

A radiant angel, dazzling in beauty, said to the ointment-bearing women "Why are you seeking the living One among the dead? He is risen and has left the tomb empty. Understand that the immutable One has changed corruption into incorruption, and say to God: "How immutable are your works, O God, for you have saved the Human race."

Run to tell the disciples.

The news is so awesome and great that the angel reassures the women not to be afraid but RUN to tell the disciples the good news:

"Do not be afraid! The One you are seeking has risen! Come and see the place where the body of Jesus lay! Run to tell the disciples. Tell them: 'The Saviour has risen from the tomb!'

...Do not be afraid!"

Furthermore the angel says:

He is the source of Life, the Lord of Life! Do not be afraid O friends of God!" The Lord reigns and grants great mercy to the world.

And the ointment-bearing women are told in the hymn:

"Come back from what you have seen, O women, herald of good tidings. Say to Sion: 'Accept from us the joyful announcement of the resurrection of Christ! O Jerusalem rejoice, exult and leap for joy! For you have seen Christ the King, coming out of the tomb as a fair bridegroom."

"Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord has shone upon you. Rejoice and be glad, O Sion, and you, O pure one, O mother of God, exult in the resurrection of your Son."

So the Sunday of the myrrh-bearing or ointment-bearing women gives further reflection to the joyful Easter message, the heart of the Christian belief that is sung over and again during the Easter season:

"Christ is risen from the dead! He has crushed death by His death. He has bestowed life to those who lay in the tomb."


Christ is risen!

Yes, He is truly risen!



## Weekly announcements

Please see the below important announcements from the Archdiocese.




**DISCOVER**  
*Orthodoxy*

**JOURNEY INTO THE DEPTH AND  
BEAUTY OF THE ANCIENT  
CHRISTIAN FAITH**

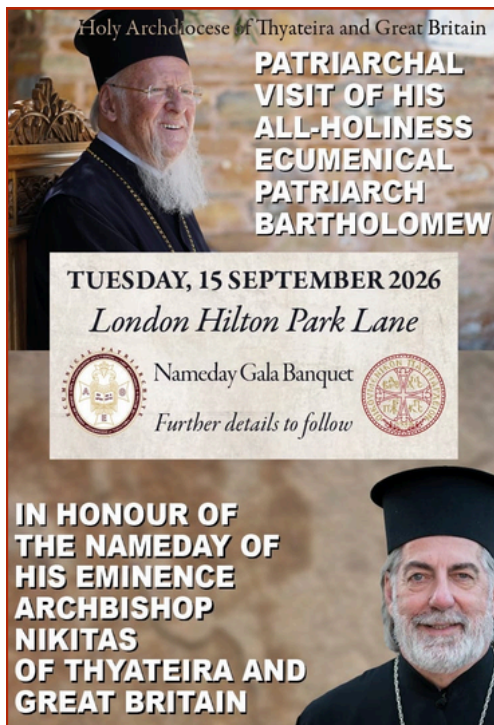
*Weekly sessions  
every Tuesday  
at 19:30 from  
22<sup>nd</sup> September 2026  
live on zoom*

**TO REGISTER**  
*Please use this code*



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discoverorthodoxygb  
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LED BY  
FR GEORGE  
TSIAPPOURDHI





Holy Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain


**PATRIARCHAL  
VISIT OF HIS  
ALL-HOLINESS  
ECUMENICAL  
PATRIARCH  
BARTHOLOMEW**

**TUESDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2026**  
*London Hilton Park Lane*

Nameday Gala Banquet  
*Further details to follow*



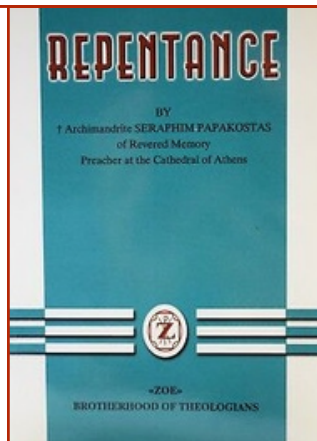
**IN HONOUR OF  
THE NAMEDAY OF  
HIS EMINENCE  
ARCHBISHOP  
NIKITAS  
OF THYATEIRA AND  
GREAT BRITAIN**



## Book recommendation from the Parish Library

Repentance by Archimandrite Seraphim Papacostas (1893–1954) is a profoundly influential, frequently reprinted Orthodox Christian work, often focusing on the necessity of repentance as a "forgotten medicine" for the soul. Archimandrite Seraphim emphasizes that repentance is not merely a theoretical exercise, but a "medicine" that cleanses the filthy soul, making it white as snow. It is viewed as a necessary, life-changing action rather than just a feeling. The work addresses why people avoid confession, provides practical advice on preparing for it, and explains how to behave during and after the process, often using real-life examples.

This book is available in our library; please help yourself and remember to send an email to [library@stbarbara.org.uk](mailto:library@stbarbara.org.uk) when borrowing a book.





## Vigil for St. George's day

On Wednesday evening we served a full Vigil for the Feast of the Great Martyr George. We started at 6.30pm with Vespers and then continued through Matins and the Divine Liturgy finished by 10pm. It was nice to see that a few people stayed until the end of the service. St. George the Great Martyr is a very popular Feast in the Orthodox church and is also the patron saint of this land.

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

Πράξ. στ´, 1-7

Ἐν ταῖς ἡμεραῖς ἐκεῖναις, πληθυνόντων τῶν μαθητῶν, ἐγένετο γογγυσμὸς τῶν Ἑλληνιστῶν πρὸς τοὺς Ἑβραίους, ὅτι παρεθεωροῦντο ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ τῆ καθημερινῇ αἱ χῆραι αὐτῶν. Προσκαλεσάμενοι δὲ οἱ δώδεκα τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν, εἶπον, Οὐκ ἀρεστὸν ἐστὶν ἡμᾶς, καταλείψαντας τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ, διακονεῖν τραπέζαις. Ἐπισκέψασθε οὖν, ἀδελφοί, ἄνδρας ἐξ ὑμῶν μαρτυρουμένους ἐπτά, πλήρεις Πνεύματος Ἁγίου καὶ σοφίας, οὓς καταστήσωμεν ἐπὶ τῆς χρείας ταύτης. Ἡμεῖς δὲ τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ διακονίᾳ τοῦ λόγου προσκαρτερήσωμεν. Καὶ ἤρρεσεν ὁ λόγος ἐνώπιον παντὸς τοῦ πλήθους· καὶ ἐξελέξαντο Στέφανον, ἄνδρα πλήρης πίστεως καὶ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου, καὶ Φίλιππον, καὶ Πρόχορον, καὶ Νικάνορα, καὶ Τίμωνα, καὶ Παρμενᾶν, καὶ Νικόλαον προσήλυτον Ἀντιοχέα, οὓς ἔστησαν ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀποστόλων· καὶ προσευξάμενοι ἐπέθηκαν αὐτοῖς τὰς χεῖρας. Καὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ ἠύξανεν, καὶ ἐπληθύνετο ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν μαθητῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ σφόδρα, πολὺς τε ὄχλος τῶν ἱερέων ὑπήκουον τῇ πίστει.

## EPISTLE READING

Acts 6: 1-7

In those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the body of the disciples and said, it is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word. And what they said pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochoros, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaos, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands upon them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

## 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



## ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Μάρκ. ιε', 43-47 - ιστ', 1-8

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἔλθων Ἰωσήφ ὁ ἀπὸ Ἀρμαθαίας, εὐσχήμων βουλευτῆς, ὃς καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν προσδεχόμενος τὴν Βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, τολήμας εἰσήλθε πρὸς Πιλάτον καὶ ἠτήσατο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. Ὁ δὲ Πιλάτος ἐθαύμασεν εἰ ἤδη τέθνηκε, καὶ

προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν κεντυρίωνα ἐπηρώτησεν αὐτὸν εἰ πάλαι ἀπέθανε· καὶ γνοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ κεντυρίωνος ἐδωρήσατο τὸ σῶμα τῷ Ἰωσήφ. Καὶ ἀγοράσας σινδὸνα καὶ καθεύων αὐτὸν ἐνείλησε τῆ σινδόνι καὶ

κατέθηκεν αὐτὸν ἐν μνημείῳ, ὃ ἦν λελατομημένον ἐκ πέτρας, καὶ προσέκλισε λίθον ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν τοῦ μνημείου. Ἡ δὲ Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ Μαρία Ἰωσή ἐθεώρουν ποῦ τίθεται. Καὶ διαγενομένου τοῦ σαββάτου Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ Μαρία ἡ τοῦ Ἰακώβου καὶ Σαλωμὴ ἠγόρασαν ἀρώματα ἵνα ἐλθοῦσαι ἀλείψωσιν αὐτόν.

Καὶ λιαν πρῶτῃ τῆς μιᾶς σαββάτων ἔρχονται ἐπὶ τὸ μνημεῖον, ἀνατειλάντος τοῦ ἡλίου. Καὶ ἔλεγον πρὸς ἑαυτάς· Τίς ἀποκλιῖσει ἡμῖν τὸν λίθον ἐκ τῆς θύρας τοῦ μνημείου; Καὶ ἀναβλέψασαι θεωροῦσιν ὅτι ἀποκεκλιῖσται ὁ λίθος· ἦν γὰρ μέγας σφῶδρα. Καὶ

εἰσελθοῦσαι εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον εἶδον νεανίσκον καθήμενον ἐν τοῖς δεξιούσι, περιβεβλημένον στολὴν λευκὴν, καὶ ἐξεθαμβήθησαν. Ὁ δὲ λέγει αὐταῖς· μὴ ἐκθαμβείσθε· Ἰησοῦν ζητεῖτε τὸν Ναζαρητῶν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον· ἠγέρθη, οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε. Ἴδε ὁ τόπος ὅπου ἐθήκαν αὐτόν. Ἄλλ'

ὑπάγετε εἰπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ Πέτρῳ ὅτι προ-άγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν· ἐκεῖ αὐτὸν ὄψεσθε, καθὼς εἶπεν ὑμῖν. Καὶ ἐξελθοῦσαι ἔφυγον ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου· εἶχε δὲ αὐτάς τρόμος καὶ ἔκστασις, καὶ οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπον· ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ.



## GOSPEL READING

Mark 15: 43-47 ; 16: 1-8

At that time, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. And Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. And when

he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. And he bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud, and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was laid. And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had

risen. And they were saying to one another, Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb? And looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled back; for it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you. And they went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and

astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.



## SERMON ON THE GOSPEL READING

Today we celebrate the third Sunday of Pascha, commemorating those involved with the burial of Jesus: the Myrrh-bearing Women, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus. Common to all these figures is the way in which they cared so carefully for the body of the dead Jesus: Joseph approached Pilate for the body of Jesus, while the Women and Nicodemus brought spices to anoint his body, to dry it out and so preserve it. All this work was undertaken with great love and toil, but also, in a way, without full knowledge. They worked to preserve the body of Jesus, not knowing that by his death he was conquering death, to live eternally. They wanted to do something they were not able to accomplish, yet by acting with great desire and love, they became agents of an action that was beyond their wildest dreams and expectations.

We, on the other hand, think that we know the whole story. But if we are not afraid, as were the women, we probably don't even realize our ignorance. We already know the ending, and so we tend to be complacent about how we get there. We think: Christ has conquered death ... so I can live my life as I was before and can even continue it on the other side of the grave! We want eternal life, we don't want the cross. The Myrrh-bearers, Joseph, and Nicodemus, on the other hand, worked with zeal and love for the body of Christ not knowing the outcome and with no thought about how it would benefit them.

Having heard the good news, our temptation is to take it on our own terms. And so, our attention is held more by the affairs of this life: we know more about politics, sports, and entertainment than we do about the Scriptures. They lacked the fullness of knowledge, but at least they labored with love; we are willfully ignorant, and work at other goals. It is because of our hard-heartedness that we spend so many weeks preparing ourselves for Pascha, and so many weeks afterwards unpacking the mystery—to make sure we get the point! The light of Pascha enlightens us so that we may no longer live in the darkness of our old ways, but rather in the light that befits children of God, even if only by a glimpse of the first rays of a new day.

It would be a great mistake, however, to think that this doesn't involve toil and labor on our part: to dry out our bodies, our passions, our attachments to all that holds us back and attracts our attention instead of Christ, by preparing ourselves with myrrh, that which is fitting for the dead, so that we ourselves become a sweet smelling offering to God and, from our rock-hard hearts, a place can be carved out where Christ can abide, giving new life to our mortal members. Only if we do so will we find that the stone which lies over our hearts, the sins and passions which weigh us down and make us unable to see or sense God, has been rolled away and the path to the tomb, our heart, the bridal chamber, has been opened.

Only God can remove the stone. But we must walk to the tomb! They had no idea how they were going to remove the stone, yet they went; so too must we, however heavy our sins and passions are, however futile they make us feel that any effort would be. It might seem impossible, but if we begin our walk towards him, we will find that Christ has already accomplished that which is beyond us, changing our stony hearts for hearts of flesh, contrite, merciful, and loving. So let us pray, then that we have the strength to walk to the tomb with the Myrrh-bearers, so we also may truly proclaim to others: Christ is Risen!

Archpriest Prof John Behr

## For your prayers

|          |   |  |
|----------|---|--|
| 26 April | Rebecca Maria Acsinte   | Baptised this day in 2015  |
| 27 April | Michael & Rachel  | Wedded this day in 2014  |
| 28 April | Olivia Anastasia Coroian<br>Christodoulos Daniel Fyles (Priest)<br>Katina Peers | Baptised this day in 2012<br>Chrismated this day in 1989<br>Laid to rest this time in 2017 |
| 30 April | David Orbu  | Baptised this day in 2017  |



## 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. All our finances are in your hands. You are the owners of everything in the church including the building and all the bills.

Please consider supporting your Parish by donating monthly via standing order:  
<https://www.stbarbara.org.uk/church-membership>

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 sign it.

Thank you for your support !



Saint Barbara the Great Martyr Orthodox Church  
Overleigh Cemetary, Overleigh Road, Chester, CH4 7HW  
<https://www.stbarbara.org.uk/>

