



The Tower

Saint Barbara the Great Martyr Orthodox Church
Sunday 14th June 2026
2nd Sunday of Matthew (All Saints of Britain)
Issue 024



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This Sunday we complete the first week of the Apostle fast. I was absent last Sunday because I was serving the church in Manchester. The people in the church send their greetings to St. Barbara and thank you for your help. The Manchester church is the oldest Greek Orthodox Church in this land. It is a big community, and this is a very good opportunity for us to connect with other people and to invite other Orthodox Christians to visit our church. A few people have been interested in coming to our pilgrimage to Holywell and to do the famous night walk to Holywell.

During this week, there was also the name day of Our Patriarch Bartholomew. The day was celebrated at the birthplace of Patriarch Bartholomew in the village of Agios Theodoros on the Island of Imbros. The Patriarchs of Bulgaria and Romania were also present at the celebration. May God grant to His All Holiness many years of service to the Holy Orthodox Church.

On Wednesday we had a guest speaker in the church. Theo Andreou presented his book "Temple of God." About 20 people came to this event, even though it was the middle of the week. It was a great evening, and Theo delivered a very interesting and enlightening speech. After that, we had time for questions and discussion, and it was a very good and lively discussion about the Mother of God, the Theotokos. At the end, we had time to speak with the author and also to buy the book. Theo is a fantastic young man with a real talent for speaking and delivering difficult theological subjects in a very understandable and simple language. His book is also very good and is available in our library. Please borrow it and read it. Huge thanks to Theo for his time, and we wish him all the wisdom in his future theological works.

He also spoke a little bit about TMES, Thyateira Midlands Ecclesiastical Seminary. He is one of the lecturers there, and TMES is a fantastic place for the development of people who are interested in serving the Orthodox Church.

in any possible way. If you have the desire and are interested to know more about this, please come and speak to me. The church needs more people to serve all the time, everybody with their talent. Without your service and help, many things will be impossible. I personally thank you for your support in every aspect.

During this week, I also received a delivery for new stock for our shop in the kitchen area. There are a lot of new and very nice items that are a must for every Orthodox home. We have very nice icons in two sizes, crosses of any kind, even for your car, magnets, key holders, cards, incense, and many more. Everything will be displayed shortly.

I would also like to announce that now we have a new Gospel Book for altar use. The book has the readings for every day of the Liturgical year in English, and there is no need to add printed pages to the Gospel every week anymore. Soon we will also order a cover for it. Thank you for your generosity. Thank you all for your help and cooperation. May God bless you all!

John

Announcements

- As I announced in the WhatsApp group, please be careful where you park in the cemetery. Avoid parking around the memorial cenotaph in the middle of the cemetery. The alleys are not in good condition and the road collapses in a few places. I hope the authorities will repair it soon. Please, be careful; we should not lose the comfort of parking in the cemetery.
- People who look after the cemetery found some wobbly gravestones outside. Please look after the children because they play in the cemetery. Tell them to be very careful and to stay away from the gravestones; they could be dangerous. Thank you for your cooperation.

Upcoming Services

17 Jun Wed	6.30pm 7.15pm	Vespers Catechesis	Martyr Leontius and those with Him
20 Jun Sat	5.30pm	Great Vespers	Martyr Julian
21 Jun Sun	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	3rd Sunday of Matthew
23 Jun Tuesday	6.30pm	Great vespers	Nativity of the Forerunner
24 Jun Wed	9.00am 6.30pm 7.15pm	Divine Liturgy Vespers Catechesis	Nativity of St. John the Baptist Apodosis of the Forerunner
27 Jun Sat	5.30pm	Great Vespers	Relics of the Unmersanaries Cyril and John
28 Jun Sun	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	4th Sunday of Matthew

Announcement

His All Holyness Name Day



Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (born Dimitrios Archontonis, 29 February 1940) is the current Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, serving as the 270th successor of the Apostolic See of St. Andrew. Since his election on 22 October 1991, he has become the longest-serving Ecumenical Patriarch in history. As the *primus inter pares* (first among equals), he occupies the First See of the Eastern Orthodox Church, acting as the highest-ranking primate and the spiritual leader of Eastern Orthodox Christianity worldwide.

Bartholomew I was born in the village of Agios Theodoros (officially called Zeytinliköy) on the island of Imbros. Following his studies, he held a prominent position at the Theological School of Halki, where he was ordained a priest. Prior to his election and enthronement as patriarch, he served as Metropolitan of Philadelphia and later of Chalcedon, and was an influential member of the Holy and Sacred Synod, shaping the Ecumenical Patriarchate's modern trajectory

A story from Internet

In certain parts of the Church, especially those influenced by Russian practice, there has grown up a tradition that it is not possible to receive holy communion unless you have first made a confession. In many places the result has been that only the clergy and children receive holy communion. But what was the original practice? What should we now do?

First of all we must answer the question: is there a connection between receiving communion and sin? To which the answer is, yes! In St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians he explains the Tradition he received about the Last Supper and then says this "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks the Lord's cup in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." Then he says "But let everyone do a self-examination, and then eat the bread and drink the cup. For whoever eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks judgement to himself, if such a one does not discern the body of the Lord." (1 Corinthians 11:26-29)

So what did St Paul mean? The universal understanding of the Fathers is that here St Paul was meaning that those who did not believe, those who were not Christians, those who were seriously sinful, should abstain from communion, examine themselves and repent. This is why he says "Let everyone do a self examination" but notice he says "everyone" because he was assuming that normally everyone would receive communion at every Liturgy. It was also assumed that after Baptism Christians would not sin again! This sounds extraordinary to us, because our understanding of sin has changed. The early Church understanding was that you would not break any of the Ten Commandments and above all that you would not apostatise i.e. in time of persecution, deny Christ. Now as time went on there were Christians who did apostatise, but afterwards repented and wanted to be received back into the Church. From this arose the practice of confession where the sinner could be restored through confession and absolution by the Church and be restored to full Communion. (There was a considerable amount of disagreement about this. Those who were not prepared to forgive, separated from the Church forming schismatic groups). After the time of Constantine the Great large numbers of people were received into the Church some of whom had entered "without a wedding garment" i.e. insincerely or they were committing serious sins like murder and adultery. In those days everyone knew more or less everyone else's business, so there were strong objections to such people receiving communion. As a result they were excommunicated and had to fulfil penances, often of several years. They would be received back into communion with the Church after confession and penance. Gradually a number of different traditions started to develop in the Church, partly through the influence of Monasticism and partly due to the rise of Scholasticism in the West. The development led to lay people receiving communion less and less frequently and it was expected for people to go to confession from time to time.

In the West the practice of receiving communion became infrequent and eventually lay people would receive communion only once a year at Pascha, and however often they communicated they would be required to go to confession first. So the two Mysteries became linked. In the Orthodox World there was no such link, but for all sorts of reasons lay people tended to receive communion fairly infrequently.

In Russia, through the influence of Czar Peter the Great and western Latin influences the Church started to adopt a number of Roman Catholic customs. This was particularly the work of Peter of Mogila, Abbot of the Kiev Caves Monastery and then Metropolitan of Kiev. He introduced much Roman Catholic theology and practice, and so a link between confession and communion was established – pure Roman Catholicism.

In Greece and other places under the Turkish yoke, because priests were likely to be tortured by the Turks if they heard confessions, an entirely different practice evolved, where those wishing to receive communion were required to fast for three days prior to receiving Communion. This might involve fasting on Saturday which is strictly forbidden in the Canons!

Father Alexander Schmemmann, a Russian Orthodox priest, has this to say:-

"What we need then is, first of all, the real rediscovery in the Church and by her faithful members, of the true meaning of the Eucharist as the Sacrament of the Church, as that essential act in which she always becomes what she is: the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Spirit, the gift of new life, the manifestation of the Kingdom of God and communion with Him. The Church becomes all this by the "sacrament of gathering" – many coming together to constitute the Church, by offering as one body united by one faith, one love, one hope, the Holy Oblation, by offering "with one mouth and one heart" the Eucharist, and by sealing this unity – in Christ with God, and in Christ with one another – in the partaking of the Holy Gifts.

What we need furthermore is the rediscovery of Holy Communion as the essential food uniting us to Christ, making us partakers of His Life, Death and Resurrection, as the very means of our fulfilling ourselves as members of the Church and of our spiritual life and growth.

What we need finally is the rediscovery of the true meaning of preparation as the very focus of our spiritual life, as that spiritual effort which always reveals to us our unworthiness and makes us therefore desire the Sacrament of healing and forgiveness, and which by revealing to us the unfathomable depth of Christ's love for us, makes us love Him and desire to be united with Him."

(Great Lent: Journey to Pascha)

Now, as we approach Great Lent, it is a good time to look at our lives and consider how we as individuals, prepare ourselves to receive communion, praying and fasting as the Church directs and attending services and reading the Scriptures – especially the New Testament.

Fr. Stephen Maxfield

* This material is taken from the website of the Shrewsbury Orthodox Church



Synaxarion St Bartholomew

Saint Bartholomew was one of the Twelve Apostles, and had Galilee as his homeland; this is all that is known of him for certain according to the history of the Gospels. Concerning his apostolic work, certain say that he preached in Arabia and Persia, and especially in India, bringing to them the Gospel written by Saint Matthew, which had been written originally in Hebrew, and which was found there one hundred years later by Pantaenus, formerly a stoic philosopher and later an illustrious teacher of the Christian school in Alexandria (see Eusebius, Eccl. Hist., 5: 10). Other accounts say that he went to Armenia. According to some, he ended his life by being crucified, or by being flayed alive, in Albanopolis (Urbanopolis) of Armenia. This also confirms an ancient tradition preserved by the Armenians. According to some, Bartholomew and Nathanael are the same person, because the Evangelists who mention Bartholomew do not mention

Nathanael; and John, who alone mentions Nathanael as one of the Twelve, says nothing of Bartholomew. Indeed, Bartholomew is a patronymic, "son of Talmai," which means "bold, spirited" (see also Jesus of Navi 15:14; II Kings 3:3), and Nathanael could have had this as a surname. According to the Synaxarion of the Menaion on April 22, however, it is Simon the Zealot and Nathanael who are the same; the Evangelists who mention Simon the Zealot (or "the Canaanite") do not mention Nathanael.

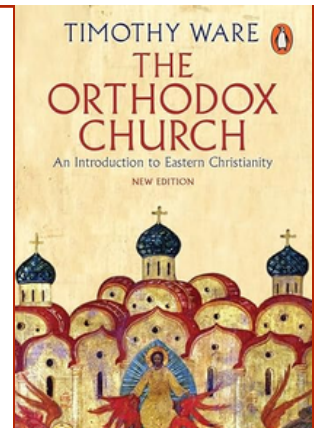
Apolytikion of Apostle Bartholomew

Third Tone

O Holy Apostles, intercede to our merciful God, that He may grant our souls forgiveness of sins.

Book recommendation from the Parish Library

Since its first publication fifty years ago, Timothy Ware's book has become established throughout the English-speaking world as the standard introduction to the Orthodox Church. Orthodoxy continues to be a subject of enormous interest among western Christians, and the author believes that an understanding of its standpoint is necessary before the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches can be reunited. In this revised and updated edition he explains the Orthodox views on such widely ranging matters as Ecumenical Councils, Sacraments, Free Will, Purgatory, the Papacy and the relation between the different Orthodox Churches



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

Ρωμ. β´, 10-16

Ἀδελφοί, δόξα καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη
παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν,
Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι· οὐ γὰρ
ἐστὶν προσωποληψία παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ.
Ὅσοι γὰρ ἀνόμως ἤμαρτον, ἀνόμως καὶ
ἀπολοῦνται· καὶ ὅσοι ἐν νόμῳ ἤμαρτον, διὰ
νόμου κριθήσονται· οὐ γὰρ οἱ ἄκροαταὶ τοῦ
νόμου δίκαιοι παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ, ἀλλ' οἱ ποιηταὶ
τοῦ νόμου δικαιωθήσονται. Ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη
τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου
ποιῇ, οὗτοι, νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες, ἑαυτοῖς
εἰσὶν νόμος· οἵτινες ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον
τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν,
συμμαρτυροῦσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως,
καὶ μεταξύ ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν κατη-
γορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων, ἐν
ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε κρινεῖ ὁ Θεὸς τὰ κρυπτά τῶν
ανθρώπων, κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου, διὰ
Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

EPISTLE READING

Rom. 2: 10-16

Brethren, glory and honor and peace
for every one who does good, the Jew
first and also the Greek. For God shows no
partiality. All who have sinned without the
law will also perish without the law, and
all who have sinned under the law will be
judged by the law. For it is not the hearers
of the law who are righteous before God, but
the doers of the law who will be justifi ed.
When Gentiles who have not the law do by
nature what the law requires, they are a
law to themselves, even though they do not
have the law. They show that what the law
requires is written on their hearts, while
their conscience also bears witness and
their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps
excuse them on that day when, according
to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men
by Christ Jesus.

ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΜΟΝ ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ

Ύμνος α´.

Τοῦ λίθου σφραγισθέντος ὑπὸ τῶν
Ἰουδαίων καὶ στρατιωτῶν φυλασ-
σόντων τὸ ἄχραντόν σου Σῶμα, ἀνέστης
τρίημερος, Σωτὴρ, δωροῦμενος τῷ κόσμῳ
τὴν ζωὴν· διὰ τοῦτο αἱ δυνάμεις τῶν
οὐρανῶν ἐβόων σοι, Ζωοδότα· Δόξα τῇ
Ἀναστάσει σου, Χριστέ, δόξα τῇ βασιλείᾳ
σου, δόξα τῇ οἰκονομίᾳ σου, μόνε φιλάν-
θρωπε.

RESURRECTION APOLYTIKION

1st Mode

When the stone had been sealed by
the Jews, and while soldiers were
guarding your most pure Body, you rose,
O Saviour, on the third day, giving life to
the world; therefore the heavenly Powers
cried out to you, Giver of life: Glory to
your Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to your
Kingdom! Glory to your dispensation, only
Lover of mankind!



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)



ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Μαθ. δ', 18-23

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, περιπατῶν ὁ Ἰησοῦς παρά τὴν θάλασσαν τῆς Γαλιλαίας εἶδε δύο ἀδελφούς, Σίμωνα τὸν λεγόμενον Πέτρον καὶ Ἀνδρέαν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, βάλλοντας ἀμφίβληστρον εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν· ἦσαν γὰρ ἀλιεῖς· καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· δεῦτε ὀπίσω μου καὶ ποιήσω ὑμᾶς ἀλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων. οἱ δὲ εὐθέως ἀφέντες τὰ δίκτυα ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ. Καὶ προβάς ἐκεῖθεν εἶδεν ἄλλους δύο ἀδελφούς, Ἰάκωβον τὸν τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου καὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ μετὰ Ζεβεδαίου τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῶν καταρτίζοντα τὰ δίκτυα αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐκάλεσεν αὐτούς. οἱ δὲ εὐθέως ἀφέντες τὸ πλοῖον καὶ τὸν πατέρα αὐτῶν ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ. Καὶ περιήγεν ὅλην τὴν Γαλιλαίαν ὁ Ἰησοῦς διδάσκων ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν καὶ κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας καὶ θεραπειῶν πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν ἐν τῷ λαῷ.



GOSPEL READING

Matt. 4: 18-23

At that time, as Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And he said to them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left their boat and their father, and followed him. And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.



SERMON ON THE GOSPEL READING

Dear brethren, I would like to share a few thoughts with you about one of the most frequently used and most important words in our vocabulary. I am speaking about the word love. It is a word we all use. It is something we all desire to be the object of. Love is a word the Church uses continuously. But it is the same word that is used by the world, in songs, in poems and in other expressions of the human spirit. The question is, whilst we may be using the same word, do we use it with the same meaning? The Fathers of our Church were not primarily concerned with words but with their content. When the Fathers would engage in dogmatical dispute, it was never solely over words, but over their meaning.

My impression is that though the world and the Church both speak about love their meaning not only differs, but is diametrically opposed. The one is sheer selfishness, whilst the other is utterly selfless. When the world says I love this or that person, this or that group, type of food etc., it is simply expressing what it likes, what 'I' like and what makes 'me' feel happy. It is, therefore, basically selfish and egotistic. But when the Church invites us to love, it is not telling us to do what we like, but what the other likes, or rather what the other needs. Worldly love is selfish, whilst Gospel love is selfless. The world tells us to think of 'number one'. That is not completely true. Yes, think of number one; that is correct. But who is number one? The deceitful world will say you are, while the Church will say, no, God and your brother is.

There are three categories of person that we can love: ourselves, our neighbour (other people) and God. Just as in the parable of the talents, where a man called his servants and distributed his goods, so does God distribute to us a certain capital, a certain amount of love. We, just as those servants were, are entirely free to barter with this capital of love as we see fit.

The world invites us selfishly to keep all this capital for ourselves, to love ourselves and no one else, unless they serve our self-interest. Contrariwise, the Church invites us to put ourselves to the side and to invest all our love in God and in our neighbour. That is how we make the capital of love grow and bear fruit, by giving it to the other. He who selfishly keeps this love for himself can be likened to a battery which instead of externalizing its energy, greedily keeps it for itself and ends up self-eroding and self-destructing. This is how one contemporary saint described depression. When you keep all your love for yourself, you end up destroying yourself.

Therefore, brethren, let us thank God for the capital of love He has freely and generously bestowed upon us. Let us barter wisely, for example, the Gospel tells us to repay evil with good. Let us be shrewd merchants. Let us not be another Scrooge with our love, thinking just of ourselves. But let us put God first in our lives - and out of love for God - let us love our neighbour as He commands us and as Christ has shown us. And when the day of judgement comes, may we hear, to our humble astonishment, the Lord welcoming us into His Kingdom.

Hieromonk Bartholomew



For your prayers

30 May	Michalis	Laid in Rest this day 2026
June	Kristiyan	Baptised 2026
June	Slava	Baptised tis day 2000
June	Lily-Mae	Laid in rest 2026
June	Owen	Laid in rest 2026
June	James	Laid in rest 2026
June	Ciara	Laid in rest 2026



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 !



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