



The Tower

Saint Barbara the Great Martyr Orthodox Church

Sunday 12th July 2026

6th Sunday of Matthew
Issue 028



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We've approached the 6th Sundy of Mathew and it is already the middle of July. The hot weather is back in the UK and the whole week was one big tropical heat wave. Last Thursday marked the Feast of the Great Martyr Pancratios and last Sunday Father Pancratios was with us and we all sang Many Years to him. May God bless him with good health and many more years. Thank you Fr. Pancratios for your service to the community. On Wednesday evening, 8th of July, we served Great Vespers for the Feast of St. Pancratios, and after the service we had a very nice Catechesis gathering with a few people. At the moment we are doing the Catechesis outside and in the upcoming weeks we may move behind the church because it's a nice and cool spot and in the evening it's a very calm and peaceful place. If you come late, please check behind the church.

Last week I advertised a retreat organised by Thyateira Midlands Ecclesiastical Seminary (TMES). It is very profitable for people who serve (or would like to) as chanters, readers and so on. These gatherings are very important. It is always good when the churches in the Archdiocese do everything in the same uniform and organised way. That is the way for all chanters to feel comfortable in the services, and in any situation. If you have time please join this gathering during the last weekend of August. Advertisement and contact details are on the following page.

On Saturday 11th of July during the Great Vespers and Artoklasia we honoured Saint Paisios of Mounth Athos and St. Sophrony of Essex. It is important for us as Orthodox Christians to venerate our local Saints. For this reason I would like to pin few important events that will take place in the next few weeks.

On Saturday the 1st of August, in Oswestry, at the Parish church of St. Oswald (SY11 2SY) we will serve Matins at 9.00am, Divine Liturgy at 10am, Venerations of the relics of St. Oswald

and a Pilgrimage to St. Oswald Holy Well at 11.30am. Then we will have refreshments and hear a talk from Fr. Panteleimon Maxfield on "The Transfiguration". Please come to this event.

On Saturday the 8th of August we will have our pilgrimage to the place of St. Plegmund. It is just a 15 min drive away from our church, in the village of Mikle Traford, just outside of Chester.

Here we will do a Blessing of the Waters, then we will come back to our church and will serve Great Vespers followed by light refreshments. Note that during this time it will be a fasting period. If you do bring food, please do it accordance with the fasting rules of the Orthodox church.

Fr. John



Announcements

- Please note that I have plan to move Sunday Services one hour earlier in order to finish in the first half of the day. The people will have more time for their families on Sunday and The Archdiocese also advise to start earlier on Sunday, and Divine Liturgy to finish before the middle of the day. If you like to discuss this matter with me before I move it, you are all more than welcome.

Upcoming Services

12 July Sun	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	6 th Sunday of Matthew
15 July Wed	6.30pm 7.15pm	Vespers Catechesis	Hieromartyr Athenogenes
18 July Sat	5.30pm	Great Vespers	St. Macrina
19 July Sun	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the 4 th EC
22 July Wed	6.30pm 7.15pm	Vespers Catechesis	Hieromartyr Phocas
25 July Sat	5.30pm	Great Vespers	Martyr Hermolaos and his Companions
26 July Sun	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	8 th Sunday of Matthew

Announcement

This August Bank Holiday, Thyateira Midlands Ecclesiastical Seminary will host a residential Liturgical Workshop in Walsingham for choir members, parish readers, and lay people who want to serve the worshipping life of the Church with greater confidence.

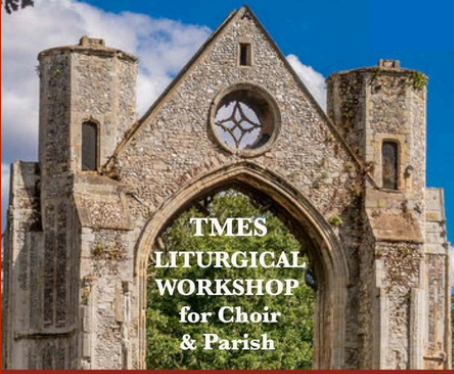
TMES Liturgical Workshop for Choir and Parish
28th–31st August Bank Holiday
Venue: The Anglican Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, The Milner Wing, Common Place, Walsingham, NR22 6BP
Residential: £360, including three days, meals, and accommodation
Booking deposit: £120
Single day: £75
Enquiries and bookings:
melangell.tmes@gmail.com

<https://tmes.org.uk/index.php/2026/06/12/learning-to-serve-the-church-tmes-liturgical-workshop-at-walsingham-28-31st-august/>



A Weekend at Walsingham

28th -31st August Bank Holiday



TMES LITURGICAL WORKSHOP for Choir & Parish

YOUR CHURCH - YOUR SERVICE - YOUR PARTICIPATION

- ✦ Learn the structure of services
- ✦ Work with Liturgical texts
- ✦ Divide into small groups to serve Services in the 3 Orthodox churches
- ✦ Becoming a Reader
- ✦ Singing in Choir
- ✦ Lay men & women

Venue: The Anglican Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, The Milner Wing, Common Place, Walsingham NR22 6BP
Cost: Residential £360 (3 days, meals, booking deposit included); Single day £75.00
Enquiries & Bookings: contact the TMES Registrar: melangell.tmes@gmail.com
Hosted by TMES, the Thyateira & Midlands Ecclesiastical Seminary <https://tmes.org.uk/>
TMES is a teaching Seminary blessed by His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain

✦ Book now to ensure your place: booking deposit £120
✦ Empowering Orthodox Leaders for Tomorrow ✦



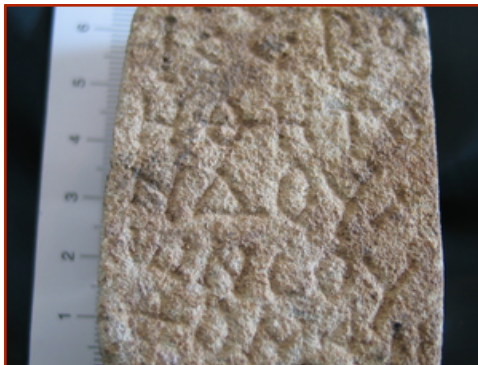
Relics of St John the Baptist

In 2010, archaeologist Kazimir Popkonstantiv discovered a bone box while excavating the Sveti Ivan (St. John) church on an island in Bulgaria. Found alongside ancient Greek inscriptions mentioning John the Baptist, the box contained six human bones that have been considered possible relics of the Saint. New research, published on June 15, 2012 by Oxford University, examines evidence from the Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit to indicate that the bones do, in fact, date to the first century C.E. Moreover, additional research conducted at the University of Copenhagen indicates that the bones are from the same individual, and the DNA (mtDNA haplotype) suggests he was likely a male from the Middle East. Oxford and Copenhagen researchers have explicitly stated that there is no definitive connection to John the Baptist; however, they were surprised to see the antiquity of bones that historical records associate with the Baptist.



Biblical and historical accounts say that John the Baptist, who is referenced as a relative of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke and a leading prophet who baptized Jesus, was beheaded by Herod Antipas, likely at the Jordanian citadel Machaerus. The discovery of an ancient Greek inscription on a tuff box referencing John the Baptist and asking God to “help your servant Thomas” led Bulgarian researchers to believe that the relics arrived in Bulgaria from Antioch, where some of the Baptist’s bones

were held until the tenth century C.E. The waterproof tuff box, likely carried by this “Thomas,” likely originated in eastern Turkey.



Oxford University’s Georges Kazan explored historical documents for a different account of how the relics may have reached the Sveti Ivan church. According to Kazan, in the fourth century C.E., monks took relics of John the Baptist’s from Jerusalem to Constantinople. In the Oxford report, Dr. Kazan states “My research suggests that during the fifth or early sixth century, the monastery of Sveti Ivan may well have received a significant portion of St John the Baptist’s relics, as well as a prestige reliquary in the shape of a sarcophagus, from a member of Constantinople’s elite. This gift could have been to dedicate or rededicate the church and the monastery to St John, which the patron or patrons may have supported financially.

“The confirmed date of a knucklebone is far from final proof that the Bulgarian bones belonged to John the Baptist. A conclusive association between supposed relics and their Saint is impossible to establish; however, the research conducted by Oxford’s Tom Higham and Christopher Ramsey does prove that the “relics” have a better case for authenticity than previously imagined. You can venerate the relics of St. John the Baptist in the coastal town of Sozopol in Bulgaria

<https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/news/relics-associated-with-john-the-baptist-dated-to-the-first-century-c-e/>



Synaxarion

Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel

It is believed that the Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel was transferred to this day from March 26 so that it could be celebrated more festively than in the period of the Great Fast; and, in fact, all the miracles of the Archangel are celebrated on this feast day, which has been listed here in the church books since the ninth century.

Apolytikion of Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel

Fourth Tone

O Commanders of the Heavenly Host, we the unworthy beseech you, that through your entreaties you will fortify us, guarding us in the shelter of the wings of your ethereal glory, even as we fervently bow before you crying: "Deliver us from all danger, as Commanders of the Powers on high!"

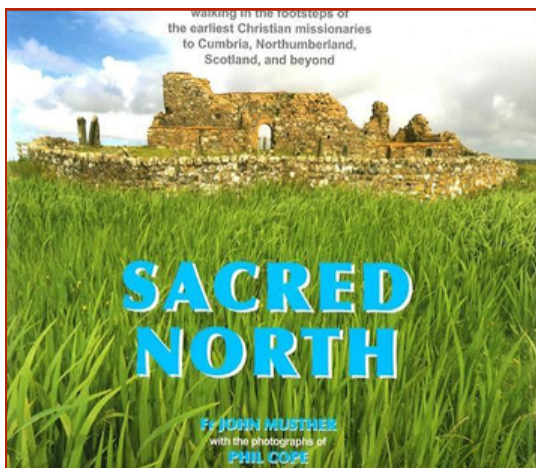
Kontakion of Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel

Plagal of the Second Tone

As thou beholdest the glory of God in Heaven, and on earth dost bestow grace from on high, O leader of Angels, wise Gabriel, minister of the glory of God, and divine defender of the world, save and keep them that cry to thee: Be thyself our helper, and no one can be against us.

Book recommendation from the Parish Library

Sacred North is a 300-page, lavishly illustrated book that explores the early Christian heritage, holy wells, and saints of Northern England. It was co-authored by the late **Father John Musther** (an Orthodox priest based in the Lake District) and photographer **Phil Cope**, and published by Culture and Democracy Press in 2018. The book takes readers on a geographical and historical journey through Northern England—particularly Cumbria and Northumberland—tracing the footsteps of the earliest Celtic and Anglo-Saxon missionaries. Father John Musther, who passed away in February 2023 at the age of 82, dedicated years of research to rediscovering these nearly forgotten local saints and early Christian shrines.



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. ιβ´, 6-14

Ἀδελφοί, ἔχοντες δὲ χάρισμα κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν διάφορα, εἴτε προφητείαν, κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως· εἴτε διακονίαν, ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ· εἴτε ὁ διδάσκων, ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ· εἴτε ὁ παρακαλῶν, ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει· ὁ μεταδιδούς, ἐν ἀπλότητι· ὁ προϊ-στάμενος, ἐν σπουδῇ· ὁ ἐλεῶν, ἐν ἰλαρότητι. Ἡ ἀγάπη ἀνυπόκριτος. Ἀποστυγοῦντες τὸ πονη-ρόν, κολλώμενοι τῷ ἀγαθῷ. Τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι· τῇ τιμῇ ἀλλήλους προηγούμενοι· τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροί· τῷ Πνεύματι ζέοντες· τῷ Κυρίῳ δουλεύοντες· τῇ ἐλπίδι χαίροντες· τῇ θλίψει ὑπομένοντες· τῇ προσευχῇ προσκαρτεροῦντες· ταῖς χρεῖαις τῶν ἁγίων κοινωνοῦντες· τὴν φιλοξενίαν διώκοντες. Εὐλογεῖτε τοὺς διώκοντας ὑμᾶς· εὐλογεῖτε, καὶ μὴ καταράσθε.

EPISTLE READING

Rom. 12: 6-14

Brethren, having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΜΟΝ ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ

Ύχος πλ. α΄

Τὸν συνάναρχον Λόγον Πατρὶ καὶ Πνεύματι, τὸν ἐκ Παρθένου τεχθέντα εἰς σωτηρίαν ἡμῶν, ἀνυμνήσωμεν, πιστοὶ καὶ προσκυνήσωμεν· ὅτι ἠυδόκησε, σαρκὶ ἀνελθεῖν ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ, καὶ θάνατον ὑπομεῖναι, καὶ ἐγεῖραι τοὺς τεθνεώτας, ἐν τῇ ἐνδόξῳ Ἀναστάσει αὐτοῦ.

ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΠΑΪΣΙΟΥ

Ύχος α΄. Τῆς ἐρήμου πολίτης.

Τῶν Φαράσων τὸν γόνον, καὶ τοῦ Ἀθωνος κλέισμα, καὶ τῶν ἀπ' αἰῶνος ὁσίων, μιμητὴν καὶ ἰσότιμον, Παῖσιον τιμήσωμεν πιστοὶ, τὸ σκεῦος χαρισμάτων τὸ μεστόν, ὡς φυλάσσοντα ἐκ πάντων τῶν λυπηρῶν, τοὺς πίστει ἀνακράζοντας, δόξα τῷ δεδωκότι σοι ἰσχύν, δόξα τῷ σὲ στεφανώσαντι, δόξα τῷ ἐνεργοῦντι διὰ σοῦ, πᾶσιν ἰάματα.



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.

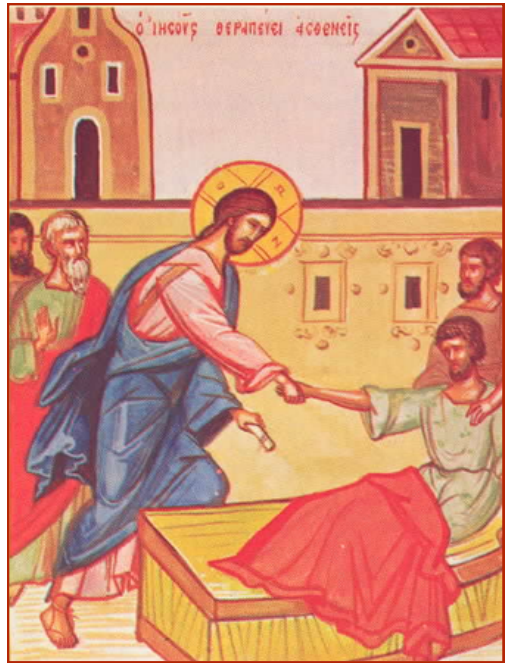
Instagram: [COTY_org](https://www.instagram.com/COTY_org)



ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Ματθ. θ', 1-8

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἐμβὰς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς πλοῖον διεπέρασε καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν πόλιν. Καὶ ἰδοὺ προσέφερον αὐτῷ παραλυτικὸν ἐπὶ κλίνῃς βεβλημένον· καὶ ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν εἶπε τῷ παραλυτικῷ· θάρσει, τέκνον· ἀφέωνται σοὶ αἱ ἁμαρτίαι σου. καὶ ἰδοὺ τινες τῶν γραμματέων εἶπον ἐν ἑαυτοῖς· οὗτος βλασφημεῖ. καὶ ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν εἶπεν· ἵνα τί ὑμεῖς ἐνθυμεῖσθε πονηρὰ ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν; τί γὰρ ἐστὶν εὐκοπώτερον, εἰπεῖν, ἀφέωνται σοὶ αἱ ἁμαρτίαι, ἢ εἰπεῖν, ἐγείρε καὶ περιπάτει; ἵνα δὲ εἰδῇτε ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀφίεναι μαρτίας - τότε λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ· ἐγερθεὶς ἄρον σου τὴν κλίνην καὶ ὕπαγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου. καὶ ἐγερθεὶς ἀπῆλθεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ. ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ ὄχλοι ἐθαύμασαν καὶ ἐδόξασαν τὸν Θεὸν τὸν δόντα ἐξουσίαν τοιαύτην τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.



GOSPEL READING

Matt. 9: 1-8

At that time, getting into a boat Jesus crossed over and came to his own city. And behold, they brought to him a paralytic, lying on his bed; and when Jesus saw their faith he said to the paralytic, Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven. And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, This man is blaspheming. But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say 'Rise and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins he then said to the paralytic, Rise, take up your bed and go home. And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.



SERMON ON THE GOSPEL READING

In the Epistle reading for today St Paul writes to the Church in Rome and provides teaching for the community there as to how they should live their lives as Christians. The teaching is as valid for us now as it was for those to whom it was addressed, it ends: 'Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them' (Rom. 12:14). It's fascinating to wonder what was going through St Paul's mind when he wrote that, given he himself had persecuted the Church before his repentance and conversion. The Gospels present us with many tests of our faith, not least of all is love for our enemies. By 'enemy' we can potentially understand anyone who has wronged us, from the gravest of acts to the most minor of annoyances.

The command is stark – not just to avoid revenge, not just to tolerate enemies but to love them, to bless them, to pray for them. In the Old Testament restraint and proportionality are urged – 'an eye for an eye' – but in the New Testament we have the command in its fullness, nowhere more clearly than in Christ's words on the Cross: 'Father forgive them, they know not what they do' (Luke 23:34). When someone wrongs us we must realise the true enemy is a common one. Whenever we sin we turn away from our true calling, we should therefore have compassion on those who wrong us because they have fallen into the trap of the evil one. St John of Kronstadt writes: "Every person that does any evil, that gratifies any passion, is sufficiently punished by the evil he has committed, by the passion he serves... it would therefore be insane and most inhuman to nourish anger against such a man; it would be the same as to drown a sinking man, or to push into the fire a person who is already being devoured by the flame" (My Life in Christ, St John of Kronstadt - (<https://ccel.org/ccel/kronstadt/christlife/christlife.ii.html>)).

Perhaps another good reason to love one's enemies is found in the constant teaching of the Fathers regarding stillness and inner peace. There is nothing that disturbs inner peace like a grudge, a wrong once committed upon us becomes an open wound in our soul if we drag it out by keeping grudges or seeking revenge. The only way out of the vicious cycle is love, as St Peter writes: 'Do not repay evil for evil or insult for insult. Instead, repay with a blessing, because to this you were called, so that you may inherit a blessing' (1 Peter 3:9). Our challenge is that this is not how society has conditioned us to behave, we react harshly or defensively and we justify our behaviour and seek justification from others. We need to be alert and attentive to how we behave when we are wronged so that we can learn.

We can even go so far as to say that if we cannot learn to love enemies we cannot truly love God: 'If anyone says, "I love God", and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen' (1 John 4:20). If God is kind even to the evil and ungrateful so must we be too. By the logic of the world this is madness, but the wisdom of the world is not God's wisdom. Loving those who wrong you, beginning with earnestly praying for them, is the only way to break the cycle of evil in the world. What's more, in this lies the measure of your faith, your ability to love everyone - without exception - even, perhaps most especially, those the world tells you to hate.

"Bless my enemies, O Lord.. Enemies have driven me into Thy embrace more than friends have."

– St Nikolai Velimirovic ('Lord, Bless my Enemies' - <https://www.orthodox.net/trebnic/lord-bless-my-enemies.html>)

Presbyter Steven Morys Ireland

For your prayers

7 July	Michalis	Laid to rest this day in 2026
12 July	Cristian Rhys Dumitrescu	Baptised this day in 2015
14 July	Iolanthe Lydia Deakin Alexander Petsas	Baptised this day in 2012 Baptised this day in 2013
17 July	Sebastain Modori Dianelle Maddox	Baptised this day in 2011 Chrismated this day in 2011
18 July	Sophia Mary Kolokotroni	Baptised this day in 2010



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 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 sign it.

Thank you for your support !



Saint Barbara the Great Martyr Orthodox Church
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