



The Tower

Saint Barbara the Great Martyr Orthodox Church

Sunday 19th July 2026

Sunday of Holy Fathers of the 4th Oecum. Council

Issue 029



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We've approached the Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the 4th Ecumenical council. During the next week a couple of big Feasts will take place: the Feast of Prophet Elijah and the Feast of Mary Magdalene. A few words for these feasts can be found in this leaflet. After this quite period in the church we're slowly approaching the Dormition Fast which will begin on the first day of August. During the Dormition Fast services will be offered every day and information for these can also be found in this leaflet. Please put the dates in your calendar. Participating in the events that we try to organise is good for you and for your spiritual growth, and is also an opportunity to spend good time with the people and friends who share the same Orthodox faith.

The 4th Ecumenical council has very a important role in the Eastern Orthodox Church. The Holy Fathers of this Council joined together in the year 451AD and are also known as the Council of Chalcedon. With 630 bishops in attendance, it was the largest of the seven Ecumenical Councils and aimed to reconcile differing theological emphases while remaining faithful to the Nicene Creed.

These councils are important for us, so we celebrate them on specific Sundays during the liturgical year. This may look very distant for some people, but what we believe and the whole of our tradition was formed in these councils. The Councils, in a sense, are the back bone of our Orthodox faith and they've guided the Bishops and Synods during the centuries until today.

The Chalcedonian Definition states that Jesus Christ is indeed the Logos incarnate, the very Son of God "begotten of the Father before all ages" (Nicene Creed). It reaffirms that the Virgin Mary is truly Theotokos, since the one born from her "according to the flesh" in Bethlehem is the uncreated, divine Son of God, one of the Holy Trinity. In His human birth, the Council declared, the Word of God took to Himself the whole of humanity, becoming a

real man in every way, but without sin. Thus, according to the Chalcedonian Definition, Jesus of Nazareth is one person or hypostasis in two natures—human and divine—united "without change, without confusion, without division, without separation." He is fully human. He is fully divine. He is perfect God and perfect man. As God, He is "of one essence" (homoousios) with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. As man, He is "of one essence" (homoousios) with all human beings, as the Formulary of Peace had declared. The union of divinity and humanity in Christ is called the hypostatic union.

This expression means that in the one, unique person, or divine hypostasis, of Christ, divine nature and human nature are united in such a way that they are neither changed, nor confused, nor separated, nor divided. Christ is one Person Who is both human and divine. One and the same divine person (or hypostasis) is the Son of God and the Son of Mary.

Fr. John



Announcements

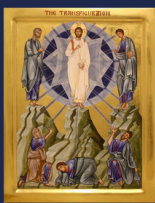
- From September we plan to move the Sunday Services forward by 1 hour so that Matins would start at 09:00, and the Divine Liturgy at 10:00. This has been advised by the Archdiocese and will also give you more time on Sundays to spend with your family. Please speak to Fr John if you'd like to discuss further.

Upcoming Services

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
29 July Wed	6.30pm 7.15pm	Vespers Catechesis	Silas & Silvanos the Apostles of the 70

Announcement

Pilgrimages in August 2026



**Saint Oswald
annual
Pilgrimage**

Saturday 1st August 2026

The Parish Church of St. Oswald,
King and Martyr,
Oswestry SY11 2SY



9.00 am - Matins
10.00 am - Divine Liturgy
Veneration of relics of St. Oswald

11.30 am - Pilgrimage to
St. Oswald's Holy Well

12 noon - Refreshments

12.15 pm - A Talk on
'The Transfiguration' with Q&A

Presbyter Panteleimon Maxfield
Presbyter John Petkov

ALL WELCOME!





**St. Plegmund
annual
Pilgrimage**

Saturday 8th of August
2026

St. Peter's Church,
Plemstall, Plemstall
Lane , Mickle Trafford



4pm - Blessing of the
waters at the well

5.30pm- Great Vespers
at St. Barbara Orthodox
church , Chester

All Welcome

We have two Pilgrimages for your calendar in August. Please come and take part in these Pilgrimages:

- 1st of August St. Oswald, St. Oswald church, Oswestry, SY11 2 SY
- 8th of August St Plegmund well, St Peter's Church, Plemstall lane, Mickle Trafford



Synaxarion St Elias the Prophet

Elias of great fame was from Thisbe or Thesbe, a town of Galaad (Gilead), beyond the Jordan. He was of priestly lineage, a man of a solitary and ascetical character, clothed in a mantle of sheep skin, and girded about his loins with a leathern belt. His name is interpreted as "Yah is my God." His zeal for the glory of God was compared to fire, and his speech for teaching and rebuke was likened unto a burning lamp. From this too he received the name Zealot. Therefore, set aflame with such zeal, he sternly reproved the impiety and lawlessness of Ahab and his wife Jezebel. He shut up heaven by means of prayer, and it did not rain for three years and six months. Ravens brought him food for his need when, at God's command, he was hiding by the torrent of Horrath. He multiplied the little flour and oil

of the poor widow of Sarephtha of Sidon, who had given him hospitality in her home, and when her son died, he raised him up. He brought down fire from Heaven upon Mount Carmel, and it burned up the sacrifice offered to God before all the people of Israel, that they might know the truth. At the torrent of Kisson, he slew 450 false prophets and priests who worshipped idols and led the people astray. He received food wondrously at the hand of an Angel, and being strengthened by this food he walked for forty days and forty nights. He beheld God on Mount Horeb, as far as this is possible for human nature. He foretold the destruction of the house of Ahab, and the death of his son Ohozias; and as for the two captains of fifty that were sent by the king, he burned them for their punishment, bringing fire down from Heaven. He divided the flow of the Jordan, and he and his disciple Elisseus passed through as it were on dry land; and finally, while speaking with him, Elias was suddenly snatched away by a fiery chariot in the year 895 B.C., and he ascended as though into heaven, whither God most certainly translated him alive, as He did Enoch (Gen. 5:24; IV Kings 2: 11). But from thence also, after seven years, by means of an epistle he reproached Joram, the son of Josaphat, as it is written: "And there came a message in writing to him from Elias the Prophet, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the way," and so forth (II Chron. 21:12). According to the opinion of the majority of the interpreters, this came to pass either through his disciple Elisseus, or through another Prophet when Elias appeared to them, even as he appeared on Mount Tabor to the disciples of Christ (see Aug. 6).

Apolytikion of Prophet Elias Fourth Tone

The incarnate Angel, the Cornerstone of the Prophets, the second Forerunner of the Coming of Christ, the glorious Elias (Elijah), who from above, sent down to Elisha the grace to dispel sickness and cleanse lepers, abounds therefore in healing for those who honor him.

Kontakion of Prophet Elias Second Tone

O Prophet and foreseer of the great works of God, O greatly renowned Elias (Elijah), who by your word held back the clouds of rain, intercede for us to the only Loving One.

Who really was Mary Magdalene?

She belonged among the circle of women who followed Christ and His disciples, helping in many ways their salvific mission.

Luke the Evangelist preserves the information that many of those female disciples of the Lord maintained financially His great missionary work and contributed to its maintenance, travel, and the housing of those gathered with Jesus (Luke 8:3).

This Mary was from Magdala, a coastal city of Galilee. This is why she is called Magdalene. The label of her origin informs us on the one hand to not confuse her with the other Mary's that followed Jesus, and it also informs us that she did not have a husband, since some of them are remembered by their husband's name (e.g. Mary of Cleopa).

A. In the West, Mary Magdalene is identified with the repentant prostitute of the Gospel who anointed the feet of Jesus with expensive myrrh and wiped them with her hair (Luke 7:36-50 & Matt. 26:6-16), in the house of Simon the pharisee.

B. In modern times, Mary Magdalene is the star of imaginary films and unhistorical novels that associate her with the sex life of Jesus, presenting her as very young and challenging.

C. In The DaVinci Code the following alleged "truths" are presented:

- a) how Christ and Mary Magdalene were not only married, but they even bore children,
- b) that this "truth" was hidden from the Gospels, later on by Constantine the Great,
- c) that these "truths" of Dan Brown are preserved in the "Gnostic Gospels" and in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

What does all this mean historically and theologically? Nothing at all!

A. The misunderstanding that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute emerged because some Gospel incidents were connected to her though they involved different people, as clearly shown in the Gospels: It is a fact that this not only happened with the aforementioned repentant prostitute, but also Mary the sister of Lazarus, who after his resurrection by Jesus, had such great joy that she felt great gratitude and anointed the feet of Jesus with myrrh (Jn. 12:1-11). These two Marys of the New Testament were mistaken to be the same person of Mary Magdalene,

because:

- a) from the latter Christ expelled "seven demons" (which is falsely considered to have come from fornication, though Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church explain these are the passions of the soul opposed to the Spirit of God),
- b) as a myrrhbearer Mary Magdalene also fell at the feet of Jesus immediately following the Resurrection of Jesus,
- c) because she anointed with the other Myrrhbearers the lifeless body of Jesus, thus identifying her with the anonymous prostitute who anointed the head and feet of Jesus,
- d) her public celebration by the Western Church for the first time was on May 4th, which was the translation of the holy relics of Saint Lazarus from Cyprus and Saint Mary Magdalene from Ephesus, resulting in the West associating Mary Magdalene with Mary the sister of Lazarus.(1,2,5,6)

B. How young was Mary Magdalene in actuality in the time of Jesus to assume that she was possessed by erotic feelings for Him? Although the Gospels do not mention something about her age, expert researchers have concluded she was around 50-60 years old, since the women were mothers of the disciples of Christ, who themselves must have been around 30-35 years old at least.

Therefore, Mary Magdalene was a mature and wise disciple of the Lord, who only out of piety and beneficence, and the fact that the Lord was a Divine Teacher, remained beside Him and dedicated herself to the service of His work, together with the other female disciples.⁷

C. Did Christ have a family with Mary Magdalene? Let us initially point out that no contemporary source of Jesus, biblical or non-biblical, offers any clear and detailed proof for the case that He was married. If this happened, there is no reason for this to be concealed by the Evangelists and the Apostle Paul, because not even the high priest was forbidden to marry, nor the other priests, prophets or teachers. Even Peter had a family, as well as the other apostles. Moreover, just before the God-man gave up His spirit, He assigned the care of His mother to St. John the Evangelist. According to the laws of the time, her protection should have been under Mary Magdalene, if He was indeed married. Also, in various passages of the New Testament

members of the family of Jesus are referred to (His mother and father, His brothers, His sisters), but nowhere is a wife mentioned, let alone there is no reference to His widowhood. Finally, Christ is preached as the ideal of Christian living, a willful and heartfelt asceticism (without it being physically reduced by marriage). In explaining the entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, He leads to the conclusion that He was not married (Matt. 19:10-12). Something also very important: Christ on earth was the incarnate God. His short mission was not to marry and have a family, but out of His love for all and through his Cross to save the entire world.

Were the truths described and taught in the Gospels an invention of Constantine the Great? Of course not! In the time of Constantine the Great the Church knew what it taught in regards to the Holy Trinity, the person of and divine-human nature of Christ, etc. And millions of believers had already died and were tortured in the amphitheaters and Roman arenas, because they believed Christ to be God.

And now we will ascertain what kind of "truth" is taught in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gnostic Gospels, according to Dan Brown. Do they reverse the authentic truths of the Gospel? Clearly not! The Dead Sea Scrolls contain nothing Christian, but only parts of the Old Testament and other fragmentary texts without reference to Christ, let alone the supposed "holy grail". The Gnostic "Gospels" (of Thomas, Philip, Mary, the Egyptians, of Truth) are dated from the 3rd century onward, were not authored by the apostles (though they borrowed their names to confer prestige on their writings), and are full of fantastic stories about the people of God and of Christ, which seek to falsify the New Testament and distort its meaning.

But who really was Mary Magdalene? While every flower is nourished by the earth and the sun, Mary Magdalene, as a living flower of the spirit, was worthy to be graced and sanctified by the very source of life, the God-man Jesus. She was worthy also to be the first to greet the Risen Christ, and then honored by the Lord to be the apostle to the

apostles, a preacher to His disciples, an evangelist to the Evangelists. That is, she was the first to proclaim to the circle of His disciples His life-giving Resurrection from the tomb (John Chrysostom, On the Gospel of John). But this was granted according to divine economy. Because, as the sorrow of the world came from a woman (Eve), from a woman (the Panagia) the same Son of God was made man, and from a woman again (Mary Magdalene) the triumphant and liberating message of the Resurrection was proclaimed (see Kontakion for the Sunday of the Myrrhbearers, Tone 2). The Orthodox Church inherited a completely different tradition about the life and times of Mary Magdalene. She was a lifelong virgin. The purity of her soul was as a pure crystal (Archbishop Modestus of Jerusalem, On the Myrrhbearers, in the Library of Photios, archbishop of Constantinople and P.G. 104, 244). The Fathers of the Church, beginning from John Chrysostom, deeply honored her (this applies both to the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches), and they state that she traveled to Rome, confessed the divinity of Christ before Emperor Tiberius, returned to Palestine, accompanied the Theotokos until her Dormition, worked together with the Apostle Peter, was exiled and preached the Gospel in Marseille, acted as an apostle in Egypt, Syria and Phoenicia and came to Ephesus, together with the Theologian and Evangelist John, where she reposed. From there her incorrupt relic was transferred to Constantinople, in 890, by Emperor Leo the Wise.

In the Monastery of Simonopetra on Mount Athos her incorrupt hand is kept, which for centuries has been preserved in its natural state, with elasticity and the temperature of a live human body. Our Church honors her as an Equal-to-the-Apostles and a Myrrhbearer, and her memory is celebrated on July 22 and May 4, the day of the translation of her relic. She is also co-celebrated with the other Myrrhbearing Holy Women on the Third Sunday after Pascha, the Sunday of the Myrrhbearers.

Source: Prof. Michael Houli, Mistagogy resource centre



Synaxarion St Mary Magdalene

Saint Mary was from Magdala in Galilee on the Sea of Tiberias, and for this was named Magdalene. When the Lord Jesus cast out seven demons from her, from which she had been suffering, she became His faithful and inseparable disciple, following Him and ministering unto Him even to the time of His crucifixion and burial. Then, returning to Jerusalem together with the rest of the Myrrh-bearers, she prepared the fragrant spices for anointing the body of the Lord. And on the Lord's day they came very early to the tomb, even before the Angels appeared declaring the Resurrection of the Lord. When Mary Magdalene saw the stone taken away from the tomb, she ran and proclaimed it to Peter and John. And returning immediately to the tomb and weeping outside, she was deemed worthy to be the first of the Myrrh-bearers to behold

the Lord arisen from the dead, and when she fell at His feet, she heard Him say, "Touch Me not." After the Lord's Ascension, nothing certain is known concerning her. Some accounts say that she went to Rome and later returned to Jerusalem, and from there proceeded to Ephesus, where she ended her life, preaching Christ. Although it is sometimes said that Saint Mary Magdalene was the "sinful woman" of the Gospel, this is nowhere stated in the tradition of the Church, in the sacred hymnology, or in the Holy Gospels themselves, which say only that our Lord cast seven demons out of her, not that she was a fallen woman.

Apolytikion of Mary Magdalene

First Tone

When Christ God had been born for our sakes from the Virgin, thou faithfully didst follow him, keeping His statutes and heeding His sacred laws, O august Mary Magdalene. Hence, as we today observe thy holy remembrance, we receive the loosing of our sins and transgressions through thy holy prayers for us.

Kontakion of Mary Magdalene

Fourth Tone

When God, the Mighty, the Transcendent in essence, came in the flesh into the world, He received thee, O Mary, as His true disciple as was meet. For thou hadst thy whole desire and thy love set upon Him; wherefore, thou didst bring to pass many cures for the ailing; and now translated to the Heavens' heights, thou ever fervently prayest for all the world.





Dormition of St. Anna, mother of the Theotokos

According to tradition, Anna, the ancestor of God, lived for sixty-nine years, and her spouse Joachim, for eighty; according to one account, Saint Joachim died two years before Saint Anna. The Theotokos had been orphaned of both her parents already when she was eleven years of age, when she was living in the Temple (see Sept. 8 and Nov. 21). Saint Anna is invoked for conceiving children, and for help in difficult childbirth.

Apolytikion of Dormition of St. Anna
Fourth Tone

O Godly-minded Anna, thou didst give birth unto God's pure Mother who conceived Him Who is our Life. Wherefore, thou hast now passed with joy to thy

heavenly rest, wherein is the abode of them that rejoice in glory; and thou askest forgiveness of sins for them that honour thee with love, O ever-blessed one.

Kontakion of Dormition of St. Anna
Second Tone

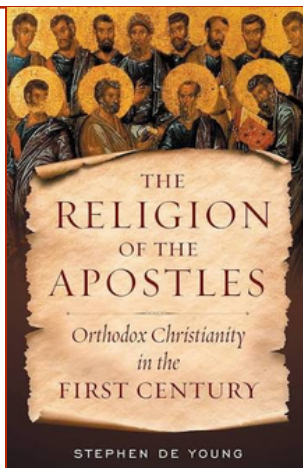
We celebrate now the mem'ry of Christ's ancestors, while asking their help with faith, that we may all be saved from all manner of tribulation as we fervently cry aloud: Be thou with us, O Lord our God, Whose pleasure it was to glorify them both.



Book recommendation from the Parish Library

Very Rev. Dr. Stephen De Young, creator of the popular The Whole Counsel of God blog and podcast, traces the lineage of Orthodox Christianity back to the faith and witness of the apostles, which was rooted in a first-century Jewish worldview. The Religion of the Apostles presents the Orthodox Christian Church of today as a continuation of the religious life of the apostles, which in turn was a continuation of the life of the people of God since the beginning of creation.

The book is available in all book retailers and in our library



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

Τίτ. γ', 8-15

Τέκνον Τίτε, πιστὸς ὁ λόγος, καὶ περὶ τούτων βούλομαι σε διαβιβαιοῦσθαι, ἵνα φροντίζωσιν καλῶν ἔργων προϊστασθαι οἱ πεπιστευκότες Θεῷ. ταῦτά ἐστιν καλὰ καὶ ὠφέλιμα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις· μωρὰς δὲ ζητήσεις καὶ γενεαλογίας καὶ ἔριν καὶ μάχας νομικὰς περιίτασο, εἰσὶν γὰρ ἀνωφελεῖς καὶ μάταιοι. αἵρετικὸν ἀνθρώπον μετὰ μίαν καὶ δευτέραν νοουθεσίαν παραιτοῦ, εἰδὼς ὅτι ἐξέστραπται ὁ τοιοῦτος καὶ ἁμαρτάνει, ὣν αὐτοκατάκριτος. Ὅταν πέμψω Ἀρτεμᾶν πρὸς σέ ἢ Τυχικόν, σπούδασον ἐλθεῖν πρὸς με εἰς Νικόπολιν, ἐκεῖ γὰρ κέκρικα παραχειμάσαι. Ζηνᾶν τὸν νομικὸν καὶ Ἀπολλῶν σπουδαίως πρόπεμψον, ἵνα μηδὲν αὐτοῖς λείπῃ. μανθανέτωσαν δὲ καὶ οἱ ἡμέτεροι καλῶν ἔργων προϊστασθαι εἰς τὰς ἀναγκαίας χρείας, ἵνα μὴ ᾖσιν ἄκαρποι. Ἀσπάζονται σε οἱ μετ' ἐμοῦ πάντες. Ἀσπασαί τοὺς φιλοῦντας ἡμᾶς ἐν πίστει. ἡ χάρις μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.

EPISTLE READING

Tit. 3: 8-15

Titus, my son, the saying is sure. I desire you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to apply themselves to good deeds; these are excellent and profitable to men. But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile. As for a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned. When I send Artemas or Tychicos to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. And let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful. All who are with me send greeting to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.

ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΜΟΝ ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ

Ἦχος πλ. β'

Ἀγγελικαὶ δυνάμεις ἐπὶ τὸ μνημά σου, καὶ οἱ φυλάσσοντες, ἀπενεκρώθησαν· καὶ ἵστατο Μαρία ἐν τῷ τάφῳ, ζητοῦσα τὸ ἄχραντόν σου σῶμα. Ἐσκύλευσας τὸν Ἄϊδην, μὴ πειρασθεῖς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ· ὑπήντησας τῇ Παρθένῳ, δωρούμενος τὴν ζωὴν. Ὁ ἀναστὰς ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, Κύριε δόξα σοι.



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



ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Ματθ. ε΄, 14-19

Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ μαθηταῖς·
Ὑμεῖς ἐστέ τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου. οὐ
δύναται πόλις κρυβῆναι ἐπάνω ὄρους
κειμένη· οὐδὲ καί οἱσι λύχνον καὶ τιθέασι
αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τὸν μόδιον, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τὴν
λυχνίαν, καὶ λάμπει πᾶσι τοῖς ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ.
οὕτω λαμψάτω τὸ φῶς ὑμῶν ἔμπροσθεν
τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὅπως ἴδωσιν ὑμῶν τὰ
καλὰ ἔργα καὶ δοξάσωσι τὸν Πατέρα ὑμῶν
τὸν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. Μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι
ἦλθον καταλῦσαι τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς
προφῆτας· οὐκ ἦλθον καταλῦσαι, ἀλλὰ
πληρῶσαι. ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν, ἕως
ἂν παρέλθῃ ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ, ἰῶτα ἐν ἧ
μία κεραία οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου
ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται. ὃς ἐὰν οὖν λύσῃ
μίαν τῶν ἐντολῶν τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων
καὶ διδάξῃ οὕτω τοὺς ἀνθρώπους,
ἐλάχιστος κληθήσεται ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν
οὐρανῶν· ὃς δ' ἂν ποιήσῃ καὶ διδάξῃ,
οὗτος μέγας κληθήσεται ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ
τῶν οὐρανῶν.



GOSPEL READING

Matt. 5: 14-19

The Lord said to his disciples, You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.



SERMON ON THE GOSPEL READING

Today we read a passage from chapter five of the gospel according to St Matthew. This passage forms part of what we call the Sermon on the Mount. The sermon is the longest piece of teaching from Jesus in the New Testament. It includes the Beatitudes and also the Lord's Prayer. The Sermon on the Mount contains the central tenets of Christian discipleship.

The passage begins with the Lord saying to His disciples, '*ye are the light of the world*'. In Greek, this is very emphatic – you are the light of the world. In the Old Testament, light is symbolic of God. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is the light. But here, in this passage, Jesus is telling His disciples that they are the light. What did He mean? By proclaiming Jesus as Savior, His disciples bring light to those in darkness. Jesus emphasises what He says to His disciples by comparing them to a city on top of a hill. It was built there so that it could be seen. He compares His disciples to a candle. When you light a candle, you do not hide the flame; you put it on a candlestick so that it gives light.

This section culminates with these famous words of Jesus, '*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Which is in heaven.*' (Matt. 5:16). When we do good works – giving money to charity, visiting the sick, helping out in a food bank – whatever it is – we should not do these things because we enjoy people praising us. Jesus gave the Pharisees a very stern telling off for behaving like this. As Christians, we do good works so that those who see them will glorify God.

The second section of today's gospel reading is about the relationship between Jesus and the Law and the prophets of the Old Testament. The Sermon on the Mount is to be read against a background of opposition from the Pharisees. The Pharisees denounced Jesus for breaking the sabbath and being generally lax in observing the laws of Moses. So, Jesus does a counter offensive, in which He demonstrates that He observes the true and inner demands of the Law; whereas the Pharisees are only concerned with external observances. Our Lord states quite unambiguously, '*I am not come to destroy*' the Law or the prophets '*but to fulfill*'.

As always when making a very solemn pronouncement, Jesus then says, '*verily I say unto you*'. And the solemn pronouncement is, '*till heaven or earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law.*' A more literal translation from Greek would be 'one iota or the tip of a letter'. (Iota is the smallest letter in the Greek alphabet.) The whole of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments is God's Word and shall endure to the end, down to the very smallest letter and even the tip of a letter. All the commandments of the Law given to Moses are still in force but have been transformed by Christ. The Lord says, '*one jot till all be fulfilled*'. For example, the day of the Resurrection (Sunday) has replaced the sabbath day because Jesus fulfilled the sabbath by resting on the seventh day (Holy Saturday) and He rose from the dead on the first day of a new week. Another example is baptism has replaced circumcision. St Paul tells us we have been circumcised by Christ in baptism (Col. 2:8-12).

Therefore, greatness in heaven may be determined by our attitude to the Scriptures. The church helps us to read the Bible by allocating readings for us each day. If we read the Scriptures every day and, most importantly, follow them and teach others to do so, we shall indeed be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Archimandrite Nicolas Eleftherios Price

ΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΥ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑΤΟΣ

Ὁ Θεὸς φῶς ἐστὶ καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος κλητὸς πρὸς Αὐτό (Ματθ. 5, 14-19)
Ὁ Θεὸς ἀποκαλύφθηκε στὸν ἄνθρωπο ὡς «ὁ Θεὸς τῆς δόξης» (Πράξ. 7, 2). Ὁ εὐαγγελιστὴς Ἰωάννης ἀναγγέλλει: «Ὁ Θεὸς φῶς ἐστὶ καὶ σκοτία ἐν Αὐτῷ οὐκ ἐστὶν οὐδεμία» (Α' Ἰωάν. 1, 5). Ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ φῶς αποτελοῦν τὸ ἱμάτιο, τὸ ὁποῖο καλύπτει τὴ φύση Του. Ἔνεκα τῆς ἀνείκαστης ἀγαθότητός Του ὁ Θεὸς εὐδόκησε νὰ μεταδώσει τὴ δόξα καὶ τὸ φῶς Του στὰ λογικὰ πλάσματα Του, τοὺς Ἀγγέλους καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους. Οἱ Ἄγγελοι πού «ἐστάθησαν καλῶς» καὶ διεφύλαξαν τὴν πρωταρχικὴ κατάστασή τους εἶναι «ὀλόφθαλμοι». Μὲ κάθε πόρο τῆς υπάρξεώς τους ἀπορροφοῦν τὴ δόξα τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ μὲ φλογερὸ πόθο Τοῦ ἀντιπροσφέρουν «ἀκαταπαύστοις στόμασιν» αἰγιόγη δοξολογία.

Μὲ τὴν πτῶση τοῦ Ἀδάμ ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὑποδουλώθηκε στὴ φθορά. Ἐξέπεσε τῆς θείας δόξας καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα του διαχύθηκε στὸν ὁρατὸ κόσμο. «Ελάτρευσε τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν Κτί-σαντα» (Ρωμ. 1, 25). Ἐτοί, κατήντησε «σκοτός» (Ἐφ. 5, 8). Ἦταν πλέον ἀδύνατον γιὰ τὸν ἐγκλωβισμένον στὴ φθορὰ ἄνθρωπο νὰ εὐρεῖ ὁδὸ διαφυγῆς. Ὁ Χριστὸς ὅμως μὲ τὴ Σάρ-κωση καὶ τῇ φρικτῇ Οἰκονομίᾳ Του κάλεσε πάλι τὸ πλάσμα Του «διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀρετῆς» (Β' Πέτρ. 1, 3) καὶ τοῦ ἔδωσε τὴ δυνατότητα νὰ γίνεῖ «θείας κοινωνὸς φύσεως» (Β' Πέτρ. 1, 4).

Μὲ τὴν πτῶση τοῦ Ἀδάμ ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὑποδουλώθηκε στὴ φθορά. Ἐξέπεσε τῆς θείας δόξας καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα του διαχύθηκε στὸν ὁρατὸ κόσμο. «Ελάτρευσε τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν Κτί-σαντα» (Ρωμ. 1, 25). Ἐτοί, κατήντησε «σκοτός» (Ἐφ. 5, 8). Ἦταν πλέον ἀδύνατον γιὰ τὸν ἐγκλωβισμένον στὴ φθορὰ ἄνθρωπο νὰ εὐρεῖ ὁδὸ διαφυγῆς. Ὁ Χριστὸς ὅμως μὲ τὴ Σάρ-κωση καὶ τῇ φρικτῇ Οἰκονομίᾳ Του κάλεσε πάλι τὸ πλάσμα Του «διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀρετῆς» (Β' Πέτρ. 1, 3) καὶ τοῦ ἔδωσε τὴ δυνατότητα νὰ γίνεῖ «θείας κοινωνὸς φύσεως» (Β' Πέτρ. 1, 4).

«Οὕτω λαμψάτω τὸ φῶς ὑμῶν ἐμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὥπως ἴδωσιν ὑμῶν τὰ καλὰ ἔργα καὶ δοξάσωσι τὸν Πατέρα ὑμῶν τὸν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς» (Ματθ. 5, 16). Ὁ προκείμενος λόγος ὑποδεικνύει ὅτι ἡ ὁδὸς πρὸς τὴ δόξα τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶναι τὰ καλὰ ἔργα, δηλαδὴ ἡ ἐκπλήρωση τῶν θείων ἐντολῶν. Ὁ μαθητὴς τοῦ Χριστοῦ καλεῖται νὰ γίνεῖ φῶς, ὅχι γιὰ νὰ ἀναγνωρισθεῖ καὶ νὰ δοξασθεῖ ὁ ἴδιος, ἀλλὰ πρὸς δόξαν τοῦ Οὐρανίου Πατρὸς κατὰ μίμηση τοῦ Διδασκάλου, ὁ ὅποιος δὲν ἐπιζητοῦσε τὴν «ἑαυτοῦ δόξαν», ἀλλὰ τὴ δόξα «τοῦ Πέμψαντος Αὐτόν» (Ἰωάν. 8, 50-54). Ἄν τὰ καλὰ ἔργα ἀποσκοποῦν στὸν ἔπαινο τῶν ἀνθρώπων, δὲν ἔχουν ἀντίκρισμα στὴν αἰωνιότητα.

Ὁ Κύριος ἐπέτελεσε τὸ μέγα ἔργο τῆς πάγκοινης σωτηρίας ἀπὸ ὑπακοῇ στὸν Οὐράνιο Πατέρα καὶ πρὸς δόξαν Αὐτοῦ. Ὡς δικὴ Του δόξα θεωροῦσε τὰ παθήματα πού ὑπέστη καὶ τὸν θάνατο πού ἀνέλαβε, προκειμένου νὰ φέρεῖ εἰς πέρας τὸ ἔργο τῆς ὑπακοῆς Του. Κατ' ἀναλογία, στὴν περίπτωσι τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, τὰ ἔργα πού δοξάζουν τὸν Οὐράνιο Πατέρα εἶναι ἐκεῖνα πού γίνονται ἀπὸ ὑπακοῇ στὰ προστάγματα Του καὶ προπαντὸς μὲ ταπεινώση. ἐκεῖνα πού ἀποσκοποῦν στὸν καθαρισμὸ τοῦ πλησίον καὶ τῆς δόξας τοῦ Θεοῦ. Τὰ ἀγαθὰ ἔργα εἶναι ὄντως ἀγαθὰ, ὅταν ὁ ἀσκητὴς τοῦ Χριστοῦ πού τὰ διαπράττει καταπονεῖται ἀπὸ τὴ συνείδηση ὅτι, «οὐκ ἐποίησέ τι ἀγαθὸν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς», ὅτι ὡς «ἀχρεῖος δούλος ἐποίησε μόνον τὰ διαταχθέντα αὐτῷ» (Λουκ. 17, 10).

Τὸ φῶς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐνδέχεται νὰ ἐκφρασθεῖ μὲ ἐξωτερικὰ ἔργα, ἀλλὰ στὴν πραγμα-τικότητα πρόκειται γιὰ φῶς καρδιάς, φῶς ἐνδόμυχο. Φῶς γιὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπο εἶναι ἡ ταπει-νώση, ἡ μετάνοια, ἡ καρδιακὴ συντριβὴ, ὁ πόνος γιὰ τὴν ἀναξιότητά του ἐνώπιον ἐνὸς τέτοιου Θεοῦ, ὅπως εἶναι ὁ Χριστός, καὶ ὁ πόθος του νὰ ἐνωθεῖ ἀρρήκτως ἡ καρδιά του μὲ τὸ Πνεῦμα Του. Τὰ ταπεινὰ ἔργα πού ἐπιτελοῦνται «ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ» (Ματθ. 6, 4) μόνον πρὸς δόξα Θεοῦ, δίχως νὰ θέτουν πρόσκομμα στὴ συνείδηση τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, ἐλκύουν τὴ χάρι. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐπιστρέφει μὲ εὐγνωμοσύνη τὸ ὑπερκεχέλισμα τῆς χάριτος στὴν πηγὴ τῆς, τὸν «Θεὸν τῆς δόξης». Σὲ αὐτὴν τὴν ἀνακύκλωση δόξας εὐρίσκει τὴν αὐθεντικὴ εὐδαιμονία του καὶ στήν παρούσα ζωὴ ἀλλὰ καὶ στήν ἀπέραντη αἰωνιότητα.

Ἀρχιμ. Ζαχαρίας

For your prayers

19 July	Peter Acton	Chrismated this day in 1987
23 July	Panagiotis Ben Hands	Chrismated this day in 2017



Dormition of St. Anna, mother of the Theotokos

According to tradition, Anna, the ancestor of God, lived for sixty-nine years, and her spouse Joachim, for eighty; according to one account, Saint Joachim died two years before Saint Anna. The Theotokos had been orphaned of both her parents already when she was eleven years of age, when she was living in the Temple (see Sept. 8 and Nov. 21). Saint Anna is invoked for conceiving children, and for help in difficult childbirth.

*Apolytikion of Dormition of St. Anna
Fourth Tone*

O Godly-minded Anna, thou didst give birth unto God's pure Mother who conceived Him Who is our Life. Wherefore, thou hast now passed with joy to thy heavenly rest, wherein is the abode of them that rejoice in glory; and thou askest forgiveness of sins for them that honour thee with love, O ever-blessed one.

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.

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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.

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