



The Tower

Saint Barbara the Great Martyr Orthodox Church

Sunday 26 Month July

8th Sunday of Matthew
Issue 030



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We've approached the 8th Sunday of St. Matthew. The Dormition Fast will start after next Sunday. Prepare yourselves well because services will be offered everyday during this period. The programme for August will also be published in the next few days.

First of all I would like to say a huge thank you for your wishes on my birthday, and thank you for the birthday cake you prepared, it was really very nice. Please accept my apologies if I didn't reply to all the messages, they were so many!

During the week I had a very nice conversation with one of our parishioners who now lives in the Shetland Islands, Izaak, who I had the honour of baptising in Chester. He still visits a us few times a year. Now in the Shetlands they have formed a small Orthodox community. Everything started a couple of years ago when Izaak moved permanently to Lerwick and contacted an Orthodox nun, Mother Mary, who has lived for over 20 years in an isolated village, two ferries away from Lerwick. They started meeting occasionally to do readers services and I still remember when Izaak told me how difficult it was for him to live there without going to church, and how he felt disconnected from the Eucharist and the Sacraments for a long time. After time they contacted our Bishop Rafael, who is based in Edinburgh and he offered his help and support in order to establish a small community there. A priest has been appointed and he will visit four times a year, and the Bishop himself will visit once a year.

During this first visit the community transformed the town hall into an Orthodox church and the first two people were Baptised. Interest in the Orthodox church in this place has certainly grown in the past months. They also have seasonal workers from Orthodox countries, Romanians, Greeks, Ukrainians and Cypriots. There are also a few people who are exploring the Orthodox faith, and one day will be accepted into the Orthodox church.

The community took the name of St. Ninian, the local Saint who is connected to the history of the archipelago. A parishioner came all the way from Orkney Island, seven hours away on a ferry to take part in the first Liturgy. Probably a little bit closer than the Scottish main land. This is all to say and to give an idea of how isolated this place is, and how difficult it is to organise a community and church there. Two nuns travelled all the way from Crete and arrived with the Bishop to support this magnificent work. I personally wish that this small community will grow and establish the Orthodox church in the archipelago for generations. Glory to God!

Your question may be, why has Fr. John told this story and what does it have to do with us? I've shared this as a word of encouragement. These examples of sacrifice and struggle are important. Very often we think that to attend church and to be on time is a very easy task, but the reality is different. To be firm and to practice orthodoxy and the sacramental life of the church is a very difficult task in some cases. In cases like these you can see how people travel huge distances to attend the church and how through hard work, a foundation of churches and communities has been built for generations in one of the most isolated places around the world. Glory to God!

Fr. John



Announcements

From September we plan to move the Sunday Services forward by 1 hour so that Matins starts at 09:00 and the Divine Liturgy at 10:00.

This has been advised by the Archdiocese. Please speak to Fr John if you'd like to discuss further.

Upcoming Services

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
1 August Sat	5.30pm	Great Vespers	
2 August Sun	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	

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:

- 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

What is an Artoklasia service?

Most of you have seen and witnessed the holy service of Artoklasia (Greek ἀρτοκλασία, meaning "breaking of bread"; also 'litiya' in Church Slavonic) is a service at the end of Great Vespers, Orthros (Matins), or even at the end of the Divine Liturgy.

In the Artoklasia five round loaves of sweet bread are offered as a sign of devotion for personal, family, or parish anniversaries such as name days, feast days, and other significant occasions. Five loaves are used, reminiscent of the **five loaves** that Jesus Christ blessed and multiplied in the desert to feed five thousand of His hearers.

The Artoklasia also symbolizes and brings into practice today the Agape (Love) meals of the very early Christian communities. In those days, after the faithful received the Precious Body and Blood of our Lord in the Divine Liturgy, they would gather for a **common meal** signifying the fraternal community in Christ established between them through their common faith and by their receiving the same Holy Eucharist.

The significance behind the Orthodox Artoklasia includes also the fact that, among the Orthodox Christians, bread continues to be highly valued not only as a basic food but also as the supreme symbol of the Body of Christ—for it is the bread which is **changed by the Holy Spirit at the consecration in the Divine Liturgy into the very Body of Christ**. Together with the wine that is likewise changed at that time into His Most-Precious and Life-Giving Blood, the bread that has become His Most Sacred Body is our participation in the crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. Bread thus has a profound mystical meaning signifying the essence of both physical and spiritual life. Christ has been repeatedly designated as the Bread of Life, and also as "the Bread which came from heaven." Bread also symbolizes the Church of Christ, which has spread all over as the wheat on the mountains and which was gathered by Christ into one body.

The blessed bread of the Holy Orthodox Church Artoklasia has from ancient times been considered to effect personal sanctification and to help the individual against bodily infirmities and illness "if taken with faith." The Greek term "artoklasia" derives from the very words used by the Evangelists in describing the Mystical Supper at which Christ "broke bread" and offered it to His disciples as His own Body.

Also, "bread is broken" in the Orthodox service of artoklasia. Through this act, a very real unity is established between the Lord and His Church, much like when the Resurrected Lord became apparent in the breaking of the bread in the Gospel of Saint John's "Road to Emmaus" narrative. After the Holy Service, the bread is cut and distributed to the faithful.

The term "Artoklasia" (Artoklasia) derives from two Greek words: "ἄρτος" which means "wheat bread," and "κλάω (klaō) which means "break". At the service of artoklasia names are given to the celebrant priest by the person or family to be read and entreat the Lord to keep them healthy or to bring healing to those who may be ill.

Another biblical reference to bread is found in the book of Genesis chapter 16. God provides the children of Israel food in the desert: Manna and Quail.

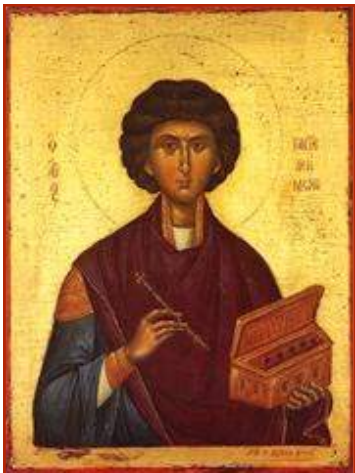


So it was that quail came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. But when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the desert, was a small round substance, white like coriander seed, like frost on the ground. So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is this?" For they did not know what it was. Thus Moses said to them, "This is the bread the Lord gives you to eat" (Exodus 16:11-15). The Lord "rained bread out of heaven" for them. It was a type of Christ, "the bread of life (St. John 6:48-51). In the Church, He gives Himself and His life to the Church in the Divine Eucharist (St. John 6:53-58).

I pray that the above explanation will help you appreciate the holy service of Artoklasia, and by participating, receive sanctification from our Lord.

source:

<https://saintandrewgoc.org/blog/2015/12/7/the-service-of-the-artoklasia-or-breaking-of-bread>



Synaxarion

St Panteleimon the Great Martyr & Healer

This Saint, who had Nicomedia as his homeland, was the son of Eustorgius and Eubula. His father was an idolater, but his mother was a Christian from her ancestors. It was through her that he was instructed in piety, and still later, he was catechized in the Faith of Christ by Saint Hermolaus (see July 26) and baptized by him. Being proficient in the physician's vocation, he practiced it in a philanthropic manner, healing every illness more by the grace of Christ than by medicines. Thus, although his parents had named him Pantoleon ("in all things a lion"), because of the compassion he showed for the souls and bodies of all, he was worthily renamed Panteleimon, meaning "all-merciful." On one occasion, when he restored the sight of a certain blind man by calling on the Divine Name, he enlightened also the eyes of this man's soul to the knowledge of the

truth. This also became the cause for the martyrdom of him who had been blind, since when he was asked by whom and in what manner his eyes had been opened, in imitation of that blind man of the Gospel he confessed with boldness both who the physician was and the manner of his healing. For this he was put to death immediately. Panteleimon was arrested also, and having endured many wounds, he was finally beheaded in the year 305, during the reign of Maximian. Saint Panteleimon is one of the Holy Unmercenaries, and is held in special honor among them, even as Saint George is among the Martyrs.

Apolytikion of Great Martyr Panteleimon

Third Tone

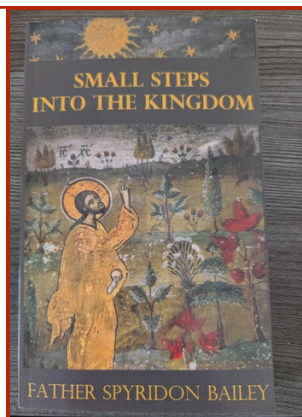
Panteleimon, saintly champion and healer, intercede with our merciful God to grant our souls remission of sins.

Book recommendation from the Parish Library

Father Spyridon explores Orthodox faith and practice that is both ancient and alive. He reveals how Orthodoxy is the continuing revelation of God to man. This is a book that will inspire and challenge in equal measure.

"Many of the Church Fathers make a comparison between physical and spiritual sickness. They ask who would not rush to see a doctor and ask for the appropriate medicines if they were afflicted with some disease. It is with this same urgency that we should desire to find healing of soul. Confession brings us a peaceful conscience for which we should all long."

— Spyridon Bailey, [Small Steps into the Kingdom](#)



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

Γαλ. γ', 23-29 - δ', 1-5

Ἀδελφοί, πρὸ τοῦ δὲ ἐλθεῖν τὴν πίστιν, ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα, συγκεκλεισμένοι εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι. Ὡστε ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν, ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν. Ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως, οὐκέτι ὑπὸ παιδαγωγόν ἔσμεν. Πάντες γάρ υἱοὶ Θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστόν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε. Οὐκ ἔνι Τουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἑλλήν, οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θήλυ· πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ, ἅρα τοῦ Ἀβραάμ σπέρμα ἐστέ, καὶ κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι. Λέγω δέ, ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ὁ κληρονόμος νηπιὸς ἐστίν, οὐδὲν διαφέρει δούλου, κύριος πάντων ὢν· ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ ἐπιτρόπους ἐστίν καὶ οἰκονόμους, ἄχρι τῆς προθεσμίας τοῦ πατρὸς. Οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὅτε ἦμεν νήπιοι, ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ἦμεν δεδουλωμένοι· ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πληρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν Υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον, ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ, ἵνα τὴν υἰοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν.

EPISTLE READING

Gal. 3: 23-29 ; 4: 1-5

Brethren, before faith came, we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. So that the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's off spring, heirs according to promise. I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no better than a slave, though he is the owner of all the estate; but he is under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. So with us; when we were children, we were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe. But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΜΟΝ ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ

Ἦχος βαρὺς

Κατέλυσας τῷ Σταυρῷ σου τὸν θάνατον· ἠνέωξας τῷ ληστῇ τὸν παράδεισον· τῶν μυροφόρων τὸν θρήνον μετέβαλες, καὶ τοῖς σοῖς ἀποστόλοις κηρύττειν ἐπέταξας, ὅτι ἀνέστης, Χριστέ ὁ Θεός, παρέχων τῷ κόσμῳ τὸ μέγα ἔλεος.



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. ιδ', 14-22

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἐξελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶδε πολὺν ὄχλον, καὶ ἐσπλαγγνίσθη ἐπ' αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐθεράπευσε τοὺς ἀρρώστους αὐτῶν. ὁψίας δὲ γενομένης προσῆλθον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντες· ἔρημός ἐστιν ὁ τόπος καὶ ἡ ὥρα ἤδη παρήλθεν· ἀπόλυσον τοὺς ὄχλους, ἵνα ἀπελθόντες εἰς τὰς κώμας ἀγοράσωσιν ἑαυτοῖς βρώματα. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· οὐ χρειάν ἐχουσιν ἀπελθεῖν· δότε αὐτοῖς ὑμεῖς φαγεῖν. οἱ δὲ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· οὐκ ἔχομεν ὥδε εἰ μὴ πέντε ἄρτους καὶ δύο ἰχθύας. ὁ δὲ εἶπε· φέρετέ μοι αὐτοὺς ὧδε. καὶ κελεύσας τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνακλιθῆναι ἐπὶ τοὺς χόρτους, λαβὼν τοὺς πέντε ἄρτους καὶ τοὺς δύο ἰχθύας, ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εὐλόγησε, καὶ κλάσας ἔδωκε τοῖς μαθηταῖς τοὺς ἄρτους, οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ τοῖς ὄχλοις. καὶ ἔφαγον πάντες καὶ ἐχορτάσθησαν, καὶ ἦσαν τὸ περισσεῦον τῶν κλασμάτων δώδεκα κοφίνους πλήρεις. οἱ δὲ ἐσθίοντες ἦσαν ἄνδρες ὡσεὶ πεντακισχίλιοι χωρὶς γυναικῶν καὶ παιδίων. Καὶ εὐθέως ἠνάγκασεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ ἐμβῆναι εἰς τὸ πλοῖον καὶ προάγειν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ πέραν, ἕως οὗ ἀπολύσῃ τοὺς ὄχλους.

GOSPEL READING

Matt. 14: 14-22

At that time, Jesus saw a great throng; and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, This is a lonely place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves. Jesus said, They need not go away; you give them something to eat. They said to him, We have only five loaves here and two fish. And he said, Bring them here to me. Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass; and taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke and gave the loaves to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Then he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.



SERMON ON THE GOSPEL READING

The Gospel of the feeding of the five thousand (Matt. 14:14–22) is a wonderful icon of the abundance of God's love for the human race. Five thousand men, besides women and children – are filled miraculously by the Lord's gracious bounty. Here is the image of the Lord who has compassion upon those who are hungry, who come to Him in the wilderness, and who provides for them in abundance from a humble offering.

The power of this miracle is intensified by its place within the Gospel of Saint Matthew, where it immediately follows a feast of an entirely different character. Herod the Tetrarch, having taken his brother's wife Herodias and imprisoned Saint John the Baptist for rebuking him, holds a banquet at which, through the dance of the daughter of Herodias and a rash oath, the holy Forerunner is beheaded and his head presented upon a platter. This is the feast of the world: a feast of corruption, of jealousy and rivalry, of personal vanity, in which a righteous man is killed so that a king may not lose face. When the disciples of John bury his body and bring word to the Lord, Christ withdraws by boat into a desert place, seeking solitude.

Yet the crowds follow, and the Lord, denied the quiet He sought, has compassion upon them. From the wilderness and the few provisions to hand emerges a feast utterly opposed to that of Herod. The world's banquet is one of grasping, in which every guest seeks his own glory; the Lord's is one of self-emptying love, in which all needs are met from the most humble of offerings.

The Fathers of the Church teach that this miracle is as an icon of the holy Mysteries, especially the Divine Eucharist, for the very words of the Gospel – that He took the bread, 'he blessed, broke, and gave the loaves to the disciples' (Matt. 14:19) – are the words of the Mystical Supper itself: 'Take, eat; this is my body' (Matt. 26:26).

This outpouring of God's love requires a response from us. When the disciples report that the hour is late and the people are hungry, the Lord asks his disciples to act. He says, 'They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat' (Matt. 14:16). The disciples respond saying that they only have five loaves and two fishes – a meagre supply – and yet they offer it up. Only then does Christ take, bless, break, and multiply, until twelve baskets of fragments remain.

God creates everything out of nothing - nothing pre-exists God. Yet pastorally, in the life of the Church and each one of us, God chooses to work otherwise. He waits for the offering of His creature, takes what is given – however small, however weak, however humble – and returns it transfigured in abundance. So it is in every Mystery: in Holy Baptism, water becomes the death and resurrection of the one baptised and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; in Holy Unction, oil becomes the anointing of reconciliation and healing; and above all in the Holy Eucharist, the humble bread and wine become the life-giving Body and Blood of God.

The lesson of the wilderness is therefore not that the faithful must wait until life is settled before approaching the Lord. Without our offering, however small, there can be no transformation. The very heart of the Divine Liturgy is precisely this offering of all that lies to hand, that it may be taken up, blessed, broken, and given back transfigured. No offering is too small, no soul too weak, no gift too humble for God to act upon and to transform into a share in the abundant glory of His Kingdom.

Presbyter Panteleimon Maxfield

For your prayers

28 July	Ruth Hoare	Baptised this day in 1996
30 July	Christopher & Helen	Wedded this day in 1994



Contributions welcome!

Do you have any interesting faith related stories you'd like to share with our parishioners? Or perhaps a recommendation for a book you've read recently? Or maybe you've taken some photographs during our services or one of our organised events that you'd like to share?

Please get in touch with Fr John if you'd like to contribute any material. Any contribution would be greatly appreciated!



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 !



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