



The Tower

Saint Barbara the Great Martyr Orthodox Church

Sunday 27th September 2026

1st Sunday of St. Luke

Issue 037



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are in the last week of September and traditionally we are preparing for our Pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Winifred in Holywell. I would like to announce with great joy that His Grace Bishop Maximus of Milete will preside our services this year. It is also the anniversary year for this pilgrimage. It started 40 years ago, in the first year of establishing our community in Chester and a couple of months after the community in Shrewsbury was established. The clergies and people from both communities will be present at the well and it is such a joy that we will have a Hiararchical visit for this great day.

I would like to stress few points about the event. First of all I would like to say that we are the host of this pilgrimage and as such we need to organise it well and be present as much as possible. Please come and be part of the commemoration of St. Winefride. This is our main pilgrimage and is an amazing day where we can join with many priests and people from different communities. The organisation itself is logistically challenging and all help will be much appreciated. Every single liturgical item including the chanters stand will be moved to Holywell on Friday and the church will be set up in the afternoon. I have done this exercise the last few years and I can confirm that it is a lot of work for one man. I do need help so please step up if you can on Friday to help with the moving and setting up.

On Saturday everything will need to come back and be put in the right place. I found this part the most challenging of all. After everything finishes at around 2.30pm on Saturday, everyone usually disappears from the well and I'm left with all the items in the church to be collected and loaded and I must also clean the church. I don't complain about this; the problem is that the church should be locked at 4pm and the lock given in to reception. This is their working time and I have no power to make them work overtime.

So please, if you can stay after the services on Saturday and help, please do as there is a lot of work.

The Hieararchical visit is amazing news and we need to show good hospitality to our Bishop. So please bring a plate of food to share on the day. In the far end of the church I will put a few tables out to leave your food. If you have any ideas for this part of the organisation please let me know. All ideas and help are more than welcome.

Some people will join the walk from Chester to Holywell. The walk will start at 2.30am from St. Barbaras. Please note that the group starts at 2.30am sharp and will not wait for late arrivals. If you come late you'll have to chase them! The group doesn't have an official leader, safeguard or first aider. Everyone should be well prepared for the walk. It usually takes over 6 hours at a moderate walking pace.

Last year the people walked in a hurricane and very poor weather. This year the forecast shows a nice, calm, sunny morning with temperatures over 10 degrees, and 18 degrees during the day.

Please contact Pr. Vera if you have any questions. The most important thing is to have comfortable shoes and a nice rain coat and warm dry cloths in your little rucksack. When you arrive you can change in the shrine facilities at Holywell and you will have a pleasant day.

For all information and questions, please contact me or Pr. Vera.

Glory to God for everything!

Fr. John

Announcements

- Our annual Pilgrimage to the Shrine of St Winefride in Holywell will take place on Saturday the 3rd October. I will need help in moving many liturgical items to Holywell and then back to Chester. If anyone can spare a few hours on Friday afternoon and/or Saturday late afternoon, please let me know.

The Annual Pilgrimage to the Shrine of St Winefride

Saturday 3rd October 2026

📍 **Holywell, Flintshire, North Wales, CH8 7LS**

Services

10.00am Matins

11.00am Divine Liturgy, Procession to the Shrine and Blessing of the Waters

2.30pm Great Vespers

Pilgrimage Walk

Starting at 2.30am from St Barbara's Orthodox Church Chester, walking to Holywell.



**Presided by His
Grace Bishop
Maximos of Melitene**



Volunteers Needed



Volunteers are needed to help Fr John move the liturgical items from Chester to Holywell on Friday afternoon and from Holywell to Chester on Saturday afternoon. Please contact Fr John if you're able to help.



To celebrate the visit of His Grace Bishop Maximos of Melitene, we kindly ask anyone who is able to prepare a couple of dishes to share at the picnic following the service of the blessing of the waters.

For more information about this event please contact Fr John.

For more information about the pilgrimage walk specifically, please contact Presbytera Vera.

Upcoming Services

27 Sep Sunday	09.00am 10.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	1 st Sunday of St. Luke
30 Sep Wednesday	6.30pm 7.15pm	Vespers Catechesis	
3 Oct Saturday	2.30am 10.00am 11.00am 2.30pm	Pilgrimage walk Matins Divine Liturgy Vespers	The Annual Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Saint Winefride
4 Oct Sunday	09.00am 10.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	2 nd Sunday of St. Luke

The remainder of the services for October will be announced in due course.



Synaxarion

The Holy Protection of the Theotokos

The Feast of the Protection commemorates the appearance of the most holy Theotokos in the Church of Blachernae in Constantinople in the tenth century, as recorded in the life of Saint Andrew the Fool for Christ's sake. While the multitudes of the faithful were gathered in church, Epiphanius, the friend of Saint Andrew, through the Saint's prayers, beheld the Virgin Mary above the faithful and spreading out her veil over them, signifying her unceasing protection of all Christians. Because of this we keep a yearly feast of gratitude, imploring our Lady never to cease sheltering us in her mighty prayers.

The Feast is celebrated on October 1. In the 1950s, the Church of Greece began to observe the Feast on October 28.

Apolytikion of Holy Protection of the Theotokos

First Tone

O Virgin, we extol the great grace of thy Protection, which thou didst spread out like a bright cloud beyond all understanding; for thou dost invisibly protect thy people from the foe's every assault. Since we have thee as our shelter and certain help, we cry to thee with our whole soul: Glory to thy great deeds, O most pure Maid. Glory to thy shelter most divine. Glory to thy care and providence for us, O spotless one.

Saint Winefride (Gwenffrewi)

Born probably between 610 and 620, Winefride was said to be the child of Tyfid and Gwenlo who were of noble birth. As a child she resolved to dedicate her life to God by living a life of chastity and prayer. Winefride was martyred as a teenager one Sunday as St Beuno, Winefride's priestly uncle and spiritual father, was preparing to serve the Liturgy on the Feast of Saint Alban (June 22nd). A young prince named Caradog, hot and thirsty from hunting called at the cottage for something to drink. Finding the beautiful Winefride alone there he attempted to seduce her. Winefride fled down the valley to the chapel of Saint Beuno pursued by Caradog. He caught her by the chapel door and in his rage at being rejected he beheaded her. Where her head fell a spring of water gushed forth and thus created the Holy Well that has been a place of pilgrimage ever since. Saint Beuno replaced her head and restored her to life after he had pronounced a curse on Caradog who, it is said, "melted away like wax before the fire". One mark was left as a reminder of the miracle-a slender white scar like a thread encircling her neck. It was from this, according to one account, that she received the name of Winefride. (Wen or Gwen = white, she is said to have been originally called 'Brewi'). After her martyrdom, Winefride continued to live a holy life first as a hermit and then as a nun at Gwytherin, a remote place in Denbighshire, firstly under the Abbess Theonia then as abbess over eleven nuns. She remained as superior at Gwytherin until her death fifteen years later. Robert, Prior of Shrewsbury, in his vita adds she also founded a convent at Saint Beuno's church in Holywell and gives an account of her death. "When the time came for her departure from this world, Winefride bade the virgins to keep their vows of chastity and guard their faith. Receiving the last sacrament from the Abbot Eleri, she died at the beginning of November and was buried in the churchyard at Gwytherin next to Tenoï and with the confessors Senanus and Chebius and other holy men and women. After her death many came to Gwytherin to be cured of their infirmities." One of the first books ever printed in English by William Caxton circa 1485 was a translation of Prior Robert's vita, The life of Saint Winefride in which he states, "...and after the hede of the vyrgyne was cut of and touchyd the ground, ...sprang up a welle of spryngyng water largely enduring unto this day, whiche heleth all languors and sekenesses, as well in men as in bestes; whiche welle is named after the name of the vyrgyne and is called Saint Wenefredes Well..."

Source: <https://shrewsburyorthodox.com/local-saints/saint-winefride-gwenffrewi/>



Theo has won the Environmental Award at the BBC Radio Manchester Make a Difference Awards!

Theo was recognised for his fantastic litter-picking challenge, which has raised more than £4,000 for [Down Syndrome Cheshire](#). He originally set out to collect 21 bags of rubbish during Down Syndrome Awareness Month, with the number representing chromosome 21. In true Theo style, he did not stop there and has now more than doubled his target!

Theo and his family have been part of our church for many years. He is such a wonderful man. May God bless you, and your family!

<https://www.derwen.ac.uk/latest-news/theo-wins-bbc-award/>

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

Β' Κορ. στ', 16-18 - ζ', 1

Ἀδελφοί, ὑμεῖς ἐστε ναὸς Θεοῦ ζῶντος, καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ Θεός ὅτι, Ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω· καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτῶν Θεός, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μοι λαός.

Διό, Ἐξέλθετε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν καὶ ἀφορίσθητε, λέγει Κύριος, καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἄπτεσθε· κἀγὼ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἔσομαι ὑμῖν εἰς πατέρα, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μοι εἰς υἱούς καὶ θυγατέρας, λέγει Κύριος Παντοκράτωρ. Ταῦ- τας οὖν ἔχοντες τὰς ἐπαγγελίας, ἀγαπητοί, καθαρίσωμεν ἑαυτοὺς ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος, ἐπιτελοῦντες ἀγιωσύνην ἐν φόβῳ Θεοῦ.

EPISTLE READING

2 Cor. 6: 16-18 ; 7: 1

Brethren, you are the temple of the living God; as God said, I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

CHILD'S EVENING PRAYER

Lord, Jesus Christ, You received the children who came to You. Receive also from Your child this evening prayer. Shelter me under the protection of Your wings that I may lie down in peace and sleep. Awaken me in due time that I may glorify You, for You alone are good and love all people.

Into Your hands, O Lord Jesus Christ, I commend my spirit and body; bless me, save me, and grant me eternal life.

The Father is my hope, the Son is my refuge, the Holy Spirit is my shelter. Holy Trinity, glory to You. Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.

ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΜΟΝ ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ

Ἦχος πλ. δ'.

Ἐξ ὕψους κατήλθες ὁ εὐσπλαγχνος, ταφὴν κατεδέξω τριήμερον, ἵνα ἡμᾶς ἐλευθερώσης τῶν παθῶν. Ἡ ζωὴ καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις ἡμῶν, Κύριε, δόξα σοι.

RESURRECTION APOLYTIKION

Plagal of the 4th Mode

You the Compassionate came down from above, you accepted burial for three days, that you might free us from the passions. Our life and resurrection, Lord, glory to you!



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

ΛΟΥΚ. Ε΄, 1-11

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκεῖνῳ, ἐστὼς ὁ Ἰησοῦς παρὰ τὴν λίμνην Γεννησαρέτ, εἶδε δύο πλοῖα ἐστῶτα παρὰ τὴν λίμνην· οἱ δὲ ἀλιεῖς ἀποβάντες ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἀπέπλυναν τὰ δίκτυα. ἐμβὰς δὲ εἰς ἓν τῶν πλοίων, ὃ ἦν τοῦ Σίμωνος, ἠρώτησεν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἐπαναγαγεῖν ὀλίγον· καὶ καθίσας ἐδίδασκεν ἐκ τοῦ πλοίου τοὺς ὄχλους. ὡς δὲ ἐπαύσατο λαλῶν, εἶπε πρὸς τὸν Σίμωνα· ἐπανάγαγε εἰς τὸ βάθος καὶ χαλάσατε τὰ δίκτυα ὑμῶν εἰς ἄγραν. καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Σίμων εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἐπιστάτα, δι' ὅλης τῆς νυκτὸς κοπιάσαντες οὐδὲν ἐλάβομεν· ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ ῥήματί σου χαλάσω τὸ δίκτυον. καὶ τοῦτο ποιήσαντες συνέκλεισαν πλῆθος ἰχθύων πολὺ· διερρήγγυτο δὲ τὸ δίκτυον αὐτῶν. καὶ κατένευσαν τοῖς μετόχοις τοῖς ἐν τῷ ἑτέρῳ πλοίῳ τοῦ ἐλθόντας συλλαβεῖσθαι αὐτοῖς· καὶ ἦλθον καὶ ἐπλησαν ἀμφότερα τὰ πλοῖα, ὥστε βυθίζεσθαι αὐτά. ἰδὼν δὲ Σίμων Πέτρος προσέειπε τοῖς γόνασιν Ἰησοῦ λέγων· ἔξελθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, ὅτι ἀνὴρ ἁμαρτωλὸς εἰμι, Κύριε· θάμβος γὰρ περιέσχεν αὐτὸν καὶ πάντας τοὺς σὺν αὐτῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἄγρᾳ τῶν ἰχθύων ἧ συνέλαβον, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ Ἰάκωβον καὶ Ἰωάννην, υἱοὺς Ζεβεδαίου, οἱ ἦσαν κοινωνοὶ τῷ Σίμωνι. καὶ εἶπε πρὸς τὸν Σίμωνα ὁ Ἰησοῦς· μὴ φοβοῦ· ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἀνθρώπους ἔσῃ ζωγρῶν. καὶ καταγαγόντες τὰ πλοῖα ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, ἀφέντες ἅπαντα ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ.

GOSPEL READING

Luke 5: 1-11

At that time, as Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch. And Simon answered, Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets. And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all who were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men. And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.



SERMON ON THE GOSPEL READING

The church in Corinth had come into being with a bang. But notwithstanding the abundance of gifts of the Holy Spirit in the new Christian community, the problem was obvious. The former pagans were still behaving like pagans – divisive, posturing, slandering, sexually immoral - not as members of ‘the temple of the living God’ (6:16). Christians need to show themselves to be true sons and daughters of God, to be like Him, and that means being different, separated from the impure and unclean ways of the world. Belief in Christ and pursuit of the passions are incompatible. The Christian way is to cleanse oneself deeply, inside and out, and to ‘make holiness perfect in the fear of God’ (7:1). That is the message of today’s epistle.

It had not taken long for the Apostles’ ‘catching men’ missionary mandate, given to them by the Lord as we read in today’s Gospel, to move them into pagan waters. The ‘fish’ caught there in the Gospel nets, however, were no longer people inculcated with the history and laws of the Old Testament, as were the Jews. On the contrary, they were filled with pagan beliefs and practices, the defiling ways of the gods. This was the problem at Corinth; it was the problem in every place where pagans were turning to Christ.

How to deal with this problem, that was the question faced by the Ancient Church, increasingly gearing herself up for a long-term future, once the initial Apostle-led phase of mission was over. How to effect the deep transformation of pagan converts, to make them Christian through and through. How to turn people from pursuing the passions to pursuing holiness. The answer, as we know, was the catechumenate, which changed the approach from instruction after baptism to instruction before baptism, and took aspiring entrants through a whole life process of Christian transformation before they became part of ‘the temple of the living God’. That could not happen in a rush. A ‘slow cooker’ approach was needed, as it were, to effect in them the shedding of their pagan beliefs and practices and replace them with a Christian identity, a Christian history, a Christian way of thinking, and a Christian set of behaviours. The Church wanted to make real Christians who could and would aim to live holy lives and thereby add to the quality and distinctiveness of Christian community life, not diminish it by premature admittance.

The processing of converts through the catechumenate proved to be very successful. Indeed, the Church soon realised that it was the very quality and distinctiveness of Christian community life itself, effectively maintained by the catechumenate, that attracted increasing numbers of pagans to want to join them, so much so that it is reckoned that by the time of St Constantine the Great, up to ten percent of the imperial population had become Christians. Quantity and quality. We must remember that this happened in an atmosphere of hostility and persecution, and yet people wanted to become Christians because they saw the life that the Christians lived. As one writer put it, ‘Beauty of life...causes strangers to join the ranks...We do not talk about great things; we live them’ (Minucius Felix, Octavius 31.7; 38.5). All these brothers and sisters of ours were doing was seeking to live the message of today’s epistle and providing a careful way for others to join with them.

What can we learn for today? The more we concentrate on cleansing ourselves and pursuing holiness, the more the inherent beauty of the Orthodox Christian life will shine forth in us and in our communities. The more we will be able - through the catechumenate - to help the increasing number of people who want to become Orthodox out of previous patterns of life and thinking into this same beauty. The more we will find ourselves thereby obeying the enduring mission mandate of Christ.

Protopresbyter John Garnett

For your prayers

29 Sep	Max Anthony Alexander Gibson	Baptised this day iin 2013
2 Oct	Demetrios (<i>Patriarch</i>) Haralambos Theohari	Laid to rest this time in 1991 Laid to rest this time in 2003
3 Oct	Mark Prisceanu	Baptised this day in 2019



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 a small salary for the priest, all charitable work of the church, and all the fundraisings organised by 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 the envelopes located at the entrance of the church. If you use card payment for your donations, and you'd like to Gift aid your payment, please select this option on the card machine once your payment is complete.

Thank you for your continous support !



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