

THE NARTHEX

The believers were first called Christians at Antioch

ACTS. 9:26

MARCH _APRIL 2013

The Orthodox Church of St. Dunstan Poole-Bournemouth
The Antiochian Orthodox Deanery of The United Kingdom and Ireland
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East
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The Bishop

It is not far off twenty years ago that our deanery was founded within the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch. In 1995 we were under a vicar-bishop, directly responsible to the Patriarch. Since that time, the vicariate of Western Europe has grown into the Metropolitan see of an Archbishop. Not long ago there were three assistant bishops but now matters have changed radically. Our beloved Patriarch Ignatius has now fallen asleep in the Lord and on top of this grief, our own Archbishop, John, has been elected to take over his office, so we are currently without direct episcopal care during a time of interregnum. Furthermore, our newly elected Patriarch has taken back to Syria, bishop Ephraim to assist him - he had been appointed originally to have pastoral care over the British Isles.

For a number of years - knowing that we were established in the first place and remain a Deanery whose very function is as a mission for Orthodoxy in these islands - It has been felt that we need a bishop resident in Britain. Not only would such a bishop be a centre of unity among us but also, would be able to advise and bless with authority all we undertake in the name of the Lord.

I must announce to you now, something that might, God-willing, culminate in the answer to many dreams and prayers within the deanery, both of the clergy and people. When we shall receive a new Archbishop I cannot say; possibly in

the Autumn. Meanwhile, our Dean, Archpriest Gregory, having attended the enthronement of His Beatitude, Patriarch John in Beirut in February, took with him a petition from all the Deanery clergy. It requests that the Holy Synod consider appointing for the British Isle a bishop from among one of our own celibate priests. If this sounds presumptive, I may add that the original suggestion came, in this instance, from one of the current assistant bishops himself. Reading between the lines here, we can entertain a quiet hopefulness at the very least.

The petition has put forward the name of Fr. Philip Hall, priest of our parish in Lincoln. You can find out more about him, following the parish links on the Deanery Web Site. Should this proposal be accepted by the Holy Synod or indeed, should they appoint someone else as a resident bishop for Britain, it is evident that it has great implications for all seventeen communities here within the British Deanery. Alongside the obvious spiritual blessing, there will also be, on our part, an obligation to provide financially in order to support such a bishop's ministry.

At this stage, the estimated cost to be born within the Deanery is around £40,000 per annum. This would cover housing, secretarial assistance, a small stipend and various expenses. It is envisaged that such a bishop would live in the area of Manchester (nearly all other Orthodox bishops in

Britain live in London - not a healthy state of affairs for the spreading of Orthodoxy. Manchester has much cheaper housing costs yet has excellent communications by road, rail and air. I may draw your attention to the fact that as soon as any bishop is available for visiting in Britain we, as a parish, are first on the list for an episcopal visit. Among other things, Reader David is to be elevated to the rank of Subdeacon. It is a sad state of affairs but for more than seventeen years, all three communities in which I have served from Cornwall to Poole have never been blessed with a bishop's visit. This, in itself of course, is a sign that our archdiocese is too large for one bishop and just as our Metropolitan had received three assistant bishops, he was called to become our Patriarch. It has always been understood that being an Orthodox Christian in Britain is something of a lonely furrow to plough, as they say; many Orthodox Christians can feel isolated here but this situation has to change and our invisibility must come to an end. Having our own bishop, especially one who is British himself, is essential to the furtherance of our mission.

To this end we as a congregation need to be aware that we shall have to contribute financially to make this possible. As stated before, the Deanery will need to raise in the region of £40,000 per annum to meet the housing, stipendiary, secretarial and travel needs of such a bishop. This will mean each of our communities throughout the Deanery making a regular and

proportional contribution to a bishop's fund. This money would come not from what is raised by the Foundation (BPOCF) that owns and runs our building (which is separate from the parish legally and financially) but from the parish which raises money through collections at the Liturgy. Currently, the parish spends its money on buying supplies and other items for the services and makes a small profit on the sale of votive candles; it contributes a variable amount each year towards the heating and lighting costs of the church and also makes a small contribution towards the Deanery and the Archdiocese. It is this latter item that the Parish Committee will have to discuss, assessing both what is reasonable, given the size of our collections together with the obvious Christian obligation to support a resident bishop should we be granted one. Personally, I can see no reason at balking at such a challenge for to reject it would be mere congregationalism, hiding within our own world and a failure to live up to the catholic nature of what it is to be an Orthodox Christian community. The opportunity before us now, should it be agreed by the Holy Synod, would represent a great step forward towards the culmination of our original vision when the Deanery was established in 1995 and I rejoice yet again to state that we exist not just for the spiritual benefit and pastoral care of our members but for the re-hallowing of Britain in its ancient faith. Without doubt, for this mission we need a bishop here in Britain to lead us with apostolic authority.

Fr. Chrysostom



THE LENTEN PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, meddling, lust of power and idle talk.

(Prostration)

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to thy servant.

(Prostration)

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother, for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

(Prostration)

Make twelve metanias, saying each time: God be gracious unto me, a sinner.

Repeat the whole prayer, straight through with only one prostration at the end.



KEEPING THE GREAT FAST

The general rule of the Fast is not to eat Meat, fish, dairy produce (including eggs) and Olive Oil; neither is alcohol or wine permitted on Saturdays and Sundays). But what is the spiritual meaning of the Fast? Remember, a fast without prayer is just a diet and prayer without almsgiving is hypocrisy. The Fast is not deprivation but a voluntary abstinence.

- It is not a humiliation of the flesh but liberation and refreshing for the spirit.
- It is not imprisoning the senses but setting them free to contemplate God.
- In renouncing the appetite for foods and sensual pleasures it elevates the soul's appetite for the love of God.
- Instead of confinement or restriction, real fasting aims at joy and greatness of heart.

SERVICES

Vespers is normally served on Saturday's at 5.00pm in the Saints of Britain chapel. Fr. Chrysostom is available for Confession afterwards. The Proskomedie is served at 9.0am and Orthros before the Liturgy at 9.30am.

MARCH

Sun 3rd The Prodigal Son
Divine Liturgy 10.30am with
The Slavanye Choir

Sun 10th Sunday of the Last Judgement - Meatfare Sunday
Chrismation of Fidelmia (June)
Hackwill 9.30am
Divine Liturgy 10.30am

Mon 11th **Meat Fast Begins**

17th Sunday of Cheesefare -
Forgiveness Sunday Divine
Liturgy 10.30am

Mon 18th **Beginning of
The Great Fast**

24th First Sunday of Great Lent
Sunday of orthodoxy Divine
Liturgy of St. Basil 10.30am

Mon 25th The Feast of the
Annunciation

Sun 31st Second Sunday of
Great Lent - St. Gregory
Palamas Divine Liturgy of St.
Basil 10.30am

APRIL

Sun 7th Third Sunday of Great
Lent - Veneration of the Cross
Divine Liturgy of St. Basil
10.30am

Sun 14th Fourth Sunday of
Great Lent - St. John Climacus
Divine Liturgy of St. Basil
10.30am

Sun 21st Fifth Sunday of Great
Lent - St. Mary of Egypt Divine
Liturgy of St. Basil 10.30am

Sun 28th Entry of Our Lord -
Palm Sunday Divine Liturgy of St.
Basil 10.30am