

THE NARTHEX

The believers were first called Christians at Antioch
ACTS. 9:26

October-November 2011

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
Parish Priest: Fr. Chrysostom MacDonnell 42 Coventry Close, Corfe Mullen, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 3UP Tel. 01202-602628 e-mail: fr.chrysostom@meowmail.com
www.saint-dunstan.org www.antiochian-orthodox.co.uk
Reader: David Wallis Tel. 01209-217499

WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?

As most of you will know, if you go to the top of the north aisle of the church and pass through the door, you will find yourself in a small chapel that we have recently furnished. This has been dedicated to the Saints of Britain and a reproduction of an icon commemorating the native saints of these islands is to be found near the north door of the iconostasis. Gradually, we should acquire more icons to fix onto the walls. Being small, the chapel is easily heated and will be a comfortable setting for weekday services, especially during the winter months. Although the Divine Liturgy may be served there, it is mainly used for Vespers on Saturday evenings at 5.00pm as well as to hear confessions afterwards for those preparing to receive the Holy Gifts the following morning.

As much as possible, we should avoid delaying the start of the Liturgy on Sunday, as has happened before, in order to hear confessions. In the Greek practice (followed in the Patriarch of Antioch), Orthros (Matins) should be served immediately before the Liturgy under normal circumstances, although I am available in church between 9.00am and 9.30am before I start the Kairon and Proskomedia (Preparation services). The main part of the church, the nave, of course, has the sacred icons of saints from all over the Orthodox world. Many have been given as gifts and, in a way represent, as well as particular saints, the many lands from which our multi-national congregation has come. We have saints from the Middle East, the Russian lands,

Greece, Romania, North Africa, even one who served in the USA.

The point, though, does need to be made that there is no such thing as a national church in Orthodoxy. The Orthodox Church is the One and only catholic-apostolic Church of Jesus Christ, even if it subsists under different national and cultural guises with many different local customs and varied liturgical practices. All of them, as a living part of the Body of Christ and with which we have full communion, may be described as *Greek Orthodox*, not because they are Hellenistic, *ethnically* speaking but because, *theologically*, they are Greek - our understanding of the mystery of faith came originally through the medium of the Greek language; the Koine (common) Greek of the Roman Empire - the very language that was used to record the tradition of the first Apostles in the pages our New Testament.

Here in Poole, our life together as a community has two aims: firstly, working out our own salvation and yet, at the same time, saving others who are willing to hear the gospel. It is very easy for a congregation to turn inward and minister only to itself. This, of course, is necessary - we must minister to one another but it is not the whole story. If we attend only to ourselves, not only shall we be judged for it, we shall eventually fade away, given time. Sooner or later, Orthodoxy, as the real form of apostolic Christianity, must become part of the culture of Britain *once again* as it was

before the Norman Conquest of 1066.

This little chapel, therefore, is a constant reminder that, here, we also invoke the intercession of the many pre-Schism saints who hallowed these Isles with their lives and prayers. It is a constant reminder that whether we were born in Britain in an Orthodox family; whether we are native born and have become Orthodox or have come from abroad bringing the faith with us - whatever our personal origins - we believe in Divine providence; that wherever we find ourselves in life, it is always within the foreknowledge and love of God; that our ministry and witness are to be exercised wherever we are.

I do not think, in fact, that it is too bold a statement to say that, whatever the debate about economic migration within the EU and especially into Britain, it will be Eastern Europeans, by the grace of God, who will prove to be the ones who reintroduced the true form of Christianity into these islands after a gap of nearly a millennium.

This must seem a tall order for a relatively small congregation that has only just begun to take root here. Moreover, the mere setting up of a small chapel or the renaming of an old building after one of the Anglo-Saxon saints might appear an insignificant gesture. But everything we do, seeks, where we can, to make contact with the world around us, even through a history which most of its people have either forgotten or have never known.

All of us, of course, not

having been called to the monastic life, must, of necessity, be in contact with the world around us: our work, our leisure, our commerce, our socialising are all in contact with the world. How we do that without becoming taken over, subsumed and tainted by the forms that are passing away, is the very content of our ascetic struggle. As Saint James tells us: *'Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained from the world.'* [Jm.1:27]. So, whoever we are or wherever we find ourselves, whatever we have or whatever we are doing, we are invited to serve Christ. Like Philip the deacon in the Acts of the Apostles, at one moment preaching the gospel to the Ethiopian Eunuch on the road between Jerusalem and Gaze, the next, caught up in the Spirit and being found in Azotus, preached there as well - we also are caught up in the Spirit, that wherever we are, Christ may be proclaimed. It is a clear dictum of the Christian spiritual life that no matter our outward circumstance, we are always 'in Christ'; that whatever befall us, we redeem the time. As St. Paul tells us: *'And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.'* [Colossians 3:17] *Fr. Chrysostom*

THE HOLY DOORS

All actions during our liturgy are symbolic, manifesting an inner meaning and are worthy of mystical interpretation. A case in point is the opening and closing of the Holy Doors during Great Vespers on Saturday evening and the eves of festivals. The doors are opened for the start of the service and remain so during Psalm 103(104), representing the gates of paradise open as the psalm, celebrating the Creation, is chanted. They are then closed for the Great Litany that we offer up like weeping Adam, excluded from our primal state of bliss. The doors are opened again for the solemn entrance with the censer, the priest being

now vested in the Phelonion, representing Christ coming into the world. As the bringer of saving light, this theophany of Christ is greeted with the most ancient hymn, *Phos Hilaron* (c. 150AD). The doors are closed once more for the litanies that follow the Prokeimenon verses, marking Christ's ascension in glory and the Church's patient attendance on his final advent to judge the world. Following the Trasagion prayers, the doors are opened for the last time at the singing of the Dismissal Hymns appointed for the day and for the final blessing.

At Orthros (Matins), with the curtain drawn at the start, the doors are only opened when we reach the reading of the gospel. Here, the doors stand for the great stone before the tomb of Christ, being rolled back for the glad tidings of His resurrection from the dead. The priest on ordinary Sundays reads one of the eleven Resurrection gospels in sequence from the side of the Holy Table, thus representing the Angel within the tomb, announcing the good news to the Myrrh-bearing women. The doors now stand open until the very end of the service.



THE FONT

As you will know, we now have a proper font for Baptisms that is a very splendid addition to our liturgical artefacts. So, our thanks are offered to the following people who all contributed towards the cost:

- Oana, Scott and Jacob Christopher Langston
- Mihaela, Claudiu and Silvia Beatrice Lazar
- Madalina Lavender
- Mirela, Ionut, Nicole Alexandra and Corina Maria Constantin
- Georgiana, Cristian and Eric Alexandru
- Elena and Silviu Ilie
- The Ambrose Family
- Alexandra, Mihai and Albert Alexandru
- Andreea Elena and Alexander

CHURCH CHOIR

Are you a good singer who can also sight-read music? If so, have you ever thought about singing in the Choir during the Liturgy as a service to God and His people? If you would like an audition, please contact Presbytera Olympias (Mo) after any service or call her on 01202-602628.



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 and Orthros are served before the Liturgy at 9.30am

OCTOBER

2nd Sun 16th after Pentecost
Divine Liturgy at 10.30am

9th Sun 17th after Pentecost
Divine Liturgy at 10.30am

16th Sun 18th after Pentecost
Romanian Liturgy at 11.00am

23rd Sun 19th after Pentecost
Divine Liturgy at 10.30am

30th Sun 20th after Pentecost
Divine Liturgy at 10.30am

NOVEMBER

5th Sat 3.30pm Baptism of Jacob Langsdon

6th Sun 21st after Pentecost
Divine Liturgy at 10.30am

13th Sun 22nd after Pentecost
Divine Liturgy at 10.30am

15th Tues **Beginning of the Nativity Fast**

20th Sun 23rd After Pentecost
Possible Romanian Liturgy to be announced - Bournemouth Sinfonietta Choir Concert at 3.00pm

21st Mon Entry of the Theotokos
27th Sun 24th after Pentecost
Divine Liturgy at 10.30am

NB Some of these times and arrangements might be subject to change. These will be announced.

