

DIOCESE OF SOUROZH
RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
CATHEDRAL OF THE DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD
AND ALL SAINTS

67 ENNISMORE GARDENS, LONDON SW7 1NH

CATHEDRAL NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2015



- Nativity of the Mother of God and Exaltation of the Holy Cross
- Festive celebrations on the Patronal Feast of the Cathedral
 - Talk on the life and mission of St John the Baptist
 - Discussion on confession
 - St Aidan and a pilgrimage to Lindisfarne

THE EXALTATION OF THE CROSS

A Sermon of Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh



In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

We have been keeping these days the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. There is a passage in the Gospel in which the Lord says to us, "No one has greater love than he who gives his life for his neighbour". And these words resolve the antinomy between the horror of the Cross and the glory of it, between death and the Resurrection. There is nothing more glorious, more awe-inspiring and wonderful than to love and to be loved. And to be loved of God with all the life, with all the death of the Only-Begotten Son, and to love one another at the cost of all our life and, if necessary, of our death is both tragedy but mainly victory.

In the Canon of the Liturgy we say, "Holy, most Holy art Thou and Thine Only-Begotten Son and Thine Holy Spirit! Holy and most Holy art Thou because Thou hast so loved Thy world that Thou hast given Thine Only-Begotten Son that those who will believe in Him do not perish but have life eternal, Who hath come and hath fulfilled all that was appointed for our sakes, and in the night when He was betrayed - no! - when He gave Himself up, He took bread, and brake it and gave it to His disciples ..."

This is the divine love. At times one can give one's own life more easily than offer unto death the person whom one loves beyond all, and this is what God, our Father has done. But it does not make less the sacrifice of Him who is sent unto death for the salvation of one person or of the whole world.

And so when we think of the Cross we must think of this strangely inter-twined mystery of tragedy and of victory. The Cross, an instrument of infamous death, of punitive death to which criminals were doomed, because Christ's death was that of an innocent, and because this death was a gift of self in an act of love - becomes victory.

This is why Saint Paul could say, "It is no longer I, it is Christ Who lives in me." Divine love filled him to the brim and therefore there was no room for any other thought or feeling, any other approach to anyone apart from love, a love that gave itself unreservedly, love sacrificial, love crucified, but love exulting in the joy of life.

And when we are told in today's Gospel, 'Turn away from yourself, take up your Cross, follow Me' (Mark 8: 34) - we are not called to something dark and frightening. We are told by God: Open yourself to love! Do not remain a prisoner of your own self-centredness. Do not be, in the words of Theophane the Recluse, like a shaving of wood which is rolled around its own emptiness. Open yourself up! Look - there is so much to love, there are so many to love! There is such an infinity of ways in which love can be experienced, and fulfilled and accomplished... Open yourself and love - because

this is the way of the Cross! Not the way which the two criminals trod together with Christ to be punished for their crimes but the wonderful way in which giving oneself unreservedly, turning away from self, existing only for the other, loving with all one's being so that one exists only for the sake of the other - this is the Cross and the glory of the Cross.

So, when we venerate the Cross, when we think of Christ's crucifixion, when we hear the call of Christ to deny ourselves - and these words simply mean: turn away from yourself! Take up your cross! - we are called to open ourselves to the flood of Love Divine, that is both death to ourselves and openness to God and to each and to all.

In the beginning of the Gospel of St. John we are told, "And the Word Ewas with God". In the Greek it says "Godwards". The Word, the Son had no other love, no other thought, no other movement but towards the Beloved One, giving Himself to Him Who gave Himself perfectly to Him. Let us learn the glory of crucified Love, of this Love sacrificial which is, in the words of the Old Testament, stronger than death, stronger than hell, stronger than all things because it is Divine Life conquering us and poured through us onto all those who need to be loved in order to come to Life, to believe in Love and themselves to become children of Love, children of Light, inherit the Life eternal. Amen.

THE UNIVERSAL EXALTATION OF THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS OF THE LORD (14/27 September)



Troparion, Tone 1

O Lord, save Thy people / and bless Thine inheritance, / granting them victory over their enemies, // and guarding Thy community with Thy Cross.

Kontakion, Tone 4

Lifted up of Thine own will upon the Cross, O Christ God, / do Thou bestow Thy mercy upon the new community that beareth Thy Name. / Make us glad with Thy strength, / granting us victory over our enemies: / may Thy Cross assist us in battle, / weapon of peace // and unconquerable ensign of victory.

FESTIVE CELEBRATIONS ON THE PATRONAL FESTIVAL OF THE LONDON DORMITION CATHEDRAL



On 28th August 2015, the Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God was celebrated in the Cathedral. The Divine Liturgy was headed by His Eminence Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh. His Eminence Archbishop Anatoly of Kerch, together with clergy of the Cathedral and the diocese concelebrated.

At the Small Entrance, Archpriest Benedict Ramsden was granted a high Patriarchal award - the right to celebrate with open Royal Doors until the Cherubic hymn in recognition of his many years of faithful service to the Church.

At the Liturgy, Vladyka Elisey ordained the diaconate Pavel Kviatkevich. The newly-ordained deacon will be serving together with Archpriest Benedict Ramsden in the Newton Abbot Parish of the New Martyrs Elizabeth and Barbara.

Amongst the other guests were Archimandrite Antoniy (Sevryuk), Rector of the Stavropegic parish of the Great Martyr Katherine in Rome and Secretary of the Administration of the parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate in Italy, Hieromonk Afanasy (Potapov), a member of the clergy of St Katherine's, and Archpriest Raphael Armour, Rector of the Parish of St Ephrem the Syrian in Cambridge.

In his sermon, Vladyka emphasized the joy of the Feast of the Dormition. We do not speak of the death of the Mother of God, but rather of her Dormition or falling asleep. She was resurrected to eternal life in the Kingdom of her Son and she thereby reveals our destiny, which by her maternal intercession we hope to achieve.

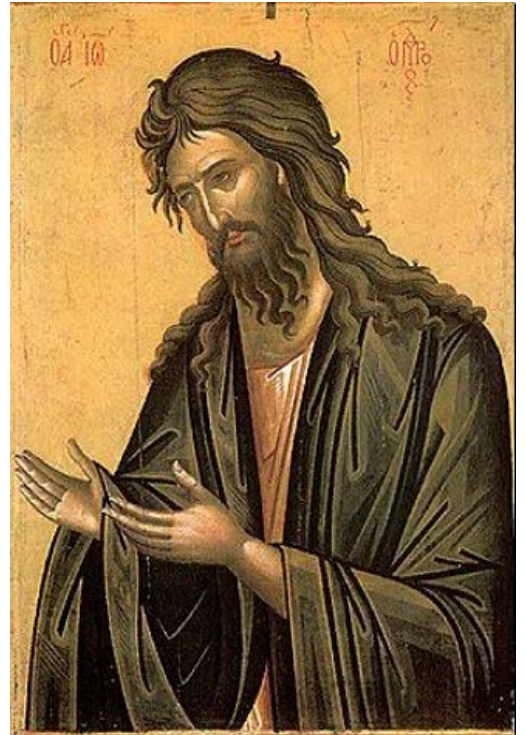


At the end of the service, Archbishop Elisey warmly welcomed Archpriest Dimitry Karpenko, who has been temporarily assigned to serve in the Diocese of Sourozh. Father Dimitry was previously Secretary of the diocesan administration of the Gubkin Diocese (Belgorod District, Russia). He is also a member of the Inter-Conciliar Presence of the Russian Orthodox Church and has a special interest in missionary work.

By Elena Kuzina

“PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD”: A Talk on the Life and Mission of St John the Baptist

The Prophet, the Forerunner and the Baptist are the words used to describe St John. He is one of the most important figures in the Bible: ‘among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist’ (Matthew 11:11). On Tuesday 8th September Archpriest Joseph Skinner gave a talk in the Cathedral Library on the remarkable life and great mission of St John the Baptist. The feast of his beheading is celebrated on Aug. 29th /Sept. 11th.



At the beginning of the talk, Father Joseph asked the audience a question: ‘What is a prophet? Is it just someone who foretells the future?’ He then explained that, in the Biblical understanding, it is much more than that - it is ‘one who speaks the mind of God’. Typically, prophets begin what they have to say with the words, ‘Thus saith the Lord’. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself testified that John was ‘more than a prophet’ (Matthew 11:9).

The birth of St. John the Baptist was miraculous. According to the Gospel, there was a righteous priest Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth who had no children because Elizabeth was barren and they were both old. Once, when Zacharias was on duty, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in the temple and predicted that Elizabeth would conceive a son who ‘will be great in the sight of the Lord’ and ‘will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born’ (Luke 1:15). Zacharias did not believe this because his wife was past child-bearing age and, as a punishment for his disbelief, was unable to speak until the day when his son was given the name of John.

The full-grown John appears very vividly in the beginning of the Gospel of Mark (1:2-3), where it says about him: “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way - a voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight paths for him’”. His main purpose was to prepare the way for the Christ whom the Jewish people had been expecting throughout history. Fr Joseph noted that the words Messiah (in Hebrew) and Christos (in Greek) have the same meaning: ‘anointed’. The Messiah was understood to be God’s special representative, an almighty king.

Fr Joseph made an interesting comparison of John’s preparatory work to the arrival of the Queen - ‘when Her Majesty is due to visit somewhere, she doesn’t just show up without any announcement: all kinds of people come beforehand and check everything to make sure all is ready’, and it was ‘so much more so for the Heavenly King’.

Remarkably, John the Baptist never married. It was very unusual in those days because of the importance of children and the perceived immortality through them.

He was 'a kind of prototype monk', as Fr Joseph explained. John preached 'a baptism of repentance', which literally means 'a change of mind'. When we are baptized, we unite ourselves to Christ. That's why, when John sees the Pharisees coming to him to repent and be baptized, he calls them 'a brood of vipers' and warns them not to repent just to feel good about themselves but to actually change their life.

In the middle of the talk Fr Joseph invited the participants to see the large icon of St John the Baptist in the Cathedral's small church (next to the entrance). He explained that St John has wings in the icon because he was a messenger of the Lord. His hand gesture is identical to that of a priest giving a blessing. The image of an axe at the root of a tree reflects the Gospel of Luke (3:9): 'The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire'.



Explaining further, Fr Joseph said that The Mother of God and St John the Baptist were the people closest to Christ. According to the Orthodox tradition of dedicating each day of the week to a Biblical person or event, Tuesday is the day of St John the Baptist.

The Gospel tells us that John the Baptist was put in prison and then beheaded by King Herod. During Herod's birthday party, the daughter of his wife Herodias danced and pleased the ruler who subsequently promised to give her anything that she might ask for. The girl consulted her mother, who nursed a grudge against John because he had told Herod that it was unlawful for him to marry her (as she was his brother's wife). Prompted by her mother, the girl's answer to Herod was 'I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter' (Mark 6:25). The king was 'distressed' but, because he gave his word in front of everybody, he could not refuse her. He sent an executor who beheaded John in prison and brought his head on a plate for Herodias's daughter who then gave it to her mother.

Among the questions asked by the audience, there was a question why thousands believed and got baptized by John. 'People believed him because he practiced what he preached' - answered Fr Joseph. John the Baptist lived a very simple life and what he was saying had power. Fr Joseph finished the talk by remarking that John the Baptist was 'a man of no compromise': truth was truth. While all other prophets were looking forward to Christ, John the Baptist accomplished the final act by baptizing the Lord and by showing Him to the people as the Messiah.

Archpriest Joseph Skinner is a priest of the Cathedral and Secretary for Department for Media and Publishing of the Diocese of Sourozh. The next talk in English will be on 22nd September at 19.30.

By Tatiana Salmon

“THE LORD CALLS US TO PERFECTION!”

Discussion on Confession with Fr Dimitry Karpenko



On Thursday, 3rd September, there was a meeting with Archpriest Dimitry Karpenko in the Cathedral Library. The subject of the discussion concerned the Sacrament of Confession. In the course of the discussion Father Dimitry answered exhaustively and in detail a large number of questions from parishioners. There were a large number of questions, relating both to the “theory” and the practice of confession.

Father Dimitry remarked that sometimes confession consists of just an observation and listing of sins: “Sometimes people regard confession as a kind of a ticket to Holy Communion. But it should not be like that. Priests are not judges, but witnesses before God. We come to God, and do not just observe that we did something improper, but are distressed with regard to what was done. We must remember that the Lord called us to perfection, and one must understand that this is a very high calling: there is always room to grow. So in the life of a Christian there must be daily internal analysis. The truth about ourselves, the extent to which we are distant from what the Lord calls for, may horrify us. Father Dimitry explained that in certain circumstances it is possible to receive Holy Communion without a preceding confession, on the condition that the priest, ideally the spiritual father, knows the person very well.

Father Dimitry spoke to the congregation about how the Sacrament of Confession existed at the time of early Christianity: “At the time of early Christianity, before receiving Holy Baptism, in the circle of believers there existed public penitence and confession. Such practice encouraged people to obey the commandments, because to repeat public confession again is not easy.”

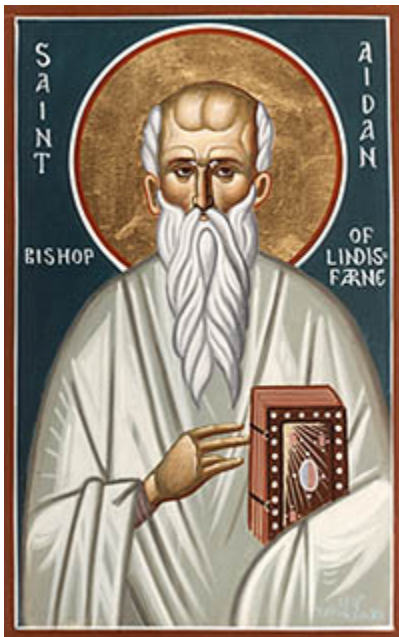
During the discussion Father Dimitry drew a parallel line between the Sacrament of Confession, which can be regarded as spiritual healing, and ordinary medicine: “One cannot sin in everything, just as one cannot suffer from all diseases at the same time. Just as in medicine, in spiritual life correct diagnosis is very important because on this depends the treatment.”

Since September 2015 Archpriest Dimitry Karpenko has been seconded for pastoral service in the Sourozh diocese. Previously he was the Secretary of the Diocesan Administration of the Gubkin diocese (Belgorod District, Russia). He is also a member of the Inter-Council Presence of the Russian Orthodox Church.

By Elena Kuzina (Translated from Russian by John Phillips)

BRITISH SAINTS

Saint Aidan of Lindisfarne



The Holy Hierarch Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne (+651, commemorated Aug. 31st / Sep. 13th) Saint Aidan was born in Ireland (then called Scotland) in the seventh century. As a monk of the monastery founded by St Columba (June 9) on the island of Iona, he was known for his strict asceticism. When the holy King Oswald of Northumbria wanted to convert his people to Christianity, he turned to the Celtic monks of Iona, rather than the Roman clergy at Canterbury. St Aidan was consecrated bishop and sent to Northumbria to take charge of the mission. King Oswald gave him the island of Lindisfarne near the royal residence of Bamburgh for his episcopal See. St Aidan founded the famous monastery on Lindisfarne in 635.

From Lindisfarne, St Aidan travelled all over Northumbria, visiting his flock and establishing missions. Oswald, who knew Gaelic from the time he and his family were exiled to Iona, acted as an interpreter for Bishop Aidan, who did not speak English. Thus, the king played an active role in the conversion of his people.

St Oswald was killed in battle against the superior forces of King Penda on August 5th, 642 at a place called Maserfield. St Aidan was deeply grieved by the king's death, but his successor St Oswin (August 20th) was also very dear to him.

King Oswin once gave St Aidan a horse and a cart for his journeys (the bishop usually travelled on foot). Soon after this, Bishop Aidan met a beggar and gave him the horse and cart. The king asked St Aidan why he had given the royal gift away when there were ordinary horses in the stables which were more suitable for a beggar. Aidan rebuked him, asking if the king regarded the foal of a mare more highly than the Son of God. At first, he did not understand. Then he fell at the bishop's feet, weeping tears of repentance. Asking for forgiveness, Oswin promised never again to judge St Aidan's charitable deeds.

St Aidan raised the king to his feet, declaring that he had never seen a king who was so humble. St Aidan foretold the death of King Oswin, saying that his people did not deserve such a good ruler. The prophecy was soon fulfilled, for St Oswin was murdered on August 20th, 651.

St Aidan departed to the Lord on August 31st, less than two weeks later. He died at Bamburgh, by the west wall of the church. The beam on which he was leaning to support himself still survives, even though the church was twice destroyed by fire. The beam may still be seen in the ceiling of the present church, above the baptismal font.

At first, the holy bishop Aidan was buried at Lindisfarne on the right side of the altar in the church of St Peter. Later, the saint's relics were translated to Iona, the monastery

where he had originally embraced the monastic life.

Full article is available here: <http://oca.org/saints/lives/2014/08/31/102445-st-aidan-the-bishop-of-lindisfarne>.

A PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY ISLAND OF LINDISFARNE

Reader Paul Fowler of the Orthodox Parish of St Aidan and St Chad of our diocese kindly shares his experience of a Pilgrimage to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne that has a recorded history from the 6th century.



Last October, the Nottingham Parish of St Aidan and St Chad went on a Pilgrimage to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne in Northumberland. Our reason for going on that pilgrimage was that Lindisfarne was the monastery where St Aidan, one of our patrons, was based.

We had booked the Marygate Retreat House on the island and had contacted the Vicar of Holy Island with a view to using the local church for services. On this pilgrimage we were joined by some friends from the Cathedral. For the pilgrimage we had hired a large minibus and we set off up north to Holy Island. It is only cut off from the Mainland when the tide is up so our journey had to be carefully planned to ensure we could drive over the causeway which links Lindisfarne to the mainland without having to wait in the cold until the sea had gone down. This was done by making planned stops on the way and then having a fish supper in Seahouses just along the coast until the way was clear for us to cross.

Marygate House is an ecumenical retreat house which we have used several times over the years and the staff welcomed us and during the week provided us with hot, simple and well cooked food - ideal for an autumnal pilgrimage to the north-east of England.

Every evening Vespers was served in the House Library - their chapel is now no longer able to be used due to structural issues - and the Divine Liturgy was served twice in the Ancient Church on the island. We also took the opportunity, several times, to cross to St Cuthbert's Island in the bay below the Church and pray at the place where Cuthbert himself prayed. On the mainland we visited the Church of St Aidan in nearby Bamburgh. We prayed at the place where Aidan reposed. We also visited the holy well at Holystone where St Paulinus (patron of the Newark Parish) once baptised 3000 people. Everyone came home with bottles filled with holy water both from St Aidan's isle and Holystone.

As we were coming back home as the Pilgrimage finished, we stopped at Durham and venerated the tombs of St Cuthbert and the Venerable Bede in the Cathedral.

By Paul Fowler

CATHEDRAL NEWSLETTER 30 YEARS AGO

AN IMPRESSION OF JUNIOR CAMP 1985

September 1985 (Newsletter No.178)

Rain and wind greeted the brightly clad, though dishevelled figures as they trudged reluctantly up the wet field for the start of the Junior Camp this year. They arrived in dribs and drabs - like the sun.

Soon the Camp picked up its rhythm; old friends met again and new ones were made; prize sticks were carved and treasured; every one became progressively muddier; unopened washbags became progressively staler and the sight of 'doc' Peter Scorer doing his rounds through the swirling mists was the only outward reminder that the weather had taken its toll on some of the younger campers.

'Volley-ball vultures' shouted benched supporters during the match between juniors and seniors; cheerleaders and team uniforms inspired great performances by all.

'Headgear' was obligatory and so a motley array of headbands, hats and masks adorned the setting of the barn dance - which was enlivened by the enthusiastic guest appearance of experienced dancers in the form of the Seniors.

Another guest who appeared for a day was greeted like a pop-star: the Bishop's arrival was preceded by awed whispers concerning the strictness of his inspection.

The entertainments entertained; from 'travel the world with Nathan and Vanya', through 'Rumpelstiltskin' to the 'French dwarf', the actors spanned the youngest and oldest - a night which was a worthy climax for the Camp.

The mud meant that all were less brightly clad for their departure, though the reluctance now was to leave; it was the tearful faces in the back of the coach as it pulled off which was the final reminder that despite the rain, despite the mud, the Camp was a success.

By Alexander Belopopsky



*Metropolitan
Anthony of Sourozh
with the campers,
1985*

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

PARISH MEETING SUNDAY OCTOBER 18TH

A regular general meeting of the parish will be held on Sun. Oct 18th at 3pm. The meeting will consider various questions about the current life of the parish.

PILGRIMAGE TO JERUSALEM 3-10/11/2015



With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh, a pilgrimage to the Holy Land will be organised from 3 to 10 November 2015. Departure from Gatwick Airport will be on Tuesday 3 November at 10:10am, arriving at Ben Gurion Airport in Tel-Aviv at 5:15pm. The flight EZY8817 is operated by EasyJet. EasyJet return flight EZY8818 from Ben Gurion

Airport (Tel Aviv) will be on Tuesday 10, November at 6.10pm, arriving at Gatwick Airport at 21:45. Estimated cost of the trip approximately £900. Accommodation in the hotel in Bethlehem and Tiberias. To join the pilgrimage group, please contact Archdeacon Dmitry Nedostupenko on his mobile number 07943711175 or by email: pilgrimages@sourozh.org.

As you will be aware, the restoration and refurbishment of the Cathedral continues. This involves major expenditure and the church's resources are limited. Any donation, however small, is welcome and will help to maintain and beautify the Cathedral, which is our common spiritual home. You can donate by:

- Cash to the church collection boxes
- Online via the diocesan website www.sourozh.org (click «Donate»)
- A cheque or a bank transfer to **Lloyds Bank**

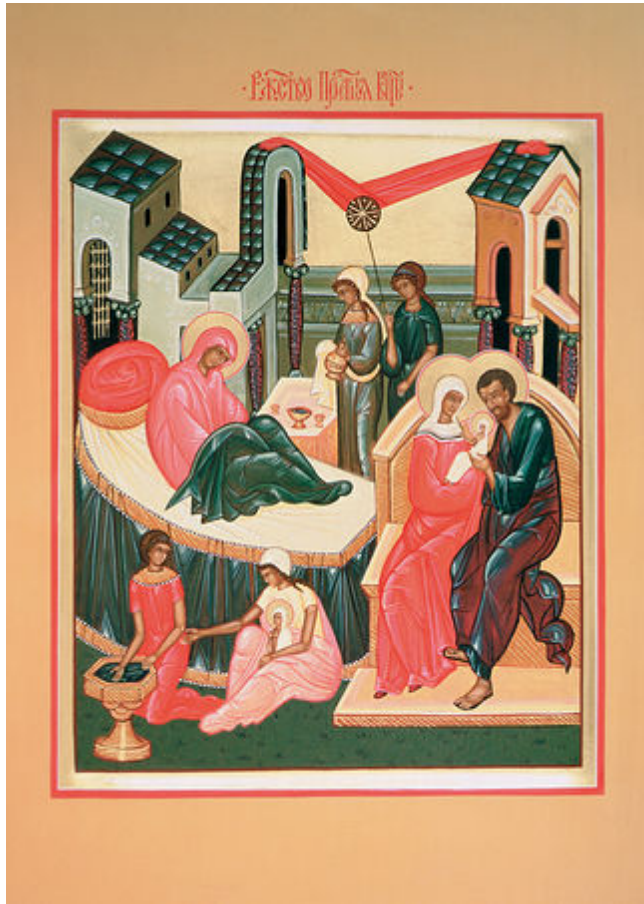
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The full timetable of the services is available via www.rocl.info.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR MOST HOLY LADY THE MOTHER OF GOD AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY (8/21 SEPTEMBER)



Troparion, Tone 4

Thy Nativity, O Mother of God, / hath brought joy to all the universe: / for from thee hath shone forth / the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God. / He hath loosed us from the curse and given the blessing; / He hath made death of no effect, // and bestowed on us eternal life.

Kondak, Tone 4

By thy holy Nativity, / O undefiled One, / Joachim and Anna were set free from the reproach of childlessness, / and Adam and Eve from the corruption of death. / Delivered from the guilt of sin, / thy people keep the feast as they sing unto Thee: // The barren woman beareth the Mother of God, who sustaineth our Life.

Diocesan Journal

A new issue, No. 110, of the diocesan journal Sourozh was published recently. It is dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the birth of Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, the founder of our diocese. It is available in the Cathedral shop, price £5.

Cathedral Newsletter is published with the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh.

Online-version is available via the diocesan website: www.sourozh.org

E-mail: cnewsletter.editor@gmail.com

We welcome your feedback and articles.
