

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
DIOCESE OF SOUROZH
CATHEDRAL OF THE DORMITION OF
THE MOTHER OF GOD

67 ENNISMORE GARDENS, LONDON SW7 1NH



Cathedral Newsletter

November 2016



*‘Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thy house,
and the dwelling-place of Thy glory.’
(Ps. 25:8)*

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Dear Readers,

We are happy to inform you that the Media and Publishing Department of the Diocese of Sourozh now has an online store, Sourozh Publications, where you can obtain the publications of the diocese. You can subscribe to the English or Russian editions of Cathedral Newsletter, and purchase the diocesan journal 'Sourozh' and the Diocesan Calendar and Lectionary. For prices and full information please visit the store at <https://sourozh.myshopify.com>.

*Cathedral Newsletter was prepared by:
Archpriest Joseph Skinner, Elena Kuzina,
Elena Creswell, John Newbery, Julia Pliauksta*

Diocesan News

CHILDREN'S DRAWING CONTEST 'THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN SCOTLAND'

A children's drawing competition 'The Orthodox Church in Scotland' was organized by the Russian Consulate General in cooperation with the Russian Orthodox School in Glasgow. The awards ceremony and opening of the exhibition of children's works in the Russian Orthodox School of Glasgow was attended by the Consul General of Russia in Edinburgh Andrey A. Pritsepov, Archpriest Georgiy Zavershinsky and the Director of the Orthodox School, Deacon Sergei Sokolovsky.

The contest winners were:

I – Simeon Wilson, aged 13

II – Valeriya Sokolovskaya, aged 14

III – Sofia MacGinniti, aged 10 /Ksenia Churbnova, aged 8.

The special prize for Creativity was awarded to Grigoriy Feigin, aged 7.

In the course of the evening there was a performance by a vocal ensemble directed by Svetlana Zvereva.

Guests of the event took part in folk games and amusements and made a traditional Russian circle dance – khorovod. The event ended with a friendly cup of tea.

Embassy Press Group



Cathedral News



*One of the old houses in the centre of Canterbury
(Photo by Julia Pliaksta)*

SCHOOL PILGRIMAGES

Pilgrimages are a significant part of our Parish school curriculum. They became an established tradition, particularly during the October half-term.

Five years ago in 2012 parents of the pupils decided with us to undertake pilgrimages by our own efforts. Our first trip was to Glastonbury, which is considered to be one of the most sacred places in England, often being referred as the 'English Holy Land'. From ancient times Glastonbury was a special place of veneration of the Mother of God.

There were not many of us: 12 parishioners and Fr Maxim Mitrofanov (currently Bishop Flavian of Cherepovets). Despite the small number of people, the pilgrimage touched us to the depth of our souls. We saw the very first abbey in England,

established in the place where St Joseph of Arimathea arrived in order to bring the gospel of the Word of God to Britain. We returned feeling spiritually animated and after we had shared our impressions with those in the school who could not go with us, we managed to inspire them to join us next time.

In 2013 a pilgrimage to St Albans took place. There were twice as many of us this time, 25 in all. Children wearing character costume dresses were active participants of the events. The church guide narrated the Life of the Saint. Archpriest Maxim Mitrofanov served a moleben to St Alban.

In 2014 we visited Winchester to venerate the relics of St Swithun. In 1996, the Russian icon-painter S.K. Fedorov completed a nine figure deisis in the crypt of Winchester Cathedral. Among the saints, Fedorov depicted St Swithun, patron Saint of Winchester Cathedral and St Birinus, the first missionary Bishop of Winchester. Our young pilgrims were happy to discover Orthodox icons in an Anglican church. Here we saw a big memorial book in which the parishioners who died during World War I and their contemporaries who died in military actions were commemorated. Every day a guard of honour of soldiers comes and reads the names from this book in order to commemorate them.

In 2015 a pilgrimage to York took place. York is the home of one of the largest cathedrals in Europe. In this minster there was a Parish of Ss Constantine and Helen. For many centuries these Saints were venerated here. Archpriest Dimitry Karpenko served a moleben to Ss Constantine and Helen.

In 2016 we went to Canterbury: this time there were 70 of us. Some of us took the train, while others went by car. During our pilgrimage it was planned to visit the three holy places which are World Heritage sites and are protected by UNESCO.

In 1997 the English speaking Christians celebrated an important date. 1400 years ago on Christmas Day King Ethelbert of Kent and 10,000 of his subjects were baptised in the River Swale by St Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, a disciple of the Roman Pope St Gregory Dialogos. The significance of this baptism was of similar importance for Western people to the baptism of Russian people by St



*Canterbury Cathedral
(Photo by Julia Pliauksta)*



*Interior of Canterbury Cathedral
(Photo by Julia Pliauksta)*

Vladimir of Kievan Rus. We visited Canterbury Cathedral, where we familiarized ourselves with its history and architecture. This is the seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury - the senior prelate of the Anglican Communion. Then we headed to to a nearby church in order to venerate St Martin. This is the oldest church in England. Our usually noisy children became quiet since they were listening carefully to the Life of St Martin the Merciful. Then they drew a picture the story in which St Martin gave his cloak to a poor person. Following these activities Hieromonk Innokentiy (Kolesnikov) served a moleben to St Martin the Merciful, whose commemoration day is October 12/25.

The final destination of our pilgrimage was St Augustine's Abbey – apparently the first monastery in England. From here the expansion of Christianity in

Southern England began. Nowadays, there are only ruins left. Wandering around the ruins we felt the presence of the grace of God in this place. It is interesting to note that if one stands in a particular place, all the three holy sites - Canterbury Cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey and St Martin's Church visually form one single line. Physically exhausted but full of spiritual energy we returned home late in the evening.



*Ruins of St. Augustine's Abbey
(Photo: Wikimedia Commons.com)*

All the Saints that have shone forth in the lands of Britain and Ireland, pray to God for us!

Elena Poplavskaya - School Principal

MEMORY ETERNAL!

Olga Browne, the oldest parishioner of the London Cathedral, peacefully departed this life the morning of November 23rd. She was 101.

‘Give rest, O Lord, to the soul of Thy faithful handmaid Olga, and let her soul dwell in the mansions of the righteous.’ We express our sincere condolences to Olga’s family and pray that the All-Merciful Lord will indeed receive her radiant soul in the mansions of the righteous.



Thoughts on fasting

The essence of fasting can be expressed in the following Church hymn: “My soul, if you fast from food but are not cleansed of the passions, in vain are we content with not eating: for if the fast does not bring you correction, it will be hateful to God as false, and you will be like the evil demons who eat nothing at all.”

Notes on the Church calendar

HISTORY OF THE NATIVITY FAST AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE



The Nativity Fast, like all the fasting seasons, dates from the early centuries of Christianity. It is mentioned by many Western church writers as far back as the 5th and 6th centuries. The origin of the Nativity Fast was the fast observed before the Feast of the Theophany, which was celebrated in the Church at least from the third century, and in the fourth century was divided into the Feasts of the Nativity and Baptism of the Lord.

Originally the Nativity Fast was observed by some Christians for seven days, and by others for a longer period. As Professor I.D. Mansvetov of the Moscow Theological Academy wrote, ‘a relic of this diversity in the length of the Fast is found in the most ancient Typikons, where the Nativity Fast is divided into two periods: the first, up to December 6th, in which the fasting is less rigorous ...and the second, from December 6th until the Feast itself’.

The Nativity Fast begins on November 15th and continues until December 25th (in the 20th and 21st centuries the corresponding dates on the New Calendar are Nov. 28th until Jan. 7th). It continues for 40 days and therefore in the Typikon it is referred to as a 40 day fast, like Great Lent. Since the preparation day for the fast falls on St Philip’s day (November 14th Old Style), this fast is sometimes called St Philip’s Fast.

In the words of St. Simeon of Thessalonica, “The forty days of the Nativity fast is an image of the fast of Moses, who having fasted for forty days and forty nights, received the words of God inscribed on stone tablets. But having fasted for forty days, we gaze upon and receive the living Word from the Virgin, inscribed not on stones, but incarnate and born, and we partake of His Divine flesh.”

The Nativity fast was established so that by the day of Christ’s Nativity we would have cleansed ourselves through repentance, prayer and fasting; so that with a pure heart, soul, and body we could reverently meet the Son of God Who has appeared to the world, and so that besides the usual gifts and sacrifices we would bring Him our pure heart and desire to follow His teaching.

THE NATIVITY FAST



The aspects of fasting have been discussed many times, but nevertheless, as soon as the fast begins the same perpetual questions about what is and what is not allowed are always asked. In a nutshell, the answer to this is that the 'dietary plan' should be of the least importance, since it is not an end in itself, but rather a means of achieving something else – five things, to be more precise:

First. Learn to pray.

We should take things one step further by adding something to what we already do. If we never pray at home, we should start praying; let it be concise but regular prayers. If we already follow the morning and evening prayer rule, we should start reading Psalms or a chapter from the Gospels. If we go to the church on Sunday, we should add at least one more day during the week.

Second. Learn to fight against our sins.

I suggest choosing the smallest of the sins that one keeps repeating again and again and trying to overcome it. For example, the habit of moaning

about whatever one sees or hears. It might be talking about other people behind their backs with a close friend, or using bad language. One might be holding a grudge against a relative, (or a boss, teacher, neighbour, etc). How to overcome this? The solution is to pray for them daily.

Third. Learn to repent.

We should choose our most secret sin—the sin that is hidden from other people and that makes us ashamed. We go to confession and ask a priest about how to battle against this particular sin. The priest is an experienced man and will most likely be able to give appropriate advice.

Fourth. Learn to do good deeds.

Every evening we should examine our conscience: what good deed have I done today? Was I compassionate towards anyone? Did I help anybody? Did I sacrifice my time for anyone? If the answer is 'no', then we should realise that the day was wasted.

Fifth. Learn to be appreciative and grateful to God.

What is there to be happy about? There are many reasons to rejoice: for example, the beauty of the world created by God and the gifts and talents that He gives to human beings. We should be joyful when we see expressions of love, compassion, mercy. We should be appreciative of obtaining sense, logic, harmony and truth. To summarise, we should be happy about everything that makes us

closer to God. And what is there to be thankful for? The answer is: everything. My dear friends, I would like to congratulate you on the occasion of Nativity Fast, and let the fast be salvific and joyful for you.

By Archpriest Vladimir Vigiliansky.



Legacy of Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

SERMON BY METROPOLITAN ANTHONY

**30th November, 1986
(Luke 12:16-21 On hoarding possessions)**

In these days of fasting approaching the festival of the Incarnation the Church gives us in the words of Christ Himself, a stern and clear warning. In the parable which we heard today, Christ speaks of barns containing material foods, but we all are rich in a variety of ways; not material primarily, but how secure we feel of our relationship with God, how secure we feel of all those sayings which our mind contains of the Gospel, the very words of Christ, the teaching of the Apostles, our Orthodox faith; and the longer we live the more we acquire, more and ever more thought and knowledge, and indeed our heart also becomes richer and richer in emotion, in response to the beauty of the word of God. And yet it is not that that saves us.

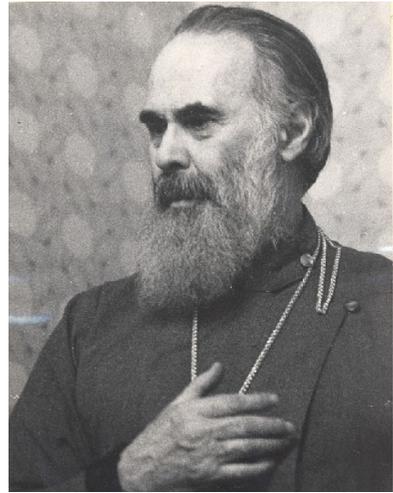
What saves us is the power of God, the

grace of God which teaches us and can cleanse and transfigure us. The grace of God is given by Him without measure and yet it is in a very small measure that we prove capable of receiving the gifts of God. Our openness is not perfect enough, our determination fails us, we have no courage to follow the way we ourselves have chosen and which we find both beautiful and life-giving. In an image used by St Paul we are like withering small twigs grafted wound to wound to the life-giving tree which is Christ. Yes, we are grafted, but how much of the life-giving sap will penetrate the vessels of this little twig? How much life will be given and received? That will depend on whether the vessels are open and the sap can run freely, and that depends on us.

We enter now into a period of fasting and recollection. At the end of it we shall be confronted with God come in the flesh to save us. But His coming is also judgement, because one cannot meet God face to face and not come into judgement. Are we going to have

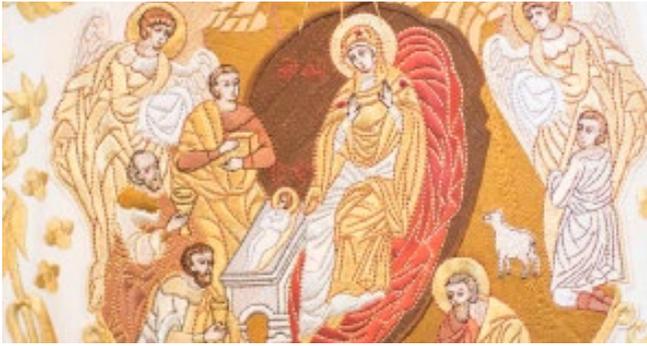
something in common with the Son of God who in an act of sacrificial, crucified love gave Himself to us? And are we going to stand before Him and have to say “I received all Thy gifts and bore no fruit”, like the man who had received talents and had buried them? Are we going to be like the guests called to the bridal feast of the king’s son, who refused to come, the one because he had acquired a plot of land, he wanted to possess the earth and he became a slave to it; the other ones who could not come because they had a task to fulfil - there was no time for God, for peace, for being with Him; or the one who had taken a wife and whose heart was too full for it to share in the joy of the bridegroom? This parable will be read just before the coming of the Lord in Advent, and what are we going to do about it? Try and receive more and more and more without bearing fruit?

The fasting time is not a time when we should come more often and more insistently to God as beggars; it is not a time when we should receive communion more often than ever. It is a time when we should stand face to face before the judgement of God, listen to the voice of our conscience and refrain from receiving communion if we cannot receive it worthily. And worthily means that every time we come to communion we must have made our peace with those with whom we are at variance. We must have made our peace with the thoughts of our mind and heart that accuse us of



Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

unfaithfulness and disloyalty to God and to one another. We must have made our peace with the living God so that it cannot be said that He died in vain for us. So it is a matter of pondering deeply upon ourselves, of passing a severe, a ruthless judgement upon ourselves and coming to communion through confession, through repentance, after a searching examination of our lives so as not to be condemned for coming lightly to the holy meal. And this implies a certain number of simple things, but things that must be done. No one should come to communion who is late for the Liturgy; no one should come to communion who has not prepared himself in the course of the whole week by praying, by examining his conscience, by reading the prayers before communion; and if they are too long to be read on a Saturday evening after the evening service, they can be distributed throughout the week and



be part of our morning and evening prayers. This is a discipline which is required of us always, but in these days particularly.

The Orthodox Church has always said also that those who wish to receive communion should be present on Saturday evening at the service, so as to be prepared for the meeting of the Lord on the day of His Resurrection on Sunday. These are rules which are not simply rules of formal discipline; these are calls for us to be guided into a deeper spiritual life and to meet the Lord more worthily, or at least less unworthily.

So let us enter into this period of fasting, preparing ourselves by a rigorous mental discipline, by being attentive to the movements of our heart, to the way in which we treat others and ourselves and God, to the way in which we learn from the

Church to pray, to worship and to obey the Lord's commandments. And then also let us pay attention more seriously than we do habitually to the fasting rules. The fasting rules are meant to shake our physical complacency, to help us stir ourselves into a condition of liveliness, to prevent ourselves from being heavy and incapable of soaring Godwards. Pay attention to them, prepare yourselves throughout this period of Advent, waiting for the Lord to come, but waiting not passively for Him to come, but in the way in which a sentry waits for his queen or king to appear. And let us remember that being in the presence of God is the greatest privilege, the holiest thing that can occur; it is not our right, it is the greatest privilege that He can confer on us, and let us behave accordingly. Amen.

Thoughts on fasting

“He is mistaken who thinks that the fast consists only in abstinence from food. True fasting is departing from evil.”

St. John Chrysostom

British and Irish Saints

VENERABLE FRIDESWIDE OF OXFORD

**Commemorated:
19th October/1st November
and 12th/25th February**

For over 1000 years St Frideswide (whose name means “peace-strong”) has been venerated as the patron-saint of Oxford (“oxen ford”) and for over 500 years, as the patroness of Oxford University.

The saint was born about 680 in western Oxfordshire, which was then a province of Mercia. Her father’s name was Dida, and her mother bore the name Sefrida. They were pious Christians. Dida ruled the area which included western Oxfordshire. As a

child Frideswide was given to a holy woman Elgitha, who brought her up.

Young Frideswide came to love the Gospel and decided to dedicate her life to God. Frideswide learned by heart the Psalter at the age of seven. She ate only herbs and barley bread and drank only water. She kept vigil day and night and wanted to become a nun. The motto of Frideswide throughout her life was: “Whatever is not God is nothing.” Her mother died when she was very young, and she returned to her father’s house.

Dida allotted lands at Oxford, Bampton and Eynsham to establish monastic communities and gave Oxford to Frideswide. Frideswide was at the head of a community of



An icon of St Frideswide of Oxford



The slab marking 'Frideswide' in the Lady Chapel of Christ Church Cathedral (photo provided by Judith Curthoys)



Fragments of stained glass window at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford

devout nuns at Oxford, which became a double monastery dedicated to the Mother of God.

A prince named Aelfgar sought Frideswide's hand when she was already abbess. The saint answered him that her only Bridegroom was Christ and she had taken monastic vows. Furious, Aelfgar decided to force the saint to marry him and abduct her. First he called his army to take Frideswide and bring her forcibly to him. But when they approached the convent the men were suddenly blinded and all ran away in fear. Then Aelfgar arrived in Oxford himself. Warned about this by an angel, Frideswide secretly fled, accompanied by two nuns. They reached the Thames and boarded a boat that had been prepared for them by Divine Providence. The nuns sailed until they arrived at a place that became their refuge for several years.

Different scholars identify that place with Binsey and Bampton in Oxfordshire and Frilsham in Berkshire. Whatever the truth is, they settled in

an abandoned pigsty in thick forests near a well of fresh water. Some time passed. Aelfgar tried to find Frideswide. He finally found Frideswide's hermitage and was going to seize her, but the holy maiden prayed fervently - and the wicked man instantly became blind. Only after his sincere repentance did the maiden allow him to wash his eyes in the well, and his eyesight was restored.

The saint returned to Oxford where she served as a wise, loving and caring abbess, gathering a large community. She opened a school and a hospital at the monastery. The saint took care of the needy, the hungry, the homeless and the oppressed. God performed numerous miracles through her intercessions. She healed the sick from many diseases. Once she cured a woman who had been blind for seven years; she drove out a demon from a possessed man, and she sent away the devil himself who appeared to her and attempted to tempt her through flattery.

There is a moving story how a leper



*Left photo:
Lady Chapel of Christ
Church Cathedral
(photo provided by
Judith Curthoys)*



*Right photo:
St Frideswide's shrine
in the Latin Chapel of
Christ Church Cathedral,
Oxford (photo provided
by Judith Curthoys)*

came up to Frideswide and said: "O venerable mother Frideswide! I beseech you to kiss me in the Name of Christ!" The saint made the sign of the cross and kissed this ugly man. And he was healed at that very moment, so his skin became like that of a child. The glory of the wonderful abbess spread far and wide, and she was loved and venerated as a saint.

In the final years of her life, Frideswide retired to Binsey where she lived as an anchoress. There a holy well gushed forth due to her prayers. It is famous for curing eye diseases even nowadays. Today Binsey is a hamlet just to the northwest of Oxford where there is the twelfth-century St Margaret's Church with the afore-mentioned holy well.

The holy woman reposed in 727 (or 735) and was buried at her monastery. Most significantly, the town of Oxford was founded, grew and developed around her monastery. It is an amazing fact that a princess of

a sub-kingdom of Mercia contributed to the formation of such an important centre as Oxford.

Many pilgrims went to her shrine and the holy wells associated with her. Cases of healing from blindness, deafness, dumbness, paralysis, swellings, leprosy, dropsy, arthritis, ulcers, stones, sciatica, intestinal diseases, fever, barrenness and mental illnesses were recorded. Members of the royal family helped this site develop as a centre of learning.

The monastery founded by Frideswide existed for several centuries. The monastery church was burned down in 1002 in the event which has been known as the "St Brice's Day Massacre" when dozens of Danes were burned alive in this church.

In 1122, a Catholic Augustinian Priory of St Frideswide was established on the site of the Orthodox Monastery. The relics of Frideswide were solemnly enshrined in a new reliquary in 1180

and over 100 miracles were reported over the following year.

In 1524 the priory was suppressed by Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, who started building his magnificent new “Cardinal College”. However, in 1529 Wolsey fell into disgrace with Henry VIII. In 1532 Henry refounded the college and in 1538 the shrine of Frideswide was desecrated, while the greater part of the church remained intact. In 1546 Henry VIII established the Diocese of Oxford, making the priory church the cathedral and the chapel of the newly-founded university college (it remains so to this day). The college and the cathedral were named in honour of Christ the Saviour—“Christ Church”.

Frideswide’s relics were reinstated together with the shrine in the reign of Mary I but were again desecrated after her death. The shrine was broken into pieces, while the relics were mixed with the remains of Catherine Dammartin, wife of a Zwinglian theologian, and buried under the floor. It was only in

1889 that fragments of the shrine were discovered and reassembled during the twentieth century. The shrine was restored and installed in the cathedral in 2002. It stands in the Latin chapel. There is a large stained glass window in front of it, created by Edward Burne-Jones, depicting sixteen scenes from the life of Frideswide. The relics of Frideswide lie under the floor in an unknown location within the cathedral, and there is a modern dark square slab in the Lady Chapel, marked with her name “Frideswide”.

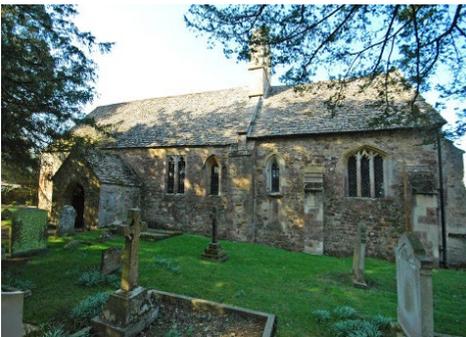
There are banners of Frideswide at the cathedral which are carried annually by Orthodox believers in processions.

A twelfth-century church with a holy well in the village of Frilsham is dedicated to Frideswide.

There is also a Church of St Frideswide in Botley Road, West Oxford.

Dmitry Lapa

Source: www.pravoslavie.ru/english/98258.htm



St. Margaret's Church in Binsey, Oxon



St. Margaret's holy well in Binsey, Oxon (photo by Irina Lapa)

Holy Places in London

ALL HALLOWS CHURCH BY THE TOWER

This charming ancient church in honour of All Saints is situated on Byward Street in the City of London near the Tower. It is one of the oldest churches of Britain's capital. The church was founded in 675 by Barking Convent and originally dedicated to the Mother of God. For a long time it was known as "All Hallows Church Barking". The church was built on the site of a second-century Roman construction whose remains were discovered in the crypt in the twentieth century. It was reconstructed and enlarged several times between the tenth and fifteenth centuries. Due to its proximity to the Tower of London (which is 300 years younger than the church!) All Hallows had royal connections. Thus, Edward IV made one of its chapels a royal chantry. Those who were executed by beheading on Tower Hill were temporarily buried at this church: among them were Thomas More, Bishop John (Fisher) of Rochester, and Archbishop William (Laud) of Canterbury.

In 1650, as a result of an explosion of barrels of gunpowder which were kept in the yard the church tower was destroyed. It was restored in 1658. The church escaped the fire of 1666 through the efforts of Admiral William



*All Hallows by the Tower
(Photo: Wikipedia.com)*

Penn, who ordered the demolition of all buildings adjoining the church, thus preventing the fire from approaching it.

Two interesting facts associated with All Hallows: in 1644 William Penn (the son of the above-mentioned admiral) was baptised here – he later became one of the founding fathers of the USA, especially of the city of Philadelphia – and the state of Pennsylvania (meaning "Penn's forest land") was named after him; also, it was here that John Quincy Adams, the sixth President of the USA, married Louisa Johnson in 1797 – the only American President to marry outside America!

The church was renovated late in the nineteenth century but was heavily damaged in the Second World War, so it took twelve years to restore it. During archaeological excavations carried out in the 1990s in the church cemetery a

great number of Roman, Saxon and medieval artefacts were discovered.

This church in which prayer has continued uninterrupted for over 1300 years is very beautiful both outside and inside. Its outer walls are of the fifteenth century, and its oldest part is the seventh-century arch in the west end of the nave (the earliest piece of church fabric in London in existence)! There are many memorials inside the church - among them are seventeen brasses on the floor of the chancel and the Lady Chapel; the most famous is the Resurrection brass (c. 1500) in the chancel which depicts Christ rising from the tomb. Among the church's artefacts let us mention: three wooden statues of saints (fifteenth-sixteenth centuries); a splendid seventeenth-century font cover which is one of the finest carvings of the capital; four panels of a triptych, created in about 1500 by a Flemish master; a mural of "the Last Supper" beneath the great east window, together with church registers of the sixteenth century.

The best reminder of the church's Orthodox past is its crypt, which consists of three chapels. There is also a museum in the crypt which tells the story of All Hallows and the City of London. In the museum visitors can see part of a Roman second-century domestic floor with tiles that were discovered under the church ninety years ago; a modern model of the Roman-era London; two Saxon crosses of the tenth-eleventh centuries,



*Roman tessellated pavement
(Photo: Visitromanbritain.com)*

together with church vessels and other artefacts.

From ancient times All Hallows had close links with guilds, and today it is connected with the "TOC H" society – an organization founded by First World War veterans to promote social services and Christian fellowship.

In 1555 Lancelot Andrewes – the future Bishop of Winchester, a brilliant theologian, preacher, writer and translator who knew nineteen languages – was baptised at All Hallows. He took an active part in preparing the "Authorised Version" – the translation of the Bible into English which was approved by King James I in 1611. Andrewes is commemorated by Anglicans as a saint. Albert Schweitzer, a prominent German-born philosopher, theologian, musician and doctor once played Bach on the organ of All Hallows. In the church one can find some memorial effigies made by the sculptor Cecil Thomas. In the Anglican tradition All Saints' Day is



Interior of All Hallows by the Tower
(Photo: Wikipedia.com)



Lancelot Andrewes
(1555 - 1626)

celebrated on 1st November.

The church is open each weekday from 8 am to 6 pm and at weekends from 10 am to 5 pm. Services are held every Thursday at 8.30 am (also lunchtime services for major weekday commemorations in the Church year) and each Sunday at 11.00 am. The church holds organ concerts.

By Dmitry Lapa

Church address:

All Hallows by the Tower
Byward Street, London EC3R 5BJ

Nearest tube station: Tower Hill
(District and Circle Lines)

Nearest DLR: Tower Gateway

Local buses: 15, 42, 78, 100, RV1,
N15

Thoughts on fasting

“The very observation of abstinence is marked by four periods, so that throughout the course of the year we would know that we continually have need of purification, and that with a distracted life we always need to strive through fasting and almsgiving to eradicate sin, which multiplies through the frailty of the flesh and unclean desires.”

St. Leo the Great

Orthodox Cemeteries

VLADYKA NIKODEM'S GRAVESTONE IS CLEANED

On November 2nd 2016, parishioners of the Dormition Cathedral in Kensington and of the Cathedral of the Dormition in Chiswick who are, at the same time, activists of the Russian Heritage in Great Britain Committee, cleaned and restored the grave of the Archbishop of Richmond and Great Britain Nikodem (+1976) in Brompton Cemetery. Three hours of non-stop work and the gravestone shone like new. Grey and hidden by an overgrown bush, the gravestone was recently found in an unsatisfactory condition by a group of Knightsbridge parishioners. Svetlana Yegorova was among them

and told the Newsletter: “Actually, it was Alexandra Ivanovna Smirnova and Irina Stepanova who remembered the tomb, which was so overgrown that one couldn’t see anything. Luckily I happened to have secateurs with me and we managed to uncover Vladyka Nikodem’s headstone”. Soon after that Svetlana asked members of “The Russian Heritage Committee in Great Britain” to clean the gravestone and plant some flowers around it. A couple of weeks later Elena Petrakova, Galina Deryabina and Julia Pliauksta came to the cemetery and cleaned the gravestone back to the original white. Elena gave a masterclass of planting a rose which now grows near the grave. It promises to be a richly blossoming



*Vladyka Nikodem's
gravestone before
and after restoration*

and nicely smelling one.

Steven Lacey has been looking after Orthodox graves for many years: “I myself and a number of people from both Chiswick and Knightsbridge parishes have been cleaning this grave and the other 30 - 40 Orthodox graves including the graves of a Polish bishop, a Serbian bishop, the Lady in Waiting to the Tsarina of Russia, a Sourozh parish priest Nicholas (which shamefully is the worst grave by far), members of Galitzine family, and a number of Russian princesses and Generals, for well over eight years. All these graves are at Brompton and need to be maintained so it’s great that the parishioners and Committee members are involved in this big task”.

Eternal memory, Vladyka Nikodem!

Julia Pliauksta

**THE PANIKHIDA FOR
PRINCESS EKATERINA
ALEXANDROVNA
YURIEVSKAYA AT ST PETER’S
CHURCH, NORTHNEY,
HAYLING ISLAND, HANTS**

This was served on Sunday, October 2nd at 3.30pm by the Very Reverend Archpriest Fr Michael Gogoleff, Dean and Rector of the Russian Orthodox Parish of St Peter and St Paul, Portsmouth, assisted by the Very Reverend Archpriest Fr Maxim Nikolsky, Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Dormition, London, and the Reverend Deacon, Fr Alexander Haig.



Mr Alexander Novikov, First Secretary of the Embassy of the Russian Federation and Dr Julia Pliauksta, Secretary to the Russian Heritage Committee of the UK, were in attendance, together with parishioners from St. Peter and St. Paul, Portsmouth, and members of the Hayling Island community, totalling 30 people in all.

“Blessed are they whom Thou hast chosen and taken O Lord”

“Alleluia”

“Their memory is from generation to generation”

“Alleluia”

“Their souls will dwell amid good things”

“Alleluia”

“O God of Spirits and of all flesh; Who hast trampled down death, and defeated the devil,

and given life to Thy world: Give rest, O Lord, to the soul of Thy servant Ekaterina, who has fallen asleep, in a place of light, in a place of fresh growth, in a place of revival whence all pain, sorrow and sighing have fled away. Forgive every sin committed by her, in thought, word and deed, in Thy goodness and love for mankind, O God. For there is no one who lives without sinning; Thou alone art without sin, and Thy justice is eternal justice, and Thy Word is Truth.

For Thou art the Resurrection, the Life, and the repose of Thy servant Katerina, who has

fallen asleep, O Christ our God, and to Thee we send up the glory, with Thy Eternal Father, and Thy All-Holy and good, and Life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.”

“Eternal remembrance”.

The symbolic bowl of kolliva was blessed and afterwards consumed at the Reception held in The Ark room adjacent to the church.

John and Stella Newbery

Sacraments of the Church

We are printing a series of short texts about the Sacraments of the Church. They are copied from ‘An Orthodox Online Catechism’, which is based on the book ‘The Mystery of Faith’ by Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev). They are presented here by the kind permission and blessing of the author.

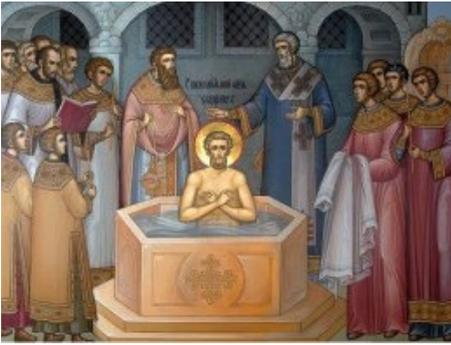
PART 2: BAPTISM

The sacrament of Baptism is the door into the Church, the Kingdom of grace. It is with Baptism that Christian life begins. Baptism is the frontier that separates the members of Christ’s Body from those who are outside it. In Baptism the human person is arrayed in Christ, following the words of St Paul which are sung as the newly-baptized is led around the baptismal font: ‘For as many of you who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ’ (Gal.3:27).



In Baptism the human person dies to his sinful life and rises again to new spiritual life.

The sacrament of Baptism was instituted by Christ Himself: ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’ (Matt.28:19). Christ’s commandment already contains the basic elements of the baptismal rite: preliminary teaching (‘catechization’),



without which the adoption of faith cannot be conscious; immersion in water (Greek *baptismos*, literally ‘immersion’); and the formula ‘in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’. In the early Church Baptism was accomplished through complete immersion in water. However, at an early date special pools (baptisteries) were built and into these the candidates for baptism were plunged. The practice of pouring water over the person or sprinkling him with water existed in the early Church, though not quite as a norm.

At the time of Constantine (fourth century) adult baptism was more common than the baptism of infants, the emphasis being laid on the conscious acceptance of the sacrament. Some postponed the sacrament until the end of their life in the knowledge that sins were forgiven in Baptism. The Emperor Constantine was baptized just before his death. St Gregory the Theologian, a son of a bishop, was baptized only when he reached maturity. Saints Basil the Great and John Chrysostom were baptized only after completing their higher education.

However, the practice of baptizing infants is no less ancient — the apostles baptized whole families which might well have included children (cf. Acts 10:48). St Irenaeus of Lyons (second century) says: ‘Christ came to save those who through Him are reborn into God: infants, children, adolescents and the elderly’. Origen in the third century calls the custom of baptizing infants an ‘apostolic tradition’. The local Council of Carthage (third century) pronounced an anathema upon those who rejected the necessity of baptizing infants and newly-born children.

The sacrament of Baptism, like all other sacraments, must be received consciously. Christian faith is the prerequisite for the validity of the sacrament. If an infant is baptized, the confession of faith is solemnly pronounced by his godparents, who thereby are obliged to bring the child up in the faith and make his Baptism conscious. An infant who receives the sacrament cannot rationally understand what is happening to him, yet his soul is fully capable of receiving the grace of the Holy Spirit. ‘I believe’,



writes St Symeon the New Theologian, ‘that baptized infants are sanctified and are preserved under the wing of the All-Holy Spirit and that they are lambs of the spiritual flock of Christ and chosen lambs, for they have been imprinted with the sign of the life-giving Cross and freed completely from the tyranny of the devil’. The grace of God is given to infants as a pledge of their future belief, as a seed cast into the earth: for the seed to grow into a tree and bring forth fruit, the efforts both of the godparents and of the one baptized as he grows are needed.

Immediately after Baptism or in the days that follow, the newly-baptized, irrespective of age, receives Holy Communion. In the Roman Catholic

Church Chrismation (Confirmation) and First Communion take place after the child has reached the age of seven, but the Orthodox Church admits children to these sacraments as early as possible. The understanding behind this practice is that children ought not to be deprived of a living, even if not a fully conscious, contact with Christ.

The sacrament of Baptism occurs only once in a person’s life. In Baptism the human person is granted freedom from original sin and forgiveness of all his personal transgressions. However, Baptism is only the first step in the human person’s ascent towards God. If it is not accompanied by a renewal of one’s entire life and a spiritual regeneration, it might be fruitless. The grace of God, received in Baptism as a pledge or as a seed, will grow within the person and be made manifest throughout his whole life so long as he strives towards Christ, lives in the Church and fulfills God’s commandments.

Source: orthodoxeurope.org/page/10/1.aspx#41

For reflection

Do not forsake prayer, for just as the body becomes weak when it is deprived of food, so also the soul when it is deprived of prayer draws nigh to weakness and noetic death.

(St. Gennadius of Constantinople, The Golden Chain, 44)

The Russian Church in London

THE HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH IN LONDON

Part 10



*Churchwarden Alexander (Shura)
Pickersgill greets Patriarch Alexis I,
27 September 1964*

In 1953 the London authorities made a decision to build a new coach station on the site of St Philip's. After some complex negotiations the Patriarchal parish was offered the disused Anglican church of All Saints at 67 Ennismore Gardens. The church, built in 1849 in Romanesque style, was modelled on the Basilica of San Zeno Maggiore in Verona, Italy.

In the autumn of 1956 the church was consecrated as the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Mother of God. Metropolitan Anthony gave his blessing to retain also the original dedication to All Saints. In October 1964 Patriarch Alexis I, who was on a visit to

Britain, presided at the service for the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.

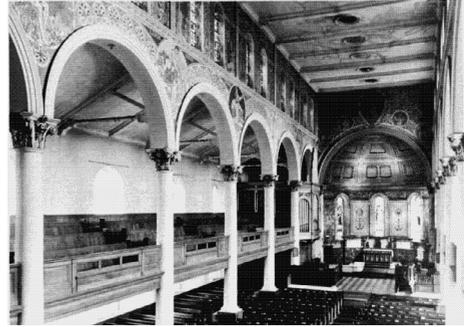
In 1979 the church building was bought by the parish through the efforts of the parishioners. A significant part of the funds collected were donations from Anglicans who appreciated Metropolitan Anthony's work in spreading the Gospel – from the early 1960s he had spoken regularly on radio and television.

Metropolitan Anthony's service was above all that of an outstanding preacher and apologete. His BBC radio talks, and later his numerous books (adapted from his talks, addresses and sermons) helped many people enter the Church, hear the Good News of Our Saviour Jesus Christ, and learn His commandments.



Metropolitan Anthony 1966

Between 1966 and 1974 Metropolitan Anthony was Patriarchal Exarch for Western Europe. From the late 1950s he participated in numerous meetings and discussions with the non-Orthodox Christians, but later in life did not continue this work. Metropolitan Anthony was awarded the doctorate of theology *honoris causa* by the theological academies of Moscow and Kiev, and the universities of Cambridge and Aberdeen.



*All Saints Cathedral in
Ennismore Gardens in 1956*

Michael Sarni

IN ETON I BECAME A CHRISTIAN

At the end of August 2016, ten students of Britain's prestigious Eton College visited Moscow and Saint Petersburg. Constantine Belyj, a junior student of Sretensky High Orthodox College, asked David Wei, one of the main organizers of the trip, to tell about his path to Christ. We found this talk particularly interesting and would like to share it with our readers.

—David, tell us how you became a Christian.

—From a very young age, I have always asked and tried to answer the big questions of life: What is the meaning of life? What happens when I die? Is there an afterlife? Is there a God? Who is God? My family was not religious and therefore I was never told the orthodox answers to these questions to memorize and believe in. Instead, I would try to answer these

questions myself, but without any success because I had no idea who to ask or which books to read.

I then went to Eton at age thirteen. It was there that I came across the academic subject, “Theology”. I realized there was a systematic way of answering these questions and Theology quickly became my favourite subject. In my second year at Eton, I was asked whether I wanted to become a confirmed member of the Anglican Church. I went on “Confirmation Exploration Day,” and decided afterwards that the pros outweighed the cons. I then took Confirmation classes, read books on the Christian faith, and realized that faith was not about what you do to go to Heaven, but what Jesus did for you (in his life, death and Resurrection). However, I still had many problems with Christian faith. The most significant one was that

I was told you have to be a Christian to go to Heaven. This is a problem for me because not everyone in my family is a Christian.

I then came across a Christian in my boarding house two years older than me. For an entire academic year, I spent around 2.5 hours with him every week reading through the Bible, talking about Christian experiences (miracles, answers to prayers) and most importantly praying. Looking back, I would say it was this period that I started to become a Christian.

—As we know, Eton is an Anglican college. Do students attend the chapel there?

—Chapel attendance is compulsory. The problem is that I don't think you get much in chapel. There's a Bible reading, but it's from the King James Version, so no one really understands it, and the sound system is really bad so you can't really hear it. The sermons that follow are mostly irrelevant; and I think a lot of the senior chaplains at the school have beliefs that are contrary to mine. There are certain things that are fundamental to the Christian faith and I think that a lot of the chaplains at school do not hold those beliefs at all, which is a problem. I think a lot of what is taught in chapel is not really Christian, but more about certain Christian values like loving your neighbour. But being a Christian isn't about living a good life, but, as I see it, about a relationship between yourself and God, and therefore is



David Wei
(Photo: Pravoslavie.Ru)

based around Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection.

Every single person is given a Bible when we arrive at the school, so the school buys 260 Bibles every year. Most people file it away on their shelves and never read it again. Those who do read it are that very small number of Christians that I mentioned. We do study the Bible academically, for instance with a class on the Gospel of Mark, but that's quite different from studying it from a confessional point of view. So no, we're not encouraged to read the Bible except perhaps on a personal basis. I had a housemaster who realized I was interested in faith and therefore encouraged me to read the Bible because he cared about me as a person.

—Do the Eton boys know about the Church Fathers, British saints, and their lives?

—Students who are interested in the academic subject of theology may have, in their own time, looked into patristics (the Cappadocian Fathers). However, the early Church is not a

subject that is taught in school, so any knowledge that Eton boys have would be through what they read in their free time.

From a faith point of view, Eton College is an Anglican School and I do not think the Church Fathers or the British saints are featured very much. Although many boys (maybe two thirds of them) would identify as a Christian, I think that this identification is more for “cultural reasons” (such as celebrating Christmas/Easter) or even for “practical reasons” (getting married in Church).

My own tradition is evangelical/charismatic Christianity. There is no emphasis on the Church Fathers or British saints and their lives at all because evangelical/charismatic Christians take their authority from the Bible. I think this is a big mistake. These Christians, I think, confuse between having the Bible as the “ultimate authority” and having the Bible as the “exclusive authority”. Even though these Christians would say that the Bible has ultimate authority, in which case it would make sense to talk about Christian saints and the Church Fathers, they don’t talk about Christian saints and Church Fathers, so this implies that these Christians believe the Bible to have “exclusive authority”. Furthermore, evangelical Christians believe that every Christian is a saint, and that a saint is not a special, holy person. Once you are a follower of Christ, God sees you through Christ’s lens and therefore you are already

“purified” and therefore saintly. I am not sure I agree with this.

I think, ultimately, that Jesus Christ is the ultimate source of authority in people’s lives. Evangelical Christians would say that Jesus needs to be revealed through various means, such as Church tradition, the Bible, experience, reason etc., and that there needs to be a trump card. I don’t think so. I don’t think the Christian life is as clear-cut as these Christians make out. One of my favourite verses in the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13:12, says, For now we see through a glass darkly, and then [after we die], face-to-face.

—Does the education at Eton make people want to search for the higher meaning of life?

—I think that everyone deep down, no matter where they are, no matter where they come from, what school they go to, what background they have, seeks this higher meaning, because I think that it’s God’s way of speaking to them - telling them that they should believe in God.

Eton pursues excellence in everything it does, which is why people become prime ministers, why Prince William and Prince Harry go there, and so on. I like to think that I invited on this trip not only my friends but also some very impressive students who demonstrate the best of Eton’s talents, which I think is good in one sense, but from a point of view of faith is very bad, with too much focus on material success.

For example, there are some people



who are really good at economics or business, and therefore want to make a lot of money and think that making a lot of money is success and happiness and fulfilment. But then when people search for a deeper meaning or the meaning of life, it's because they feel that their current meaning, such as the one they find at Eton, is insufficient. I'm not sure if I've expressed myself well, but basically the culture of competition and emphasis on self-worth and self-dignity at Eton could be seen as a very bad thing from a faith point of view, because it means you trust in yourself and not in God. If you don't trust in God then you will have deep doubts as to what makes life meaningful.

—How often do you discuss with Eton boys questions of faith? What is their reaction?

—When I first became a Christian I used to discuss with other Etonians questions of faith very frequently (every day); it was almost on the top of my agenda. I then realized that sometimes I was being too forceful and that this had the opposite effect of what I wanted. I then started doing that less frequently.

I have earned at Eton a reputation of “being a Christian”. I think this is partly through my character, trying to live out a Christian life, but I think this is more to do with what I say in public. I have given public speeches to my year group on how and why I became a Christian. This does mean that when other boys have questions regarding faith, whether they are genuine or whether they just want to argue with me, they always know that I am prepared to answer back. I have spoken with many people before so I feel rehearsed in any criticism that they have of Christian faith, to its supposed irrationality, dangerousness, tendency to fanaticism (ISIS, KKK, al-Qaeda).

I have never yet persuaded someone to “become a Christian,” but often I make steps in the right direction, explaining something or giving a helpful analogy that solves a big problem that they have. I think trying to convince someone comes in many stages, and I hope I have helped many progress through the stages.

—How do you see the future of Christianity in Britain?

—From my limited understanding, I am pessimistic about Christian faith in Britain. I have a theory, a meta-narrative, that the more liberal/capitalist/wealthy a country becomes the more non-religious the country becomes. The simple explanation: Britain is a wealthy country and when people have wealth, material possessions become their god. (I

think that God can be described as anything that is the “centre of your life”). So for example, some people are “obsessed” about getting that new car, or that new house, or that new gold-diamond-necklace etc., etc., etc. And therefore, people attribute meaning to these things. God, therefore, becomes unnecessary.

Tied into this, I also believe that people believe in God the most when they are suffering, in a bad situation. I certainly found this to be the case. On my trip to Russia, the two times I felt best about my Christian faith was when I prayed with Sam Jones about the meeting with the President going well because I was worried some people in the group would say careless things (I consider this worry and anxiety to be suffering). The second time was when I prayed that Sam would recover from his illness (albeit temporarily), allowing him to go to the meeting. When society, or an economic system, or a government,

makes life “as nice as possible” for its citizens, I think faith becomes sidelined. Faith thrives in times of difficulty and trouble - so right now Christianity is thriving in China, Latin America (in places of poverty). Why? One reason is because people have nothing else to turn to. After all, the Gospels - Mark’s Gospel in particular - is a very short biography that is all about the suffering of Christ. In fact, one third of the Gospel is dedicated entirely to retelling the story of “The Passion (i.e. suffering) of Christ”. When people are suffering, then they are able to relate to what they hear. I have emphasized the word relate because it is only when you are in a relationship (i.e. a state where you understand the other person) that you are able to be convinced/persuaded of what they believe in.

Constantine Belyi spoke with David Wei

Source: Pravoslavie.ru



Cathedral Newsletter 30 years ago



BAZAAR 1986

The Organiser is asking those who have not yet paid for their Raffle Tickets to pay him now, or return their unsold counterfoils, so that final accounts can be produced. The final figure will be in the area of £4,000.

Looking back at this year's Bazaar, one must admit that its character has changed somewhat since we moved to the larger hall in Kensington High Street. There were over 500 entries at 25p - against 460 in 1985 - a record. But possibly fewer parishioners attended, which is a pity if we want the Bazaar to retain its attraction as a social event in the yearly life of the Parish. In the past, numerous friends and acquaintances could be seen sitting at the small tables along the wall, drinking tea and delighting in the excellent variety of home-made cakes, savoury and sweet, from the Russian and English buffet. Indeed, food this year was excellent and plentiful: apart from the buffet (which was not sold out), there were jams and cakes for sale, and some delicious ice cream.

The beginning at 1.30 pm drew the greatest public. One particular stall - Russian and antique articles, including jewellery - was for a time overwhelmed by something like a cloud of locusts; there was much pushing and general chaos around this stall. Many stalls have done very well and with less harassment: tombola, bottles, books, crafts, toys, stationery, soft articles, toiletry, bric-a-brac, little jewellery, electricals, china and glass, plants and herbs, records and icons and, of course, clothes of various descriptions: but these have not done as well as previously, due perhaps to somewhat inferior quality or state of wear.

This, and the fact that many visitors came directly from the street, made the occasion look at times more like a jumble sale: the cheaper articles were bought more readily. We must not, however, feel despondent: in this larger hall, at a time when profits are weaker all round in other bazaars, we have done very well once again. With an increased effort next time to make it a more widely popular social event, this Bazaar will remain a landmark in the joys and activities in our community.

Witness to this is the gallant contribution by an impressive number of helpers - 60 in all, led by Eddie Roberson - who do the enormous

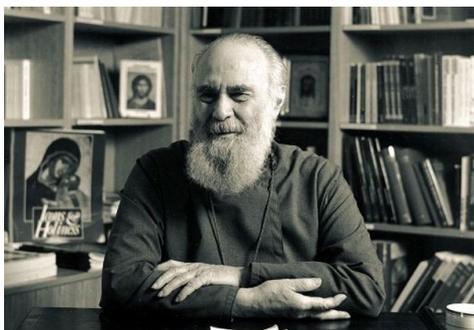
work of sorting and pricing the goods, preparing and looking after the stalls, buffet and raffle, who do the carrying, the loading and unloading of the van, the setting up of the hall and the cleaning afterwards.

Our thanks also go to Natalia Makarova who came to draw the first three prizes in our raffle. We are

particularly grateful to the fathers of Our Lady of Victories for lending us their premises and facilities in a truly brotherly attitude. A special and sincere “thank you” goes, of course, to our public who make the Bazaar into a success year after year: thank you!

BLESSING FOR LOVE

I received the recent documentary film about Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh ‘How they love one other’ (2015) by D. Rozov as a gift in memory of our parishioner Galina who unexpectedly for us all untimely passed away this July. This film will always be very special to me.



I became acquainted with Metropolitan Anthony through his living legacy: his preaching, and the parishioners whom that preaching continues to bring to and to strengthen in faith. To me everything that was created by Metropolitan Anthony was created by the grace of Holy Spirit mysteriously acting through that versatile and deep man, Metropolitan

Anthony. He drew everlasting wisdom from the Gospel and from following it.

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5).

The film generously offers us a kaleidoscope of interesting views on Vladyka’s beliefs and his unique personality. What remains in the heart after the viewing is Vladyka’s Blessing for Love, his conquering and everlasting love for God, for others and for Russia.

May I finish this rather humble film review with the words of Vladyka Anthony:

“Faith and hope will pass away when faith becomes visible and hope turns to possession, but Love will never pass away.”

Yana Reznik

Thoughts on fasting

“As the Lord generously gave us the fruits of the earth,” writes the holy hierarch, “so should we also be generous to the poor during the fast.”

St Leo the Great

Forthcoming Events

The Old Church Slavonic language course will start running again at the Cathedral at Ennismore Gardens every second Monday starting on the 5th December at 7.30pm.

The course is aimed to give a basic knowledge of reading Old Slavonic texts and understanding of the Holy Scripture, Liturgy, prayers and the church services.

Most of the studies will be focused on reading of the texts. The essential minimum of grammar as well as the basics of Liturgy will be explained. Newcomers are most welcome – the beginning part of the course will also focus on revisions of the foundation. Instruction is given in Russian.

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

E-mail: londonsobornolistok@gmail.com

We welcome your stories of finding faith, conversion, pilgrimages etc. If you would like to leave feedback or contribute content to the Newsletter, please contact us at the above address. We are always happy to hear from our readers.

Any donation to support the work of the church, however small, is welcome. You can donate by:

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