



“JOY OF ALL WHO SORROW”

No. 16 March ‘10

LAY NOT UP TREASURES ON EARTH, BUT IN HEAVEN WHERE NOTHING IS LOST

The Lord speaks to all people of all times and races, and tells them something clear and well-known. Today a man is alive, but tomorrow he dies and everything that he has is lost to him. But the soul, which moves the body, continues to live and it is either comforted and happy, or sad and burdened. Man is created thus; the body must live as the soul desires. At the moment of death, the soul continues to live without the body. Everything will perish except that which the soul has gathered through love and prayer. Everything virtuous done by a person is written in the soul and will not be taken from him. While people are alive, they find themselves paying attention to many things: clothing, health, work, studying. There are times when people are concerned only with the thought of war or a failed harvest; everything that is necessary for life on earth. So, too, in spiritual life there are times of special attention to what is needful for the soul.

Such is Great Lent; a time of special attention, examination and of the freeing of spiritual forces. Fasting is established by the Holy Spirit. Righteous men, striving toward God, through life experience came to know the meaning of fasting and bear witness that without fasting there can be no spiritual life. All the various attacks of the devil, all his temptations, everything concerning the diabolic world, is cast aside, becomes powerless and is shamed when a person firmly follows the words of the Saviour Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ: *...This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting* (Matt 17: 21).

Now is a time of fasting, a suitable time for cleansing the soul. This is the most important thing, for a soul to be able to accept the grace of God, so that those treasures will be stored up in the soul, which will not be taken from it. And then the path of its life will be straight; in the soul there will be peace and joy.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

(These timeless words of wisdom are from a sermon by St John the Wonderworker on 7 March 1954.) In our church we have a fine ikon of Vladika St John, who is very dear to us. The ikon has been published as an A6 card but we now have a smaller laminated version which is ideal for carrying in a wallet or handbag. There are available on the church bookstall.

CHURCH NEWS

BAPTISM

On Saturday 13 February, Ella, the daughter of Paul and Andreea Barnovschi, was baptised by Fr Liviu Barbu. This was the second baptism in our new church. May God grant the newly baptised infant, her parents and godparents - Many Years.

HAITI APPEAL

Another £260 was donated to the appeal fund and this brings to a total of £428 raised through the church to date. The appeal has been printed in the current issue of *Orthodox News*, so we hope to be

able to forward further help to our brothers and sisters in Faith who are suffering so much.

KURSK IKON

We have been informed that the Wonderworking Kursk Ikon of the Mother of God will be in England from 17 - 30 June. This ikon will be taken to various parishes in this country. We are trying to arrange for this precious ikon to be brought to our church here in Mettingham. This will most likely be on a weekday. We will keep you all informed just as soon as we have full details. Many miracles are attributed to the Mother of God working through this ikon. One notable example is the healing of St Seraphim of Sarov. As a child he lived in the city of Kursk. One day, there was a procession through the streets of the city with the ikon. St Seraphim's mother took him out to venerate the ikon and he received healing from his sickness. This precious ikon was saved from destruction by the Bolsheviks during the Russian Revolution, by the great General Wrangel who brought it out of Russia.

RECOMMENDED LENTEN READING

The life of St Seraphim is recorded in the newly published book, *AN EXTRAORDINARY PEACE, St Seraphim, Flame of Sarov* by Archimandrite Lazarus (Moore). SGOIS has copies in stock - Pb £12.95

IKON OF SAINT MAMAS

A large ikon of St Mamas was donated last year by Subdeacon Constantine Bell. We did not put it into church immediately because it had become scratched. It has now been repaired and re-varnished and placed in the church.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Please make a note of the following dates in you diary. Saturday 24 July when we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of St George Orthodox Information Service. There will be a Liturgy at 10.30am followed by a buffet lunch.

Also make a note of Saturday 6 November which is the Patronal Festival (prestolnik) of our church.

CHURCH SERVICES

The regular pattern of church services is: 10.30am every Sunday. On the Sunday of the Cross (3rd Sunday in Great Lent), 7 March, Fr Philip Steer will be serving the Liturgy in our church.

At 6pm every day we have evening prayers, which can vary. On Saturday evening it will be either Vespers or Vigil Service, but most frequently, on weekdays, it is Compline followed by intercessions before the Ikon of the Mother of God *Joy of All Who Sorrow*. If you would like to join us on any evening, please feel free to do so. If you wish us to commemorate anyone, please send us their Christian names and we will add them to the list.

Some of the evening services in Great Lent are unique. On Wednesday in the 5th Week, we read the Life of St Mary of Egypt in the evening service. This will be on 17 March.

The Akathist to the Mother of God will be sung at Compline on Friday 19 March.

Lazarus Saturday is on 27 March. So on Friday evening (26 March) we will have Great Compline at which there is a special Canon for St Lazarus.

In Holy Week, on Monday (29 March), Tuesday (30 March) and Wednesday (31 March) we will have Compline together with the Canon of the day. On Holy Thursday (1 April) there will be the Twelve Gospel Service. All of these evening services will begin at 6pm.

On Good Friday the Royal Hours will be read at 9am. Vespers will be sung at 3pm and the Service of Lamentations (the burial of Christ) will begin at 6pm.

The Easter Midnight service will begin at 11.30pm on Saturday evening with the Midnight Office. Easter Matins begins at midnight.

GOLD CHAIN

This should have been mentioned in the last bulletin but was forgotten. When the snow melted a thin gold chain was found on the shingle path leading to the church. It had obviously fallen because a link had broken. We thought there may have been a baptismal cross but could not see one anywhere. If anyone has lost a chain, please contact us.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LAZARUS SATURDAY

The Saturday before Palm Sunday is known as Lazarus Saturday. On this day we commemorate the raising of Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary. Lazarus is described as *the four day dead*. If we look at the services for the week prior to Palm Sunday, we see that the liturgical texts for Wednesday contain the following:

Today dead Lazarus is buried, and his sisters sing in lamentation: but Thou, in Thy divine foreknowledge, hast predicted what should come to pass. "Lazarus sleeps", Thou hast prophesied to Thy disciples, "but now I go to raise up him whom I created". Therefore we all cry to Thee: Glory to Thy mighty power.

The biblical account is found in St John's Gospel (11: 1 - 46). Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday are bright days set between Great Lent and Holy Week. The raising of Lazarus is, in a way, a prophesy about resurrection. It is preparing the disciples for the much greater event that will follow later; the Resurrection of Christ Himself. There is an essential difference in that Lazarus is raised and resumes his earthly life, whereas Christ resurrection body has the form that our bodies will take in the General Resurrection on the last day. Christ is reminding all of us that, whilst He is fully human, He is also God. As such, He can set aside the laws of nature if He wills so to do. All His miracles demonstrate this fact. Of course, miracles are the exception to the normal order of things, entirely through God's condescension. Were this not so, all of us would be little more than automata, thereby rendering our actions worthless. We have to chose freely to follow Christ but we are not forced to do so.

The liturgical texts for Lazarus Saturday set out in detail how the miracle at Bethany reveals the two natures of Christ who is God Incarnate. As Bp Kallistos says in his introduction to the Triodion: Christ asks where Lazarus is laid and weeps for him, and so He shows the fullness of his manhood, involving as it does human ignorance and genuine grief for a beloved friend. Then, disclosing the fullness of his divine power, Christ raises Lazarus from the dead, even though his corpse has already begun to decompose and stink. This double fullness of the Lord's divinity and His humanity is to be kept in view throughout Holy Week, and above all on Good Friday. On the Cross we see a genuinely human agony, both physical and mental, but we see more than this: we see not only suffering man but *suffering* God.

Orthodox Church of the Mother of God *Joy of All Who Sorrow*

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REGULAR SERVICES: Every Sunday 10.30am - Every evening 6pm

Extra services for festivals and saints days will be announced in the bulletin.

e-mail churchmettingham@aol.com Website www.joyofallwhosorrow.org.uk

Cheques for the church fund should be made payable to "*Joy of All Who Sorrow*" Church.

The account is in HSBC Bank, 3 New Market, Beccles, Suffolk NR34 9HQ

Account No 71395912 Sort Code 40-09-24