



# “Joy of All Who Sorrow”

No 39 February 2012



## Mettingham Ikon of the Mother of God

### TROPARION - Tone 4

*Rejoice, Our Lady and All-Pure Virgin Mary  
for thou art enthroned once more  
as Mettingham's joy and Waveney's glory.  
Guide and protect us, we pray thee,  
strengthening our faith in thy Son,  
leading us into the Way of Salvation,  
since thou art both Mother of God and Queen of Heaven.*

**E**frem Carrasco has now sent us the first photograph of the Ikon of Our Lady of Mettingham, which shows the Theotokos seated with the Christ Child standing on her right knee. Please let us know if you would like us to email the picture to you.

## CHRISTIAN LOVE

Christianity is not simply a belief system but is manifested in our treatment of others. Do we really love our enemies? Do we really do good to those who use us spitefully? This is a very difficult injunction to obey but we find a good example in the life of St Meletios who is commemorated in the Church Calendar on 12 February. He became Patriarch of Antioch in AD 360 when the Arian controversy was raging. A story is recounted by St John Chrysostom about the persecution and unjust banishment of St Meletios. The Governor, who was an Arian, appeared in public with the saint who was being sent into exile. The crowds in the street, being unwilling to lose their archpastor, pelted the Governor with stones. St Meletios covered the Governor's head with his cloak to protect him. Thus he shamed his persecutor and gave the people an example of humility and kindness. As St John Chrysostom observes, it is not just to do no evil to our enemies, but we should use our strength to protect them from those dangers that threaten them.

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## SAINTS XENOPHON AND MARY

They were prominent and wealthy citizens of Constantinople. Xenophon and his wife Mary lived a God-pleasing life and dedicated all their attention to the Christian upbringing of their sons, John and Arcadios. When their sons were old enough, they were sent to study in Beirut; but it so happened that a storm capsized their boat. By the Providence of God, the brothers were somehow saved from drowning. They were tossed ashore by the waves but in two different places so that each thought the other had drowned. Out of grief for each other, they both embraced monasticism, but in two different monasteries. After two years, their grieving parents came to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage to pray in the holy places. There, with the help of the discernment of a spiritual father, not only were the brothers re-united with each other but also with their parents. Out of gratitude to God, Xenophon and Mary distributed their entire estate to the poor and both of them were tonsured. The history of these four souls is touching and it shows how the Lord wonderfully guides the fate of those who believe in Him; how He permits pain and sorrow upon them that they may, later on, be strengthened in faith, in order to lead them into still greater joy. They lived and died in the Lord in the fifth century.

*The baptismal name of an Orthodox Christian is always a saint's name. In this way, we each have a name-saint as a personal patron saint. This St Mary, the wife of St Xenophon, was the name-saint of Mary our foundress, of pious memory.*

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## CHURCH NOTES AND JOTTINGS

### METTINGHAM ORTHODOX TRUST

As this issue of the bulletin goes out to press, we have just received official notification that the "Mettingham Orthodox Trust" will be registered as a UK charity from 6 February under the registration number- 1145765. When the property is handed over to the Trust, the

church activity here will, with Archbishop Mark's blessing, function under the title *College of Our Lady of Mettingham*.

## **CHURCH PORCH**

Weather permitting, work will soon begin on the construction of a porch to shield the West doors of the church from the worst of the elements. At the same time, a paved area will be made on the North side of the church to enable a car to park there for the convenience of anyone who uses a wheelchair. A ramp will also be provided to allow access to the church via the North door. This was not a consideration in the original plans because of the church being designated as a domestic chapel. Now that this is becoming church property, questions of public access must be addressed.

## **THE VENERABLE MARTYRS OF CROWLAND**

The Venerable Martyrs of Crowland (Abbot Theodore and his companions) are commemorated in the Church Calendar on 9 April and 30 August. Fr Elias has supplied the text of the Canon in honour of the Holy Martyrs, which he has recently completed. There is also a Troparion in Tone 4:

**O Holy Theodore and chosen lambs of the Saviour, you were gathered together in St Guthlac's flock. You were put to death by the cruelty of the pagans and departed joyfully for the heavenly fold. O righteous athletes of Christ we beseech you to pray for our souls.**

## **DATE OF EASTER**

Because of the Paschal moon, the date of Easter moves about, within certain parameters. The reason is that, in the first three centuries of the second millennium, the annual commemoration of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection was subject to a variety of customs including celebrating Easter Day on a fixed date regardless of the day of the week. In making regular the liturgical customs the Church formally accepted the calculation based on the Paschal moon but added a second condition. This second condition is that regardless of the date that the calculation produces, Easter must not precede, or coincide with, the Jewish Passover, but must be delayed until the first free Sunday after Passover. The reason is that Passover, commemorating the escape from Egypt, is a foreshadowing, a promise of that which was to follow; a prophecy in actions rather than words. Passover is the promise but the Resurrection is the fulfillment of the promise. Thus to preserve the symbolism, they must not be celebrated together. Rather, the one must follow the other. This year, the Jewish Passover, which lasts for eight days, will be celebrated from 7 - 14 April. Therefore it follows that Easter Day is 15 April this year.

## **GIFT OF BOOKS TO THE LIBRARY**

We have received a letter from Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira offering to donate theological books to the college library. We appreciate this gesture of goodwill and support.

## **St WANDREGESILIUS**

The first edition *Vita Prima* (Life of St Wandregesilius) is now out of print. The second edition has been expanded by the inclusion of the Canon and the Troparion in honour of

the saint. Copies are available on request, free of charge.

### **INTER-CHURCH QUIZ**

For the last two years we have participated in the local Inter-Church Quiz which is held annually in Mettingham Village Hall. This year's quiz has been arranged for 13 April, which is Good Friday, so we are unable to take part.

### **NAMEDAYS**

To all who are celebrating a nameday at this time, we send congratulations and wish you Many Years!

21 February - **Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates** - Tudor Daniel

23 February - **St Valentina of Palestine, Martyr** - Valentine Meade

26 February - **St Zoe of Bethlehem** - Zoe Andrews

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