



“Joy of All Who Sorrow”

No 31 - June 2011

THE QUESTION OF ALMSGIVING

In the *Prayers before Sleep* in the Prayer Book, among the recounting of our faults and failings we read the phrase *if a beggar has come to me and I despised or neglected him*. This is in the Prayer of St Ephrem the Syrian to the Most Holy Spirit. Despite the establishment of the Welfare State, we do still have beggars on the streets, homeless people who sleep in shop doorways and others who sell the *Big Issue*. Since St Ephrem's time, almsgiving has become more organised with registered charities. Appeals for the victims of all kinds of problems, including seemingly never-ending civil unrest and natural disasters, bombard us constantly. We can all get rather irritated by this and think that we are suffering from charity fatigue, but Saint Nikolai of Zicha has a few words of advice for us.

"Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do it" (Proverbs 3:27).

The Lord does not deny you that which you need, neither should you deny the man whom the Lord has sent to encounter you in order to test your heart. If a beggar extends his hand to you for help once in your life, give to him and do not refuse. Remember how many years there are in your life and how many are the hours in a day and how many are the minutes in an hour-every minute of so many, many thousands of days you extend your hand to the Lord and the Lord gives and does not refuse. Remember the mercy of God and your lack of mercy will burn you as a live coal and it will never give you any peace until you repent and soften your heart.

Do not ever say: "These beggars annoy me!" So many millions of men live on earth and all are beggars before the Lord; emperors as well as labourers, the wealthy as well as servants, all are beggars before the Lord and the Lord never said: "These beggars annoy me!" O man, give thanksgiving to God that someone seeks something good from you, be it material, or spiritual! This means that you are a man of God's trust: God has entrusted some of His goods to you because all goods belong to God. Show yourself worthy of this trust, show yourself worthy in lesser things so that you may be entrusted with greater things.

O Lord, most rich, soften our hearts and enlighten our understanding that we may be merciful in the goods which Thou, the All-merciful, have entrusted to us.

To Thee be glory and thanks always. Amen.

SAINT WANDREGESILIUS

The ikonographer, Ephrem Carrasco, has told us that the ikon of St Wandregesilius, who founded the Abbey of Fontenelle, Normandy, in the 7th Century, will be ready before his feastday this summer. This is wonderful news. The ikon is a gift to the church by Mary McCabe in memory of the foundress. Work is also progressing well with the translation of the saint's Life and the biographical details will be used to write a Canon in honour of St Wandregesilius, which will be used, for the first time, on his feastday. This will re-establish a link with the past because there was, in former times, a great devotion to St Wandregesilius in Mettingham College and the community made an annual pilgrimage to the shrine of the saint at Bixley, near Norwich.

The ikon will be blessed, in church, at 5pm on Wednesday 3 August. The Life of St Wandregesilius will be read on this occasion. We will then adjourn to the house for afternoon tea. Please make a note of this date in your diary.

At 7.30pm we will sing the Vigil and on Thursday 4 August the Liturgy will be served at 10am.

It is our intention to publish a booklet with the Life of St Wandregesilius, together with the Troparion and Canon.

We should never underestimate the importance and value of the saints. Preaching on the Sunday of All Saints of Russia, Vladika St John said: *Saints are those who have partaken of the Divine Essence and made it their own; to God they have become "His own". The saints enjoy blessedness for God is blessed. From them there is light for mankind. Through them the power of God is revealed. Saints retain all that is characteristic of the human condition; they know everything that is ours. They are near to God but they are also near to us; they walked and dwelt among us.*

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CHURCH NOTES AND JOTTINGS: METTINGHAM ORTHODOX TRUST

The trustees have now settled all the terms and provisions for the registering of the Trust which our solicitors, Sprake and Kingsley, will proceed to do. This will enable the White House to become church property in perpetuity, thereby safeguarding the church and the grave of the foundress. Also it will enable the trustees to pursue their remit of using all educational means to promote the Faith.

LIBRARY

Plans are in hand to vastly increase the library shelf space. This will enable us to sort the books into proper academic categories, prior to cataloguing them. In addition we have been thinking about the possibility of clearing out an old storeroom in order to transform it into an archive room where all the other historic documents, pamphlets and similar material can be stored in a filing system to make them accessible for reference and research. Whilst we welcome gifts of books for the library, we are also interested in collecting any documentation relating to the history of the Church, particularly in Britain. If anyone wishes to donate original documents, this will be welcome but photocopies are equally useful. Indeed, it is always a good thing to make copies of important historic documents just in case some disaster, such as a fire, should cause the destruction of the originals.

PROGRESS WITH THE OFFICE

The builders have begun work on the various improvements and renovations that are required. The arch in the hall has now been blocked and the resulting wall plastered. This has restored the former office, on the

ground floor, as a separate room. When telephone and power points have been installed, together with new lighting, we will redecorate the room and install the office equipment.

RADONITSA

After the Radonitsa Liturgy here on Tuesday 3 May we sang the Paschal Panikhida at the grave of the foundress and visited the graves in Beccles Cemetery. After this, three of us travelled to visit graves at Kelsale and Great Bealings. Whilst we were pleased to be able to do this, we were saddened by the fact that these graves appeared unvisited and neglected.

TREASURER

Owing to extreme pressure of other commitments, John Barry has, sadly, had to resign as church treasurer. We thank him for all his efforts on behalf of the church.

CONGRATULATIONS

We send our congratulations to our friend Stephen Weston of St Fursey's House, Sutton who has recently been ordained to the priesthood. Fr Stephen - Many Years

NAMEDAYS

We send congratulations, and wish Many Years, to all who will soon be celebrating a nameday remembering especially:

3 June, Saint Constantine and his mother St Helen - Matushka Helen Bardsley

27 June, Holy Prophet Elisha - His Eminence Archbishop Elisey

(New style dates given for convenience)

SAINT HELEN

Saint Helen was born in about AD250 and lived to the age of eighty. Since she is commemorated on the same day as her more famous son, the Emperor Constantine, she is somewhat eclipsed by him. Also, the published sources are not agreed about many details of her life, including the place of her birth. The list for this honour is quite long and includes Colchester (this is found in the writings of Geoffrey of Monmouth in the 12th Century), Trier, and Drepanum (later Helenopolis) in Bithynia on the Black Sea. Despite being of lowly birth, she became the wife of Emperor Constantius Chlorus and gave birth to Constantine in AD274. It is not known when she was baptised because the fact that she was a Christian only becomes public knowledge after the Edict of Toleration in AD312.

St Helen was known for her extreme charity, giving generously to churches and institutions for the poor, also sending aid to prisoners. In her great piety, she made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where she endorsed the building of churches and is traditionally associated with the finding of the true Cross of Christ. She reposed in the Lord at Nicomedia in about AD330.

Saint Helen - pray to God for us.

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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