

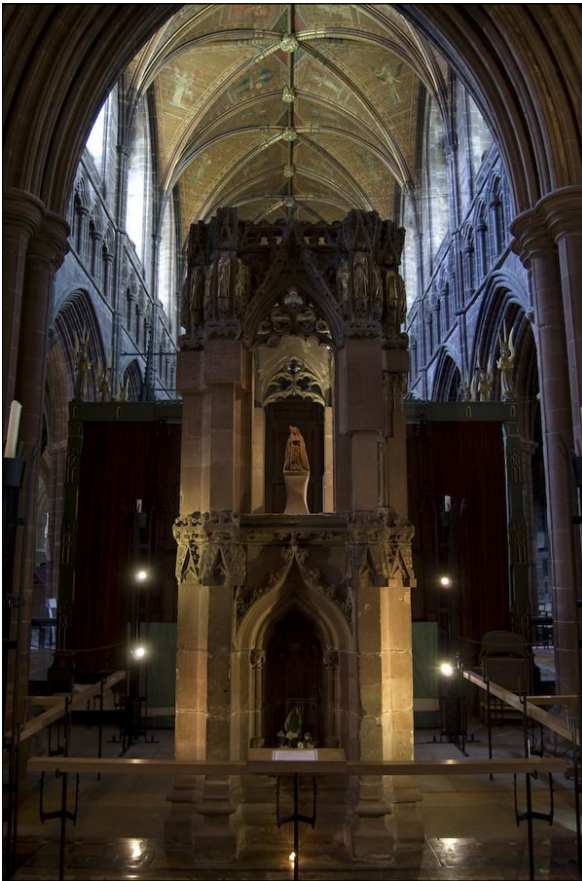
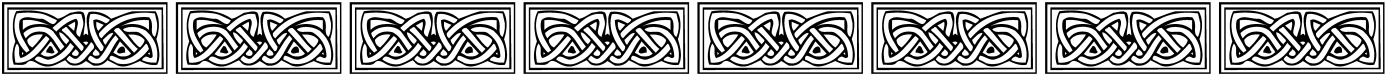


# The New-Martyr

**A Newsletter of the Parish of Saint Elisabeth the New-Martyr**  
*A Parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia  
in the Diocese of Great Britain and Ireland*

Rake Lane Cemetery, Liscard, Merseyside. CH45 5DE.  
[www.newmartyr.info](http://www.newmartyr.info) Tel: 0151 653 7768

Issue No. 1—February, 2013



Above: The reconstructed shrine of St Werburgh in the Anglican cathedral in Chester. The cathedral stands on the site of the church of Ss Werburgh and Oswald, built in the 10th century, when the church in Britain was still part of the Orthodox family. The late mediaeval shrine was demolished in the 16th century by the protestant reformers. The present shrine dates from the 19th century and is reconstructed in large part from fragments of the original, which were found in the cathedral grounds.

## **In this issue...**

**Pg. 3 Father says...**

*A pastoral letter from Father Paul.*

**Pg. 5 The Life of St Werburgh**

*St Werburgh is a beloved saint of our parish, and one of the great saints of these isles. For a number of years we worshipped in a chapel dedicated to her honour at the home of one of our parishioners.*

*St Werburgh's feast is on the 16th of this month.*

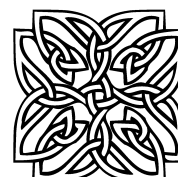
**Pg. 7 For this Holy House**

*This is the first instalment in a series of articles on our worship and prayer in church.*

*This month, we look at the attitude of humble prayerfulness with which we ought to enter the house of the Lord.*

**Pg. 8 News, Events & Namedays**

*Each month we hope to keep readers abreast of parish goings-on. Please send details of your nameday to Subdeacon Michael for inclusion.*



## A Word from the Saints

*'Three things that please God are true faith in God with a pure heart, a simple life with a grateful spirit, and generosity inspired by love.'*

- St Ita of Killeedy



*'We see the water of a river flowing uninterruptedly and passing away, and all that floats on its surface - rubbish or beams of trees - all passes by. Christian! So it is with our life... I was an infant, and that time has gone. I was an adolescent, and that too has passed. I was a young man, and that is also far behind me. The strong and mature man that I was is no more. My hair turns white, I succumb to age, but that too passes away; I approach the end and will go the way of all flesh. I was born in order to die. I die that I may live. Remember me, O Lord, in thy Kingdom!'*

- St Tikhon of Voronezh



*'There is nothing upon earth holier, higher, grander, more solemn, more life-giving than the Liturgy. The church, at this particular time, becomes an earthly heaven; those who officiate represent Christ Himself, the angels, the cherubim, seraphim and apostles.'*

- St John of Kronstadt



*'Remember everything I told you, my dears. Always be not only my children, but obedient disciples. Keep together and be like one soul - everything for God - and say like St John Chrysostom, as he was sent into exile: "Glory to God for all things!" I live in the hope of being with you again soon and I want to find you all together. Apart from the Gospels, read the letters of the Apostle, together. The Lord has found that it is time for us to bear his cross... blessed be the name of the Lord.'*

- St Elisabeth the New-Martyr, writing to her nuns from captivity



*'Be at peace, and have genuine charity among yourselves. If you follow the example of the holy fathers, God, the Comforter of all good, will be your helper.'*

- St Colum Cille of Iona





## Father says...

**D**ear brothers and sisters in Christ,

This is the first newsletter that we have produced and is thus a milestone in the development of our little parish. The idea behind it is to help to bind us together and inform us of events coming up, but also to provide some spiritual nourishment.

I have a memory of being dropped off in Katerini in northern Greece at about 5.00 in the morning in March 1979. Everywhere was dark in the village but for a light in the little church. I entered quietly. Like our church, there were just benches around the edge. I then experienced something very beautiful. The priest was praying the proskomede (Preparation) in the Altar all on his own. I was the only congregation. As the sun rose in the east, light began to filter into the church.

By about 6.00 the most pious old ladies began to arrive. As they came into church they looked up into the cupola and greeted the icon of Christ with their arms outstretched towards Him. Candles began to burn before the icons. Not until about 6.30 did anything public begin to happen. I really felt that, as in the Holy Scriptures, I had come to the tomb early whilst it was yet dark, expectant and yearning to meet my Lord.

How we come into church on a Sunday morning is very important for we should try very hard to be expectant and make our hearts ready for the Holy Liturgy. The lamps are lit when we arrive but, especially in a Russian church, the doors of the screen and the curtain are closed. You may be early enough to see the priests stand before the doors to say their preparation prayers and bow to you, begging your forgiveness before they enter the altar. They then vest and begin the Proskomede.

Getting everything ready in quietness is the great privilege of the priest and his people. There is a need for your quiet prayerfulness, for at this time, as the people of God gather, we all meditate upon the unseen, almost secret birth and infancy of our Saviour. We know very little about his early life upon this earth as it is shrouded in mystery. Thus our Hours should concentrate upon the prayers at the opening of the giving thanks for the Incarnation of The Lord and He has come to dwell amongst us. During the Hours we may feel repentance, we may seek to come to confession so that our hearts and minds are as prepared as they possibly can be to receive the Holy Mysteries of Christ.



The Hours help us to prepare and our holy faith. We try to be serene all those things which keep us from God. During the Third Hour the curtain is still closed. The holy Gifts are now prepared and you can hear the first censuring and hopefully smell the incense. This is a reminder to us of the paradise promised to us by our Lord. The bread and wine are now ready. The curtain opens and the first great censuring begins. This is part of the sanctification of the people of God. Ordinary bread and wine have been set aside for this great Mystery, now the people are set aside in a similar way. All are made ready, all are spiritually as beautiful as they possibly can be, all are as close to God as they can be...yearning and longing to meet the Saviour. Just as the people of God of the Old Covenant were made ready by the Law and the Prophets, so are we, the people of the New Covenant.



We are made ready to hear the proclamation of the Good News (Gospel). What the people rarely hear, except when our bishop is with us, are the final preparation prayers just before the Holy Liturgy begins. The priest raises his arms towards the heavens and says, 'O Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, who art everywhere present and fillest all things; Treasury of blessings and Giver of life, come and abide in us, cleanse us from every impurity and save our souls, O Good One.' Then he says, 'Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace, goodwill



towards men." - the song of the angels at the birth of Christ - and then, 'O Lord, open our lips and our mouths shall show forth thy praise.' He then kisses the Holy Table and takes the Gospel Book and sings in a loud voice: 'Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit now and ever and unto the ages of ages.'

This is the moment that the people of God have been waiting for, the Good News they have come to hear, that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. As the public ministry of our Saviour opens with the proclamation of the coming of the Kingdom after his preparation in his Baptism and temptation in the wilderness, so the Holy Liturgy opens with this great revelation which we, the people of God, affirm with joy as we sing: 'Amen!'

These are just a few thoughts for us. I will prepare a few more for a future edition to guide us through to the Little Entrance.

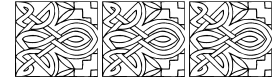
My love to you in Christ our Saviour.

Priest Paul Elliott





# St Werburgh of Chester

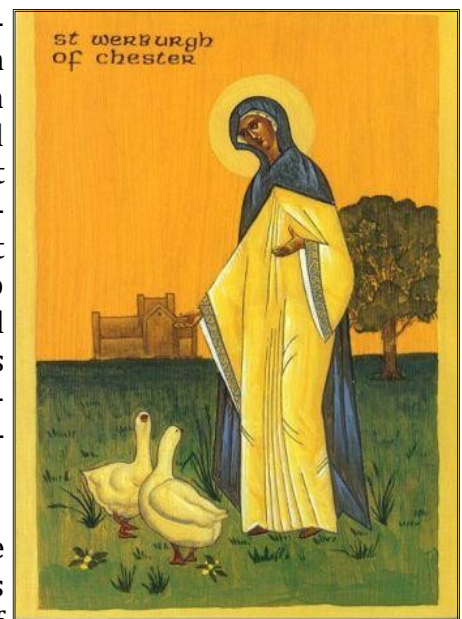


*Feast day: 3rd February (Church calendar)*

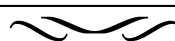
**I**n the year 597, when the Christian faith was first brought to England, one of the greatest difficulties faced by the missionaries was the division of the land into a number of often warring kingdoms. The most effective way of overcoming this disunity was dynastic marriage between members of the royal families, families which, once Christianised, were able to spread the Faith with immense zeal. In this undertaking the main and vital role was played by queens and princesses, the women of the royal families, who, as ever, showed far greater sensitivity to the Truth of Christ than the men. Many of them, as widows, together with unmarried sisters or daughters, turned to the monastic life, which in turn helped weld together the seven kingdoms into national unity. Indeed, Old England had no fewer than thirty-seven holy abbesses, many of them of royal origin. The family tree of this golden age of holiness starts in 597 with the first convert, Ethelburt, King of Kent. From his family emerged an extraordinary catalogue of twenty-seven Saints, including St Werburgh.

On her mother's side, St Werburgh was descended from a long line of Saints from the kingdom of Kent. Her father, however, was Wulfhere, prince of the newly-converted Mercia, and her father's father was none other than Penda, the war-like pagan King of Mercia, responsible for the deaths of Christian kings from neighbouring kingdoms - St Oswald, King of Northumbria and St Sigebert, King of East Anglia. Her father died when she was young and so she was brought up by her great-aunt, St Audrey, at Ely, later going to Minster-in-Sheppey in Kent with her mother St Ermenhild and her grandmother, St Saxburgh.

No doubt here she made the acquaintance of her cousins, Milburgh, Mildred and Mildgyth, and the Kentish and East Anglian traditions of family and monastic piety handed down through the generations, as well as the advice of spiritual fathers and mothers whom the family had known, going right back to St Augustine himself. She was destined to take back these traditions with her to her native Mercia. A late tradition says that Werburgh had a suitor whom she rejected, and it was he who was responsible for martyring her two brothers, Wulfhad and Ruffin, who were protecting her. However this may be, it is clear that, when still young, she had already chosen the monastic life. She was to become a nun and then abbess at Minster-in-Sheppey and then at Ely itself. But this was not to last.



On account of both her spiritual and practical experience in the great convents of England, she was invited by her father's brother, King and later St Ethelred of Mercia, to take charge of convents in Mercia, at Weedon, Hanbury and Threckingham. Stories about her from this period particularly concern her links with the animal world. A picturesque legend describes the control she had over wild geese which were devastating crops at Weedon. Abbess Werburgh ordered them into a stable and such was their obedience that next morning they asked her to be released. Another story, which shows her humility, is that of how at Weedon she protected a cowherd, Alnoth, a man of simplicity and holiness, from a cruel steward. She threw herself at the steward's feet and asked him to spare Alnoth, whom she said was more acceptable to God than any of themselves. Later, the same cowherd was to become a hermit in nearby woods at Stowe, and then murdered. He was venerated locally as a Saint on 27th February.



The Abbess Werburgh reposed at Threckingham on 3rd February in about the year 700, certainly not later than 710. Apparently at her own request, the relics were taken from Threckingham to Hanbury, where they remained until 875, much venerated. In this year, for fear of the Danish invasions, the holy remains were transferred to Chester, to the church which became known as St Werburgh's. This is the beginning of her long connection with that city, and she is often called "St Werburga of Chester". The site of St Werburgh's church is today that of Chester Cathedral, where part of the stone base of her shrine still survives. In 1540, Henry VIII made the abbey church of St Werburgh into a cathedral, and, as protestants often did, like the Normans before them, rededicated it. However, even today, it still keeps its link with the Saint through the name of the street leading to the cathedral - St Werburgh Street. St Werburgh's prayers were much sought by the young, especially children and young women.

The church at Hanbury is still dedicated to St Werburgh and this may mean that she actually founded the convent whereas she only reformed Weedon and Threckingham. Near Hanbury, another dedication is at Kingsley. Churches at Derby and nearby Spondon and Blackwell are also dedicated to her, and these, too, are probably her foundations, for it is known that she laboured here and also in nearby Repton. Although Chester was rededicated at the reformation, in Cheshire, the village of Warburton is named after the Saint, (Werburgton), and the church there is also dedicated to her, apparently on the site of a monastery. In the Midlands, there used to be another village, now lost, called Werburgewic.

Werburgh's presence is also remembered in Kent in the present-day village of Hoo St Werburgh near the convent at Minster-in-Sheppey and previously in another lost village of Thanet, Werburghingland. Other dedications to her are in Bristol, Wembury in Devon, and at Tregelos and Warbstow (the "stow" or "holy place" of Werburgh), in Cornwall. These dedications may represent a distribution of relics of the Saint in the West.

*From Orthodox Christianity and the English Tradition, by Archpriest Andrew Phillips.*

#### **Troparion—tone 4**

*Thine illustrious life filled the angels with awe and put the demons to flight in terror, while it adorns the congregations of the faithful with the splendour of grace, O venerable mother Werburga! As in thy charity thou didst extend thy love to all thy fellow creatures, intercede with God on our behalf, that our souls may be saved!*



*Above and right: the former Orthodox garden chapel of St Werburgh, Congleton—a place of worship in our parish for a number of years, at the home of Barbara Worth. Our present icon of St Werburgh resided here.*



# For this Holy House

Subdeacon Michael Astley



*Enter this door as if the floor within were gold;  
and every wall of jewels all of wealth untold;  
as if a choir in robes of fire were singing here;  
nor shout, nor rush,  
but hush...*

*For God is here.*

**R**ound inscribed on the doors of some old English churches, this little rhyme captures well the spirit of awe in which we ought to approach the house of God. In the Incarnation, the Invisible became visible, the Immaterial became material, and God became flesh; so that we mortals, who are flesh, may be united with God. So, in our Christian life, we achieve the spiritual through the material: we kiss holy things, we bow, we prostrate, and we trace the Cross of the Lord upon our bodies; we are immersed in water, we are anointed with oil, and we receive the Body and Blood of the Saviour in the forms of bread and wine. Through these physical actions, we are exposed to the life-giving grace of God.

Similarly, the place where we come to worship is part of this material, physical creation which has been set apart to be the place where this encounter with the divine takes place, where time stretches up meet eternity, and where heaven reaches down to meet earth. We must enter it conscious of the great mystery that takes place here and of our own unworthiness. Indeed, at almost every service, we pray “for this holy house, and for those who enter it with faith, reverence, and the fear of God”.

So we come into our Father’s house as his children who have received the grace of adoption through our baptism. Yet, aware of our own sin, as we approach the doors of the church or once we have entered\*, the tradition of the Church has taught us to sign ourselves with the Cross and bow (or prostrate) three times, saying:

1. Thou hast created me, O Lord: have mercy on me.
2. O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.
3. Countless times I have sinned: O Lord, forgive me.

Then we bow to our brothers and sisters in Christ to the right and to the left of the church, before also greeting the Lord, the Mother of God, and the other saints by venerating their holy icons, asking their prayers, and thus strengthening the spiritual bond that exists between them and us.

Once we have done this, we take our place in the church, listening to the psalms and prayers, and joining in the singing, worshipping God from the heart.

*\*In many places, it is also the custom to repeat this action when leaving the church.*

## News



### Monastic Clothing

On Christmas Day, Father Lazarus was clothed in his monastic garments, which were lovingly made by the nuns of St Elizabeth's Convent in Minsk. Photographs may be viewed in the [photo gallery](#).

### Iconostas

Also on Christmas Day were blessed the new icons of Ss Elisabeth and Barbara for our iconostas. There are plans for two more icons: one of St John the Wonderworker, archbishop in London in the 1950s and a beloved saint of modern times, as well as another of a saint yet undecided. Your suggestions are welcome.

### The St Barbara the New-Martyr Trust

We have now set up a trust to support Father Lazarus. Father Lazarus is a priestmonk who is not attached to a monastery but rather serves St Elisabeth's as our second priest since last summer. He keeps our church open most days of the week, praying the Hours throughout the day, and receiving visitors who cross the threshold of our church for any of a number of reasons. This is a great blessing to our parish and to many who enter our doors, particularly in these times when churches are seldom found to be open or are put to secular use outside of service times.

In order to enable Father Lazarus to continue this important work, we must support him with what he needs. He lives a simple monastic life but money is still needed, and may be paid directly into the trust bank account:

Account number: 36980860  
Sort code: 77-17-24  
Name: The St Barbara the New-Martyr Trust

Additionally, comestible donations may be made at church, where there is a refrigerator. Please remember that monks do not eat meat or poultry (they do eat fish, however), and that Father Lazarus does not drink alcohol.

### Newsletter

This is the first edition of the parish e-newsletter. Ideas about the format and content are welcome. Please send the date of your nameday to Subdeacon Michael at [editor@newmartyr.info](mailto:editor@newmartyr.info). If you do not know the date or are unsure whether you have a saint's name, please make contact anyway. We don't want to leave anybody out.



## Upcoming Events

*Saturday, 2nd February*

### **Rossall School Liturgy**

Postponed from the previous Saturday due to heavy snowfall. Services at 10.15 a.m.

*Friday, 15th February*

### **The Meeting of the Lord**

Hours and Divine Liturgy at 8.30 a.m.  
Fish, wine, and oil are allowed today.

*Saturday, 16th February*

### **St Werburgh of Chester**

Hours and Divine Liturgy at 8.30 a.m.

*Sunday, 24th February*

### **Bring-and-Share Luncheon**

Following the Divine Liturgy.

*25th February—2nd March*

### **Fast-free week**

The fasting rules are completely relaxed this week in preparation for the approaching Great Fast.

## Dates for Your Diary

### **Film Night**

Micky Shroeder is putting on another film night on Thursday, the 2nd of March after the Akathist at 7 p.m. It is a Greek film about a village that tries to keep its Faith under the persecutions of the Ottoman Empire. Like last time, bring food so that we can all have supper together as we watch the film.

### **Concert Fundraiser**

Evgenia Petrenko is organising a concert at the church on the evening of Saturday, the 10th of March at 7.30 p.m. Any proceeds will go towards the St Barbara the New-Martyr Trust.

### **Great and Holy Week & Pascha**

Easter is very late this year, falling on the 5th of May. Holy Week begins with Lazarus Saturday on the 27th of April, followed by Palm Sunday. The core of the weekday services will take place from the evening of Great and Holy Wednesday, (1st of May).

In order to enter as fully as possible into the mystery of the Passion and Resurrection of the Saviour, we should make every effort to be present at as many of these services as possible.

### **Rossall School Liturgy**

Rossall is a boarding school near Fleetwood, a short journey north of



## Dates for Your Diary, cont'd.

Blackpool by public transportation. The school has a number of Orthodox pupils of various nationalities who, apart from their own prayers, are isolated from any form of Orthodox Church life. Once each term, we travel to the school to serve the Divine Liturgy, enabling the pupils to make their confession and receive Holy Communion.

The next Liturgy at the school is scheduled for the 11th of May, which is the Saturday in Bright Week, so that the pupils may take part in the celebration of the Paschal Mystery of the Resurrection of the Saviour. It would be good for the pupils if as many of us as possible were to take part in this Liturgy. [Directions to the school](#) are on the parish website.

## Namedays



*Sunday, 3rd February (21st January) - St Maximus the Confessor*  
Maxim Hyland

*Wednesday, 6th February (24th January) - St Xenia of St Petersburg*  
Oksana Holt  
Oksana Kehoe

*Saturday, 16th February (3rd February) - St Anna the Prophetess*  
Ania Bowen

*Monday, 25th February (12th February) - St Alexis of Moscow, Wonderworker of All Russia*  
Aleksey Hyland

*May God grant them many years!*

Here are the references to the Scripture readings from the Divine Liturgy in the coming weeks.

<b>3rd February</b> (21st January)	<i>35th Sunday after Pentecost</i> <i>St Maximus the Confessor</i>	1st Timothy 1:15-17 Hebrews 11:33-12:2	Luke 18:35-43 Luke 12:8-12
<b>10th February</b> (28th January)	<i>36th Sunday after Pentecost</i> <i>Holy New-Martyrs and Confessors of Russia</i>	2nd Corinthians 6:16-7:1 Romans 8:28-39	Matthew 15:21-28 Luke 21:12-19
<b>15th February</b> (2nd February)	<i>The Meeting of the Lord in the Temple</i>	Hebrews 7:7-17	Luke 2:22-40
<b>16th February</b> (3rd February)	<i>Saturday in the 37th Week</i> <i>St Werburgh of Chester</i>	1st Thessalonians 5:14-23 Galatians 3:23-29	Luke 17:3-10 Matthew 25:1-13
<b>17th February</b> (4th February)	<i>37th Sunday after Pentecost</i>	1st Timothy 4:9-15	Luke 19:1-10
<b>24th February</b> (11th February)	<i>Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee</i>	2nd Timothy 3:10-15	Luke 18:10-14

Please consider printing this page on card and cutting out this contact card for your wallet, purse, or organiser, to help ensure that your spiritual and sacramental needs are met.



### IN CASE OF EMERGENCY



**I am an Orthodox Christian.**

In case of medical emergency/hospitalisation, please contact one of my priests:

Father Paul Elliott: 07926 194 031  
Father Lazarus: 07906 578 313



St Elisabeth's is a Christian church. We hold to the ancient Orthodox faith of the Apostles, confessing our faith in the Holy and Indivisible Trinity: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We are a parish of the [Great Britain & Ireland Diocese](#) of the [Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia](#), a self-governing part of the international Russian Orthodox Church with our chief bishop in New York. Our own bishop is His Grace Archbishop Mark of Great Britain.

Among our regular congregation are Britons, Russians, Romanians, Ukrainians, Serbs, Americans, and others. Our Sunday services are approximately 85% in English with the rest in Slavonic and occasionally some Greek and Romanian, according to who is present. We tend to use more English for other services. Conversation is predominantly in English, and we share refreshments after the service. On one Sunday each month, we stay for a bring-and-share luncheon together. All are welcome.

The Hours and Divine Liturgy (The Holy Eucharist) are served every Sunday morning at 9.45, as well as on other feast days as announced. Only Orthodox Christians receive Holy Communion, and our parish practice is that communicants should confess regularly. Visitors who wish to receive communion are asked to make themselves known to one of the clergy beforehand.

We follow the traditional Church calendar which was established by the First Ecumenical Council. Currently, this is 13 days behind the civil calendar. (Therefore, for instance, our celebration of Christmas, which is the 25th of December, falls on the 7th of January in the civil calendar). Both dates are usually given in published details of church services and other events, which may be found on [our parish website](#).

Our parish supports the Wirral Churches' Ark Project for homeless men and women. Donations of clothes, toiletries, and non-perishable foodstuffs may be made at church, and monetary donations may be made either directly to the Ark Project or through Mrs Irina Burnip at church.

We have two priests:

**Priest Paul Elliott**

Address: 58 Shrewsbury Road, Oxtot, Birkenhead, Merseyside. CH43 2HY

Telephone: 07926 194 031

e-mail: [fatherpaul@newmartyr.info](mailto:fatherpaul@newmartyr.info)

**Priestmonk Lazarus**

Address: Flat 1, 4 Rake Lane, Wallasey, Merseyside. CH45 5DF

Telephone: 07906 578 313

e-mail: [fatherlazarus@newmartyr.info](mailto:fatherlazarus@newmartyr.info)

Father Lazarus prays the Hours in church on most days of the week and is happy to receive visitors, as well as requests for prayers, molebens, and other services.

For pastoral or other enquiries for Russians who do not speak English, our parish has a Russian-language contact:

**Mrs Svetlana Jeneson**

Telephone: 01704 212 959

e-mail: [svjetlana@newmartyr.info](mailto:svjetlana@newmartyr.info)



The New-Martyr is published with the blessing of the Revd Fr Paul Elliott, Rector of the Parish of Saint Elisabeth the New-Martyr. Questions and comments may be sent to the editor:

**Subdeacon Michael Astley** e-mail: [editor@newmartyr.info](mailto:editor@newmartyr.info)

Please ensure that all submissions for publication are received by the 23rd day of the previous month.