

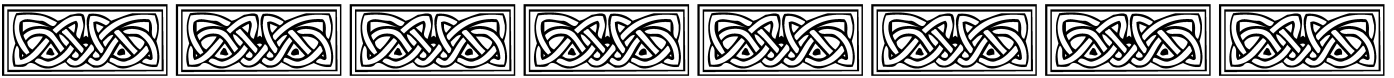


The New-Martyr

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

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Issue No. 4—May, 2013



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Christ is risen!



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Dear friends in Christ,

We are now into our fourth issue of *The New-Martyr*, which seems to have been quite well received so far, both within and without our parish.

In this special Paschal issue, we hear nourishing words from our bishop about how we are to approach and live the feast of the Lord's Resurrection.

Aidan's research on the Holy Myrrh-bearing Women begins a new feature which is hoped will find a regular place in the newsletter. Each month, we would like to include a piece on the life, writings, hymnody, or works of a particular saint whose feast falls during that month. This is an ideal opportunity for readers to contribute something to the newsletter, sharing their favourite saints with the rest of us and deepening our devotion to and union with the holy friends of God. The July slot is already booked but all other months are open so please [check the calendar](#) and let us know about the saints who touch your lives in some special way.

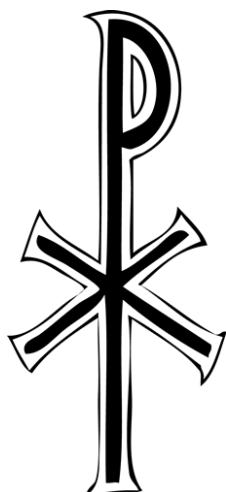
We also have our first book review, which is very encouraging. If you would like to review a suitable book pertaining to some element of the Christian life, please do get in touch.

On a personal note, I am very grateful and feel honoured to be able to play a part in this effort to give further cohesion to our parish life together.

Your brother in Christ,
Michael



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

A Word from the Saints

'On the day of the Resurrection we remind ourselves of the grace given to us by standing at prayer, not only because we rose with Christ, and are bound to "seek those things which are above," but because the day seems to us to be in some sense an image of the age which we expect... On this day the rules of the church have educated us to prefer the upright attitude of prayer, for by their plain reminder they, as it were, make our mind to dwell no longer in the present but in the future. Moreover, every time we fall upon our knees and rise from off them we show by the very deed that by our sin we fell down to earth, and by the loving-kindness of our Creator were called back to heaven.'

- St Basil the Great *On the Holy Spirit*



'Now since you are celebrating the holy Pascha, you should know, brethren, what the Pascha is. Pascha means the passing-over, and so the Festival is called by this name. For it was on this day that the Children of Israel passed over out of Egypt, and the Son of God passed over from this world to his Father. What gain is it to celebrate unless you imitate Him Whom you worship; that is, unless you pass over from Egypt, that is, from the darkness of evil-doing to the light of virtue, from the love of this world to the love of your heavenly home?'

- St Ambrose of Milan



'Their poor ointments, with which they meant to preserve from corruption Him Who Himself keeps the heavens from decay, and with which they desired to anoint Him from whom the heavens take their fragrance! O most fragrant Lord, the only fragrance of the human being and human history; how wondrously didst Thou reward these devoted and faithful souls who did not forget Thee dead in thy tomb! Thou didst make the Myrrh-bearing Women the bearers of the tidings of thy Resurrection and thy glory! They did not anoint thy dead body, but Thou didst anoint their living souls with the oil of gladness. The mourners of the dead became the swallows of a new spring.'

- St Nikolai Velimirovic



'Yesterday I was crucified with Him; today I am glorified with Him. Yesterday I died with Him; today I am enlivened with Him. Yesterday I was buried with Him; today I rise with Him. But let us make an offering to Him Who suffered and rose again for us. You will think perhaps that I am going to say gold, or silver, or woven work, or transparent and costly stones—the mere passing material of earth, that remains here below, and is for the most part always possessed by bad men, slaves of the world and of the Prince of the world. Let us rather offer ourselves, the possession most precious to God, and most fitting; let us give back to the Image what is made after the Image. Let us recognise our dignity, let us honour our Archetype, let us know the power of the Mystery, and for what Christ died.'

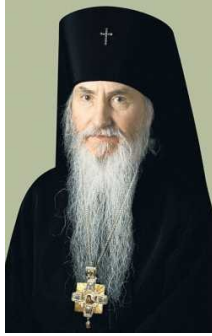
- St Gregory the Theologian



A Paschal Message to the Pious Flock in Great Britain & Ireland

Archbishop Mark

Christ is risen,
dear brothers
and sisters!



Every year on the radiant night of Easter, we offer Christ the triumphant angelic hymn, as they sing the praises of his Resurrection and we ask the Risen Lord to vouchsafe us on earth to see Him and glorify Him in purity of heart.

But surely it is impossible to see God in our present life? Surely that ability will only be revealed to us in the life to come? If it were impossible to see God in this earthly life, then we would not sing at Easter and at every Sunday service: 'Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus...'. Where exactly and how is it possible to behold the Resurrection of Christ? Not outwardly, with our bodily eyes, not in dreaminess or in the imagination, which deceives us with images, like stills from a film, and not even in church on the icon of the Resurrection, for an icon is only a representation of an inward mysterious event. There is only one place in the Universe where we can meet Christ the Lord – it is in our own hearts. The Lord descends there, into the depths of our hearts, in the sacraments of the Church, in order to bring our souls out of the prison of hades (Psalm 141: 7), in order to raise up us who are mortified by sin. It is of this that the icon of the Resurrection of Christ, also called 'The Descent into Hades', speaks to us.

The blessedness of the vision of God is promised to mankind by the God-Man Himself: Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God (Matthew 5: 8). However, it is not promised to all: only to those who are

pure in heart and keep the Lord's commandments. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me...and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him (John 14: 21). This promise testifies to the possibility of seeing God even in this earthly life, for wherever his commandments are kept, He will appear to all who have purified their hearts.

The grace of the Holy Spirit cleanses the heart when we wholeheartedly strive to live for Christ and in Christ. This is particularly vital at Eastertide. It is dangerous to give ourselves up to just an outward celebration, all the more so if it involves noisy and worldly merry making. Such merriment is incompatible with the true and sacred Paschal joy. If we forget the Cross of Christ, the joy of the feast of Christ's Resurrection can easily be transformed from a spiritual celebration into a fleshly entertainment. In order to prevent our joy from becoming foolish and sinful, we have to call to memory and live together with Christ through everything that preceded the Resurrection: the unjust judgement of the Saviour, the spitting, the beating, the mocking, his voluntary suffering on the Cross for our sakes and his death and burial. It is impossible to experience the true joy of Christ's Resurrection if we have not died and risen together with Christ, if we have not inwardly lived through all the stages of his path of the Cross which He accomplished for our sakes. It is impossible to understand Christ's feat if we are not ourselves prepared to suffer, if we are not prepared to take on ourselves spiritually Gethsemane, Golgotha, the Cross, and the Descent into Hades. For, as Paul the Apostle says, if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his Resurrection (Romans 6: 5)

and if we are children of God, then heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together (8: 17).

May God grant us who are united to Christ during the holy forty days of Lent through the likeness of his death, to be united with the Resurrection of Christ through the likeness of his Resurrection, not only in these holy Paschal days, but all the days of our life; to triumph and to celebrate with his holy angels, with all the prophets, apostles, martyrs and confessors, saints and righteous, who have purified their

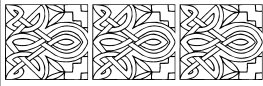
hearts in order to see God. And may God grant that, once we have purified our hearts and kept them pure, there may also come to us the promise of the desired meeting, the promise of the joy that is imperishable, that does not pass and cannot be taken away, given by the Lord to his holy disciples and all who follow Him: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you (Jn 16, 22).

Christ is Risen Indeed!



Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus, the only sinless One. We venerate thy Cross, O Christ, and we praise and glorify thy holy Resurrection, for Thou art our God, and we know none other than Thee. We call on thy name. Come, all you faithful! Let us venerate Christ's holy Resurrection. For, behold, through the Cross joy has come into all the world. Let us ever bless the Lord, praising his Resurrection. For, having endured the Cross for us, He has destroyed death by death.





Saint of the Month

The Holy Myrrh-bearers



*The Myrrh-bearing maidens anticipated the dawn,
seeking, as though it were day,
the Sun Who existed before the sun,
and Who had set in the tomb.*

*And they cried out to one another:
'O friends! Come, let us anoint with sweet-smelling spices
the life-giving and buried Body,
even that Flesh Which raises fallen Adam,
and which lies in the grave.
Come, let us make haste like the Wise Men.
Let us worship Him and offer myrrh as a gift
to Him Who is wrapped no longer in swaddling bands
but in a winding-sheet,
and let us weep and cry aloud:
"Arise, O Master, Who grantest Resurrection to the fallen!"'*

- The Ikos after Ode 6 of the Paschal Canon



In the devotion of the Orthodox Church, the Holy Myrrh-bearers are those individuals mentioned in the New Testament who were directly involved in the burial, or who discovered the empty tomb following the Resurrection of the Saviour. The term traditionally refers to the women with myrrh who came to the tomb of Christ early in the morning to find it empty. Also included are the Noble Joseph of

Arimathea and Nicodemus, who took the body of Jesus down from the Cross, embalmed it with myrrh and aloes, wrapped it in clean linen, and placed it in a new tomb. (Matthew 27:55-61, Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 15:40-16:11, Luke 23:50-24:10, John 19:38-20:18).

The women followed Jesus during his earthly ministry in Galilee, providing for Him and his followers out of their own means (Mark 15:41). They remained faithful to Him even during the most dangerous time of his arrest and execution, and not only stood by the Cross, but accompanied Him to his burial, noticing where the tomb was located. Because of the impending Sabbath, it was necessary for the burial preparations to be brief. Jewish custom at the time dictated that mourners return to the tomb every day for three days. Once the Sabbath had passed, the women returned at the earliest possible moment, bringing myrrh to anoint the Body. It was at this point that the Resurrection was revealed to them, and they were commissioned to go and tell the Apostles. They were, in effect, the apostles to the Apostles. It is for this reason that the Myrrh-bearing Women, especially St Mary Magdalene, are sometimes referred to as *Equal to the Apostles*. Also for this reason, we celebrate their memory each year on the Second Sunday after Pascha. In addition to which, each of the Holy Myrrh-bearing Women is commemorated on her own feast day in the church calendar.

The Homily of St Gregory Palamas for the Sunday of the Holy Myrrh-bearers may be read [here](#).

*Many thanks to Aidan Draper for submitting
these texts on the Holy Myrrh-bearers.*



A rising



n Holy Saturday we begin what was once described as the Mother of all Vigils.
This morning as I write it is dark outside -
reminiscent of the tomb in which the Crucified Jesus lay—Christ laid dead in a tomb.

After a lifetime of events in a week, the Son of God lies dead in a tomb,
But about to prove wrong the saying, "You will be a long time dead".
On Palm Sunday He is proclaimed as a King,
On Thursday He is betrayed by one of the Disciples and handed over to death on a Cross.

This morning even in the dark a bird is singing,
As if it were breaking out in a song about the hope for which we are waiting.
In the hours to come we watch and wait,
In the words of the Book of Romans: "We await the redemption of our bodies."

Are we seeking to surrender our wills to God's plan for us?
"Truly I say unto you unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies
it remains alone,
But if it dies it bears rich fruit."
There is more work to be done for all of us to remain faithful to Christ .



A Vigil to keep more profoundly as we watch and wait with the sick and suffering,
This Vigil with those who continue to stand at the foot of the Holy Cross and suffer,
A vigil for our loved ones,
A vigil for those who have lost their way in life and spiritually.

We watch and wait with those who thirst for love, compassion, and understanding.
We are called to take them by the hand and make a journey with them,
A journey from the darkness of their tombs,
A journey to the Resurrection in their lives.

This hope of all hopes is offered to all men and women without exception.
The hope that "All will be well, and all will be well, and all manner of things shall be well."
Even in the darkest night of our lives there is the fragile flame of hope.
An old saying has it that it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.

As we sometimes struggle to make our offering to God there is hope to encourage us:
the fullness of life in Christ risen and transformed in glory.
Even as our days and nights on earth run out we wait in joyful hope,
Waiting in joyful hope for Him who is most lovable,
and loves and understands us more than anyone else.

Through the days and nights of our mortal time there is another time running:
God's time for us,
God's life within us,
God's peace, love, and compassion,
God's offer of rest for all those who struggle and carry heavy burdens,
God desire that we grow into his own inner life,
that we fulfil our full potential,
that we become the sons and daughters of God.

Christ is risen!
He is truly in our midst!
What difference will this make to us?
Or will He pass us by unnoticed?



Priestmonk Lazarus



The Angel Cried



Michael Astley

*The Angel cried to the Lady, full of grace: 'O Pure Virgin, rejoice!
And again I say rejoice, for thy Son is risen from the grave on the third day;
And he has raised all the dead.' O, you people, be joyful!*

*Shine! Shine! O New Jerusalem: the glory of the Lord has arisen on thee.
Dance, now, and be glad, O Sion. Be radiant, O Pure Theotokos,
in the Resurrection of thy Son.*

This hymn (in [Slavonic](#) and [English](#)), which replaces "It is truly meet" at many services throughout the paschal season, is one of those hymns most beloved of Orthodox Christians. Not only does it express our abundant joy in the Resurrection of the Saviour and our deep love for his holy Mother, but it also has much to teach us.



I find it inexpressibly moving to think that the mourning Mother of God, having endured much grief and seen her beloved Son endure immense suffering, was once again comforted by an angel—perhaps even the Holy Archangel Gabriel himself—who had first brought her the news that in her, of all women throughout all the world and throughout all the ages, would be fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of the sign ([Isaiah 7:14](#)).

Indeed, the description of her as "the Lady full of grace" is a direct reference to the Annunciation, which we celebrated last month. Having been obedient to God's will throughout all of those trials, it seems fitting that she should learn of the Resurrection from the angel in a new annunciation. And so the story goes full circle, and the anticipation and uncertainty of the first angelic salutation, "Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos!" is fulfilled in the comfort and joyous victory of the second:

"and again I say: Rejoice!"

Of course, the Mother of God has what we are called to have, and is what we are all called to be, so the hymn doesn't stop with her but calls all of us to share in the joy and life of the Resurrection in the exhortation, "Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem!"

At the Vesperal Liturgy of St Basil on Holy Saturday - the "old" paschal vigil - we hear this reading from the prophecy of Isaiah:

Shine, shine, O Jerusalem: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thy eyes round about, and see: all these are gathered together, they are come to thee: thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall rise up at thy side. Then shalt thou see, and abound, and thy heart shall wonder and be enlarged, when the multitude of the sea shall be converted to thee, the strength of the Gentiles shall come to thee.

The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the



dromedaries of Madian and Ephraim: all they from Saba shall come, bringing gold and frankincense: and shewing forth praise to the Lord. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nabaioth shall minister to thee: they shall be offered upon my acceptable altar, and I will glorify the house of my majesty. Who are these that fly as clouds, and as doves to their windows? For the islands wait for me, and the ships of the sea in the beginning: that I may bring thy sons from afar: their silver, and their gold with them, to the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. And the children of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister to thee: for in my wrath have I struck thee, and in my reconciliation have I had mercy upon thee.

And thy gates shall be open continually: *they shall not be shut day nor night, that the strength of the Gentiles may be brought to thee, and their kings may be brought. For the nation and the kingdom that will not serve thee, shall perish: and the Gentiles shall be wasted with desolation. The glory of Libanus shall come to thee, the Ar tree, and the box tree, and the pine tree together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary: and I will glorify the place of my feet. And the children of them that afflict thee, shall come bowing down to thee, and all that slandered thee shall worship the steps of thy feet, and shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Sion of the Holy One of Israel. Because thou wast forsaken, and hated, and there was none that passed through thee, I will make thee to be an everlasting glory, a joy unto generation and generation.*

- from Isaiah 60

In the Resurrection of Christ, we see this prophecy fulfilled: the Church **is** the New Jerusalem, and the glory of the Lord has indeed arisen upon us, just as Isaiah foretold. Death is conquered and life is set free, and it is our inheritance as children of the Father, adopted through Baptism, for us to claim and

in which we participate in the sacramental life of the Church—in the services, the Mysteries, the prayers and hymns, and in our communion with, and love for, each other.

"O you people, be joyful!"

In this brilliant radiance of the Resurrection, and in keeping with Isaiah's prophecy that "thy gates shall be open continually, and they shall not be shut day or night" the doors of the iconostas in our churches are left open throughout Bright Week, so that we look through the open doors, which depict the Annunciation to the Mother of God, whose entry into the temple is described in our hymns as "the prelude of God's goodwill and the prophecy of the salvation of men". We look through these open doors and we see the Reign and Kingdom of God. We see the eschatological nature of the life in Christ, whose kingship is symbolised by the Gospel Book and Holy Things enthroned on the Holy Table, from which is served the Mystical Supper, of which we are all called to be partakers.

*You who have kept the fast,
and you who have not,
rejoice this day,
for the table is bountifully spread!
Feast royally, for the calf is fattened.
Let no one go away hungry.
All of you, partake of the banquet of faith.
Enjoy the bounty of the Lord's goodness!*

- from the paschal Homily
of St John Chrysostom

This short hymn that we sing, aptly during the Anaphora, in the paschal season, is replete with the theology of the Resurrection and the whole Christian life, and I think that we would all benefit from pondering on these things at the next Liturgy in which we take part.



Pascha In Dachau

- Gleb Alexandrovitch Rahr

27th April: The last transport of prisoners arrives from Buchenwald. Of the 5,000 originally destined for Dachau, I was among the 1,300 who had survived the trip. Many were shot, some starved to death, while others died of typhus.

28th April: My fellow prisoners and I can hear the bombardment of Munich taking place some 30 km from our concentration camp. As the sound of artillery approaches ever nearer from the west and the north, orders are given proscribing prisoners from leaving their barracks under any circumstances. SS soldiers patrol the camp on motorcycles as machine guns are directed at us from the watch-towers, which surround the camp.

29th April: The booming sound of artillery has been joined by the staccato bursts of machine gun fire. Shells whistle over the camp from all directions. Suddenly white flags appear on the towers - a sign of hope that the SS would surrender rather than shoot all prisoners and fight to the last man. Then, at about 6pm, a strange sound can be detected emanating from somewhere near the camp gate which swiftly increases in volume.



Finally all 32, 600 prisoners join in the cry as the first American soldiers appear just behind the wire fence of the camp. After a short while electric power is turned off, the gates open and the American GIs make their entrance. As they stare, wide-eyed at our lot, half-starved as we are and suffering from typhus and dysentery, they appear more like fifteen-year-old boys than battle-weary soldiers.

An international committee of prisoners is formed to take over the administration of the camp. Food from SS stores is put at the disposal of the camp kitchen. A US military unit also contributes some provision, thereby providing me with my first opportunity to taste American corn. By order of an American officer radio-receivers are confiscated from prominent Nazis in the town of Dachau and distributed to the various national groups of prisoners. The news comes in: Hitler has committed suicide, the Russians have taken Berlin, and German troops have surrendered in the South and in the North. But the fighting still rages in Austria and Czechoslovakia.

Naturally, I was ever cognizant of the fact that these momentous events were unfolding during Holy Week. But how could we mark it, other than through our silent, individual prayers? A fellow prisoner and chief interpreter of the International prisoner's committee, Boris F, paid a visit to my typhus-infested barrack, Block 27, to inform me that efforts were underway in conjunction with the Yugoslav and Greek National Prisoners' Committees to arrange an Orthodox service for Easter Day, the 6th of May.

There were Orthodox priests, deacons, and a group of monks from Mount Athos among the prisoners. But there were no vestments, no books whatsoever, no icons, no candles, no prosphora, no wine.

Efforts to acquire all these items from the Russian parish in Munich failed, as the Americans just could not locate anyone from that parish in the devastated city. Nevertheless, some of the problems could be solved: the approximately 400 Catholic priests detained in Dachau had been allowed to remain together in one barrack and recite mass every morning before going to work. They offered us Orthodox the use of their prayer room in Block 26, which was just across the road from my own block. The chapel was bare, save for a wooden table and a Czenstochowa icon of the Theotokos hanging on the wall above the table - an icon which had originated in Constantinople and was later brought to Belz in Galicia, where it was subsequently taken from the Orthodox by a Polish king. A creative solution to the problem of the vestments was also found. New linen towels were taken from the hospital of our former SS guards. When sewn together lengthwise, two towels formed an epitrichil (priest's stole) and when sewn together at the ends they became an orar (deacon's stole). Red crosses, originally intended to be worn by the medical personnel of the SS guards, were put on the towel-vestments.

On Easter Sunday, 6th May (23rd April according to the Church calendar), - which ominously fell that year on the feast of St George the Victory-Bearer, Serbs, Greeks and Russians gathered at the Catholic priests' barrack. Although Russians composed about 40 percent of the Dachau inmates, only a few managed to attend the service. By that time repatriation officers of the special "Smersh" units had arrived in Dachau by



American military planes, and begun the process of erecting new lines of barbed wire for the purpose of isolating Soviet citizens from the rest of the prisoners, which was the first step in preparing them for their eventual forced repatriation. In the entire history of the Orthodox Church there has probably never been an Easter service like the one at Dachau in 1945. Greek and Serbian priests together with a Serbian deacon adorned the make-shift vestments over their blue-and-grey-striped prisoners' uniforms. Then they began to chant, changing from Greek to Slavonic, then back again to Greek. The Paschal Canon, the Paschal Stikhera - everything was recited from memory. The Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word", also from memory.

And finally, the Homily of Saint John Chrysostom—also from memory. A young Greek monk from the Holy Mountain stood up in front of us and recited it with such infectious enthusiasm that we shall never forget him as long as we live. St John Chrysostom himself seemed to speak through him to us and to the rest of the world as well! Eighteen Orthodox priests and one deacon - most of whom were Serbs - participated in this unforgettable service. Like the sick man who had been lowered through the roof of a house and placed in front of the feet of Christ the Saviour, the Greek Archimandrite Meletios was carried on a stretcher into the chapel, where he remained prostrate for the duration of the service.

The priests who participated in the 1945 Dachau Easter service are commemorated at every Divine Service held in the Dachau Russian Orthodox Memorial Chapel, along with all Orthodox Christians, who lost their lives "at this place, or at another place of torture". The Dachau Resurrection Chapel, which was constructed by a unit of the Russian Army's Western Group of Forces just before their departure from Germany in August, 1994, is an exact replica of a North-Russian "tent-domed" church or chapel. Behind the Holy Table of the chapel is a large icon depicting angels opening the gates of the Dachau concentration camp and Christ Himself leading the prisoners to freedom. Today I would like to take the opportunity to ask you, Orthodox Christians all over the world, to pass on the names of fellow Orthodox who were imprisoned and died here in Dachau or in other Nazi concentration camps so that we can include them in our prayers. Should you ever come to Germany, be sure to visit our Russian Chapel on the site of the former concentration camp in Dachau and pray for all those who died "at this place, or at another place of torture".

Did you know?

Here are some interesting facts about the date of Easter.

Pascha/Easter is a moveable feast, which means that it does not fall on a set date but rather it varies from year to year. Many other feasts, such as Palm Sunday, Ascension, Pentecost, All Saints, as well as other seasons such as Lent, are all determined by the date of Pascha.

So why does Pascha move around all the time and how do we work out when it happens?

In ancient times, Christians celebrated the Resurrection of the Lord according to the Jewish Passover, which was determined by the full moon in the Jewish month of Nisan, as this was the time when the events of Holy Week took place, as recorded in the Gospel. Indeed, *Pascha* is simply the Greek word for Passover. However, at the time, there was no universal Jewish calendar. For various reasons, Jews in one part of the world could be celebrating Passover at a different time from Jews in another part of the world - days and sometimes even a month apart. Christians following the Jewish date would be similarly divided in their celebration of the Resurrection. In addition, some Christians celebrated the Resurrection on the third day of Passover, for Christ arose on the third day, while others celebrated it on the *Sunday* following the beginning of Passover, for Christ arose on a Sunday. Other customs were also to be found.

The results of all of this variety were discord, chaos, and confusion. Therefore, in the 4th century, the 318 fathers of the First Ecumenical Council sought to bring some order to things. They determined that Pascha would always be on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the equinox occurring in March, (that is, the time when the sun is directly over the equator—this can happen anywhere from the 19th to the 21st of March but for ease of use, the Church always uses the date of the 21st). This was reinforced by Canon 8 of the Apostolic Canons, forbidding the taking of the Jewish Passover into account when calculating the date of Pascha. With some notable anomalies, which were eventually rectified, (the Church in Britain being a famous example), the whole Church from this point onwards celebrated the Resurrection of the Lord together, in harmony.

So why do Roman Catholics and Protestants often have a different Easter from us?

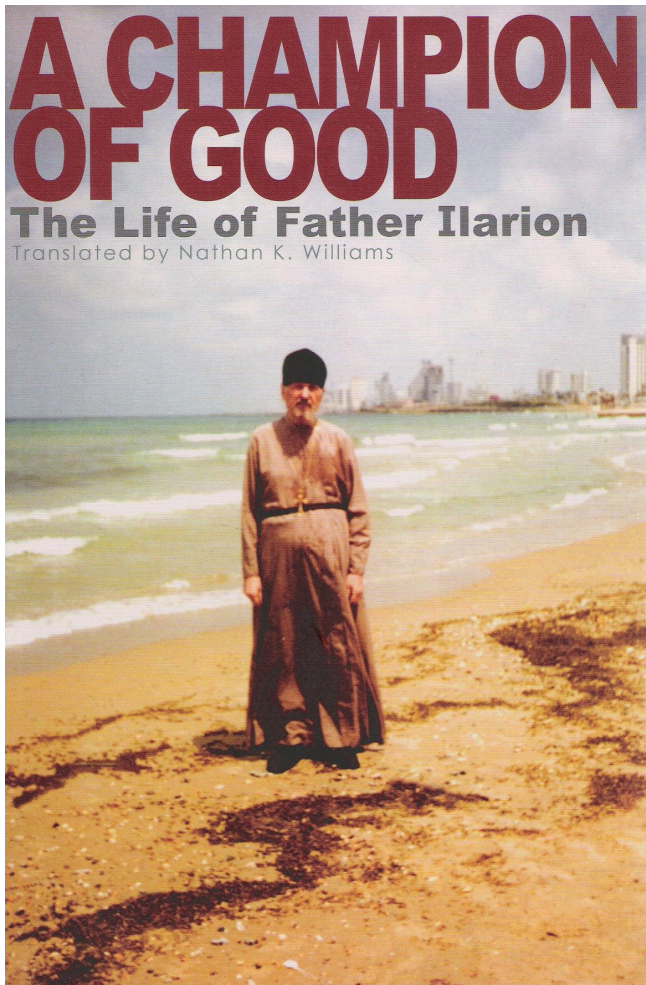
The Roman Catholic church follows the same rule that we do: Easter is the first Sunday after the first full moon following the March equinox. So if we follow the same rule, how come the dates are often different? There are two main reasons for this:

1. In the 16th century, the Roman Catholic church introduced a new calendar, which is currently 13 days ahead of the calendar that we use. Most Catholic countries, and later many protestant churches and countries eventually adopted this new calendar. The Orthodox Church did not. So even though we agree to keep the March equinox on the 21st of March, we still mark it at different times due to our different calendars. (This is also why our Christmas celebrations are at different times, even though we both keep the feast on the 25th of December.)
2. Over time, the date used by the Church for the full moon after the March equinox came to be determined not by actual observation of the moon in the sky but rather by astronomical calculations which could predict the position of the moon for many years into the future, with varying degrees of accuracy. These dates are referred to as the Ecclesiastical Full Moon, to distinguish them from the dates of the actual full moon in the sky. In our present times, the calculations used by the Roman Catholic church and those used by the Orthodox Church are different.

These two variables mean that the Roman Catholic church could mark an ecclesiastical full moon **after** the 21st of March by *their* calendar, and celebrate Easter on the following Sunday, **before** we Orthodox have even reached the 21st of March by *our* calendar. That is precisely what has happened this year, which is why Orthodox and Roman Catholic celebrations of Easter are as far apart as they can possibly be. Next year, the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical full moon does not occur until some weeks after the 21st of March by their calendar. This means that, by the time their full moon occurs, we shall have already marked the 21st of March by our calendar. Because our ecclesiastical full moons next year fall roughly together, we shall celebrate the Resurrection at the same time, on the following Sunday.

Book Review

- Chad Newman



A Champion Of Good: A Life Of Fr Ilarion (2011)

A Beacon Of Hope: The Teaching Of Fr Ilarion (2012)

Fr Ilarion, an elder of our times who reposed in 2008, lived most of his monastic life outside of a monastery. He was a monk who experienced Khrushchev's renewed persecutions of the Church and who was removed from the Leningrad Theological Seminary because he refused to collaborate with the KGB. A parish priest for over forty years he also lived to see the collapse of communism and the revival of his beloved Glinsk Hermitage. His life and teaching were marked by a desire for the salvation of the souls of the faithful and his profound belief in the importance of repentance and forgiveness.

He was born in 1924 into a pious peasant family in the Unecha region. Despite being badly wounded he survived WWII and over several years the desire to become a monk grew inside him. After some difficulties he was accepted as a novice in the Glinsk Hermitage in the Ukraine in 1955 and was tonsured a monk in 1959.

The hermitage had been a centre of pilgrimage for centuries and its elders were renowned for their spiritual development. It also housed a wonder-working icon of the Nativity of the Most-Holy Mother

of God which disappeared after the closure of the hermitage by the communists in 1922. The hermitage had been re-opened in 1942 and by the time Fr Ilarion was admitted spiritual life was flourishing there once again even if the physical state of the monastery left much to be desired.

'A Champion Of Good' contains a fascinating chapter on the importance and life of the monastery: wherever he was sent afterwards, Fr Ilarion tried to keep the rules of the hermitage especially in his celebration of the cycle of services.

In 1961 disaster struck and, once again, the Glinsk Hermitage was closed and its monks and Elders scattered; many went to Georgia where the persecutions were less intense but Fr Ilarion was to become a parish priest in the Novgorod region for most of the next four decades. Over the years he made two further attempts to enter a monastery but was thwarted each time by the Authorities refusal to give him the registration documents.

Years later he lamented to one of his spiritual children: *'If I had known I would not be able to remain in a monastery, I would not have become a monk.'* And yet he accepted his situation as the path God had chosen for him and in obedience went to the parishes as instructed.

Wherever he was placed he drew believers to the Church and, with God's Grace working through him, hearts were softened and unbelievers turned to faith. The first book contains numerous reminiscences of his spiritual children about his love for them, his strictness and humility, his clairvoyance and the power of his prayers.

At a time when overt preaching was forbidden the divine services became the primary means by which the faithful could comprehend the meaning of the Gospel. One spiritual child observes that Fr Ilarion experienced each service as a feast conveying through them spiritual truths to his flock. One measure of his

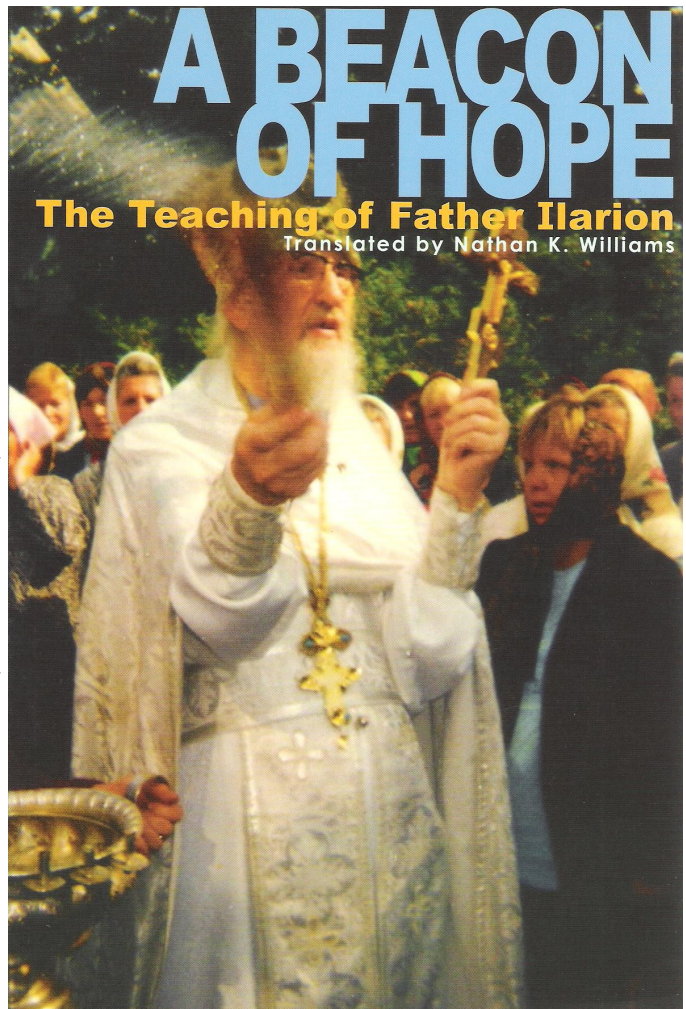
success may be found in a note in his police file which remarked:

'If this cleric spends another year here he will make believers of all Borisovka.'

One parishioner notes that through Fr Ilarion the meaning of the divine services and their language became comprehensible: *'We perceived the whole structure of Church life as God's will for us. Our will and hearts were roused to meet this will and we strove to keep God's commandments.'*

For those of us less experienced in the faith Fr Ilarion's bracing approach to confession is certainly sobering; yet everything he did was directed to the salvation of the souls of his flock. That is, out of love and not out of any egoistic desire to impose his own will as a spiritual father. And should anyone be upset or offended he would be mortified and beg their forgiveness. *'Don't just forgive me,'* he would say, *'forgive me from your heart.'*

'A Beacon Of Hope' is a collection of sermons arranged by theme such as 'Prayer & Fasting,' 'On The Mother Of God,' and 'Preparation For The Kingdom To Come.' The fervour with which they must have been delivered is almost palpable and yet they are also clear and thoughtful.



And two useful appendices enable us also to read them in Church calendar order or chronologically running from 1966 to 2008. In later sermons Fr Ilarion demonstrates the timelessness of the faith as he weaves commentary on the new materialism in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union into discussion of biblical events.

In his funeral address Archbishop Luka described Fr Ilarion as an elder adding, 'An elder is not a person who is very old but rather one who by his wisdom, spiritual life and spiritual labour shows us the way to the Lord.' These books show the truth of that statement.

A Champion of Good and A Beacon of Hope are available from [Holy Trinity Publications](#), the publishing arm of the [Holy Trinity Monastery](#), Jordanville, and which kindly provided the pictures for this review.



News

Baptisms

Our parish is delighted to have celebrated two baptisms in April: Katherine Symes and Ribca (Rebecca) Stepanous. Both have a blessing in the form of faithful Orthodox families to aid their continued spiritual growth. Please continue



to pray for Ava Katherine and Rebecca, as well as their families, at this new stage on their life in Christ. Photographs may be viewed on the [parish website](#).



News cont'd

East meets West

On the feast of the Annunciation, we were pleased to receive a visit from Father Thomas Cook. Father Thomas is a priest of ROCOR, serving within the [Western Rite Vicariate](#). The Vicariate operates internationally as an extra-territorial diocese and is under the care of its Episcopal Vicar, His Grace Bishop Jerome of Manhattan. The website of the UK missions may be viewed [here](#). At the ROCOR Western Rite Conference, His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion encouraged the vicariate clergy, wherever they may be, to become involved in the life of the wider local Orthodox Church. With Archbishop Mark's blessing, Father Thomas will visit our parish and concelebrate with our clergy from time to time. We welcome this development in the relationship between the communities worshipping God according to these two ancient and noble expressions of our one Holy Orthodox Faith.

Parish Life

Following discussions it would seem that now is a pertinent time to apply more structure to the day to day life of the parish. As most of you know, as well as being rector of our parish, Father Paul works as a headmaster of a school for children with special needs. While our parish community was small he somehow managed—and still does to date—to meet all of the demands of the running of the parish. However, the growth of the parish has not only brought with it time constraints which are less easy to manage but also on a positive note people with diverse skills and resources.

It is proposed, therefore, to hold a meeting after Pascha to discuss what form the structure in the parish will take and what those attending would like to offer in terms of each person's skills, resources, and gifts to meet the proposed structure and to help to build up our life together. Please think and pray about what you may wish to bring to the table.

Church Family

With Father Thomas Cook from Nottingham and Father Geoffrey Ready from Canada having visited us in April, and with Deacon Andrei visiting us this month, comes the awareness of our place within the wider life of the Orthodox Church, both locally and internationally. It is hoped that this may continue, and that we may learn from each other as we share our experiences of living the Orthodox life in different places and circumstances.



Upcoming Events

Wednesday, 1st May—The Great Anointing

For those who were not able to make it to the diocesan service at the cathedral last month, the Mystery of Holy Unction will be served in our parish at 7 p.m.

Great and Holy Week & Pascha

Services of Holy Week and Pascha are detailed in [last month's newsletter](#) and the [parish calendar](#), both of which are on the parish website.

Sunday, 26th May—Bring & Share Lunch with Talk

We welcome Deacon Andrei Psarev from the Eastern American Diocese to our parish. He plans to give an address on a subject relating to church life during our monthly bring & share meal. This will be a Sunday in the Paschal season: all foods are permitted.



Dates for Your Diary

Film Night

After the success of the past two parish film nights, it has been suggested that we do a third over the summer. The film will be about the life of St John the Wonderker, a saint of modern times (glorified in 1994), whose episcopal care at various times included Shanghai, San Francisco, and London. His feast is celebrated annually on the Saturday nearest the 2nd of July (being the 19th of June by the Church calendar). Date and time to be announced.

Patronal Feast

The feast of St Elisabeth the New-Martyr is the 18th of July, being the 5th of July in the Church calendar. With Archbishop Mark's blessing, we keep our patronal feast on the following weekend. In a change from the previously announced date, this year we shall celebrate it on Sunday, the 21st of July. Services will begin on the Saturday evening. Please make a special effort to take part as fully as possible in this feast, which is of great significance in the life of our parish.



Namedays



Wednesday, 8th May (25th April) - **The Holy Apostle & Evangelist Mark**

Reader Mark Tattum-Smith

Mark Wright

Friday, 17th May (4th May) - **The Translation of St Lazarus & St Mary Magdalene**

Priestmonk Lazarus

Mary Campbell

Monday, 20th May (7th May) - **St John of Beverley**

John Williams

Wednesday, 22nd May (9th May) - **The Translation of St Nicholas the Wonderworker**

Reader Nicolas Mabin

Nikolaos Papadopoulos

Nikolai Hyland

Friday, 24th May (11th May) - **Ss Cyril & Methodius, Apostles to the Slavs**

His Holiness Patriarch Kyrill of Moscow and all Russia

Saturday, 25th May (12th May) - **St Pancratius (Pancras) of Rome**

Priest Pancratios Sanders

May God grant them many years!



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

4th May 21st April	<i>The Resurrection of the Lord (Pascha)</i>	Romans 6:3-11	Matthew 28:1-20
5th May 22nd April	<i>The Resurrection of the Lord (Pascha)</i>	Acts 1:1-8	John 1:1-17
12th May 29th April	<i>Antipascha</i> <i>(St Thomas)</i>	Acts 5:12-20	John 20:19-31
19th May 6th May	<i>The 2nd Sunday after Pascha</i> <i>(The Myrrh-bearing Women)</i>	Acts 6:1-7	Mark 15:43-16:8
26th May 13th May	<i>The 3rd Sunday after Pascha</i> <i>(The Paralytic)</i>	Acts 9:32-42	John 5:1-15



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, Oxtan, Birkenhead, Merseyside. CH43 2HY
Telephone: 07926 194 031
e-mail: fatherpaul@newmartyr.info

Priestmonk Lazarus

Address: Flat 1, 4 Rake Lane, Wallasey, Merseyside. CH45 5DF
Telephone: 07906 578 313
e-mail: 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: svetlana@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. The [archive](#) may be found on the parish website. Articles, poems, books reviews, as well as questions and comments may be sent to the editor:

Subdeacon Michael Astley e-mail: editor@newmartyr.info