

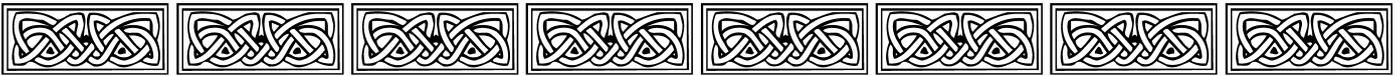


The New-Martyr

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. 7—December, 2013



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

'Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel'

A Word from the Saints

'The Wisdom of God, even Christ, has furnished a table, that is the Altar of the Lord, saying, "Come, eat of my Bread, and drink of the Wine which I have mingled for you: that is, take the food of the holy Body and drink the cup of the sacred Blood."

- St Isidore of Spain



'The Lord has ordained that for a little labour, which we temporarily endure in this life, we shall be granted the kingdom of the heavens, life everlasting, ineffable delights, and endless rest. As fitting, we believe these promises of the Lord. Therefore, let us leave all the sweet pleasures of the world, as false and short-lived, that we may inherit what is true and ageless.'

- St Irene of Cappadocia



'The flesh which the Word of God the Father took in the Virgin's womb, united to his Person, and the Bread which is consecrated in the Church, are the one Body of Christ. For as that flesh is the Body of Christ, so this Bread becomes the Body of Christ.'

- St Remigius of Rheims



'Christmas is fast approaching. And now that Christ has aroused our seasonal expectations, he will soon fulfil them all.'

- Blessed Augustine of Hippo



'Those whose hearts are pure are the temples of the Holy Spirit.'

- St Lucy of Syracuse



*'If it concerns itself with things divine, the soul becomes a light to others,
inspiring them to glorify God.'*

- St Nikitas Stithatos



On the Priesthood

Priest Paul Elliott

As I look back over the past year, having marked the 15th anniversary of my ordination, I naturally try to meditate upon the meaning of being set apart as a priest. I have become more and more aware that the modern western notion of priesthood, isolated as it is from Holy Tradition, is based on some kind of business or leadership model and not really on the model of service. Priesthood is essentially service primarily of God and of the Children of God. Not for nothing is the priest given a Sluzhebnik or Service Book when he is ordained. This book tells the priest how to serve God to the best of his ability, though instructions are limited because some of the detail and spirit of the service is passed from priest to priest.



who bore our sorrows and was acquainted with grief as St Isaiah says. This is very different from so much of the nonsense that is supposedly taught to train people for ministry today.

I turned to the New Testament to find the passage about the washing, by our Saviour, of the feet of his disciples, where again He is teaching the Princes of the Church, the Apostles, how they are to be examples to the faithful. It is worth looking at this passage in the Gospel of St

John, Chapter 13. The Saviour shows us how to serve: the very opposite of the sort of leadership so applauded today. However, while I was reading this passage, I found a passage from St Ephraim the Syrian that must have struck me many years ago, so much so that I had written it above the biblical text. It is from his 8th Homily and is exquisitely moving and beautiful.

'The Word entered his Mother and became a servant. The Word entered her and He became silent. Thunder entered her and its voice was still. The Shepherd entered her and became a lamb, and came forth bleating. The rich came forth lowly. Brightness entered her, clothed Himself and came forth despised...naked and bare came forth He who is the Clother of all.'

The other thing that a priest in our church is given is a Tsar Nicholas Cross. If you see me wearing this, ask me to turn it over so that you can see what it says on the back. This tells the priest how he is to serve God and his people. There is a quotation from 1st Timothy 4:12: 'Be an example in speech and in conduct, in love, faith, and purity.' So the Cross worn by the priest in the Russian rite should constantly remind him how he should behave towards God and towards God's children. Fr Nicanor, who was the elderly Convent Chaplain in London, once said to me, 'Remember, the longer you are a priest, the heavier becomes your chain to remind you of the yoke of Christ and to keep you from harm.' I understand a little more of what he meant now. St Seraphim of Sarov wore a very heavy Cross under his cassock for the sins of those who had hurt him and left him for dead who he feared were unrepentant. So he did penance for them. This is instructive, for the priest is ultimately the icon of the Saviour

Essentially, this teaches the priest that if he is to dare to be the icon of Christ, that this road is most difficult and sacrificial. The above was translated by John Henry Newman in 1841. I have this very old book in the little church. In it I found a "meditation" by him that I must have kept from years ago and predates my conversion to Holy Orthodoxy. Here it is:



'God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me that He has not committed to another...I have my mission...I am a link in a chain, a bond of connections between persons...therefore I will trust Him. Wherever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, if I am in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him, if I am in sorrow, my sorrow will serve Him. He knows what He is doing. He may take away my friends. He may throw me amongst strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me - yet still, He knows what He is doing. He has not created me for nothing. I shall do good. I shall do his work, I shall be an angel of peace and a preacher of truth in my own place. I have my mission...I may never know it in this life but I shall be told it in the next.'

Perhaps this kind of Victorian piety is hard for us to relate to but actually it says much to us because it teaches us that all of us, priest and people, are called to serve God unreservedly and not necessarily daring to try to understand what our part in his plan actually is. This desire or even demand to know, is the undoing of our age and is certainly the destruction of traditional priestly service.

Thank you, all of you, whom I have the enormous privilege to serve, for all of the spiritual joy that we share together at St Elisabeth's. There are times that I am overwhelmed by the immense spiritual treasure that we have in our little church. Thank you for 15 sometimes difficult but always rewarding years together. May God continue to bless us and keep us in his love.

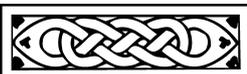


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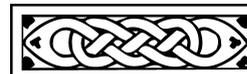
The Prayer Below the Ambo—Christmas Day

O Christ our God, Who, before all ages, without passion, didst shine forth from the beginningless Father and, in these last times, didst take flesh and wast born of the holy Virgin; Who for us becamest poor so that by this poverty we will become rich; Who, as an infant, wast wrapped in swaddling bands and didst divinely recline in a manger: O Master, Who treatest all things with respect, do Thou Thyself accept our lowly praises and entreaties, as Thou didst accept the praise of the shepherds and the worship of the Magi with gifts, and vouchsafe us to become concelebrants with the heavenly army and to be shown forth as heirs of the heavenly exultation that is prepared for those who worthily celebrate thy Nativity, and grant victories to our Christ-loving queen; for Thou art glorified and the Friend of Man, together with thy Father Who is without beginning, and thine all-holy and good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.





The Advent Antiphons



Bach evening, Orthodox Christians begin the new day with the service of Vespers. In the Western Rite, this service always includes the Magnificat: the song of the Mother of God upon being greeted by St Elisabeth. This is begun and ended with an antiphon specific to the day or feast.

During the last days of watching and waiting before Christmas, these antiphons call upon the coming Saviour under various titles, rich in scriptural imagery and symbolism. These are sometimes called *The Great 'O's* and, in Latin, the first seven of these are addressed to the Saviour and, in reverse, form the acrostic ERO CRAS, "Tomorrow, I will be".

Perhaps, when the world has forgotten December's excesses, in the quietness of our hearts, we could think of these antiphons in our own private preparations for the coming of the Saviour.

O Sapientia—16th December (29th December)

O Wisdom, proceeding from the mouth of the Most High, and reaching from one end to the other, mightily and sweetly ordering all things: Come and teach us the way of prudence.

At the dawn of creation, the eternal Logos—the Word, the Wisdom of God—proceeded from the Father, carried by his divine Spirit, and from nothing the universe came into being. With one will and one purpose, the Holy and Indivisible Trinity brought the cosmos into existence. This account of the creation in Genesis is the first reading at the Vespereal Divine Liturgy of Christmas.

Throughout the services of the Church, and particularly before readings from the Scriptures, the deacon calls upon the Divine Wisdom to come among us. Our entering into the life of God is only possible through our enlightenment with that Wisdom that is from on high. That revelation in its fullest form that we know is in the Incarnation of the Son of God.

"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory."

- John 1:14

O Adonai—17th December (30th December)

O Adonai, and leader of the House of Israel, Who appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and gave him the law on Sinai: Come and redeem us with an outstretched arm.

Adonai or "Lord" is one of the many forms of addressing God found in the Scriptures. The Old Testament Church used this often, for the Divine Name, revealed to Moses at the burning bush, was considered too sacred for human utterance or hearing. Now this Lord, whose name we are unworthy to hear, comes among us for our sake, and we hear his voice, calling us to Himself.



O Radix Jesse—18th December (31st December)

O Root of Jesse, standing as a sign among the peoples; before Thee kings will shut their mouths, to Thee the nations will make their prayer: Come and deliver us, and do not delay.

Jesse was the father of the Holy Prophet King David, and Micah had prophesied that the Christ would be of the house and lineage of David, and be born in Bethlehem, the city of David. On the second Sunday before Christmas, we commemorate the holy Ancestors of God, the bloodline from ancient times leading to the promised Saviour. The Gospel on this Sunday is the genealogy of Christ from St Matthew's Gospel.



“There shall come forth a rod from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall grow out of his root.”

- Isaiah 11:1-2

O Clavis David—19th December (1st January)

O Key of David and sceptre of the House of Israel; Thou openest and no one can shut; Thou shuttest and no one can open: Come and lead the prisoners from the prison house, those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

The Key of David is mentioned in both the prophecy of Isaiah and in the book of the Apocalypse. It has power to bind and to set free, and to rule over the Kingdom of Israel. The Saviour established his reign on earth with the performing of miracles, overturning the laws of nature and the created order. He healed the sick, made the lame to walk, and raised the dead. Thus, He rules not only over Israel, or the New Jerusalem, but his kingdom is without bounds.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the good news to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind.”

- Luke 4:18

O Oriens—20th December (2nd January)

O Dayspring, Splendour of light eternal and Sun of righteousness: Come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

The Latin *oriens* literally means “the rising”. The direction of the rising sun—the east from which the day springs upon us—is thus called the Orient. The rising sun has long been the primary cosmic symbol of the Christ, which is one reason that Christians face east to pray, together awaiting the coming of their Lord, the Sun of Righteousness. The [troparion of Christmas Day](#) reminds us of this.

“Through the tender mercy of our God, the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

- Luke 1:76-79



O Rex Gentium—21st December (3rd January)

O King of the nations, and their Desire, the cornerstone making both one: Come and save the race of man, which Thou hast fashioned from clay.

Christ is King not merely of the people of Israel but of all of the nations. The Church is the New Jerusalem, in which we become citizens through our baptism, and heirs of the promise of grace.

O Emmanuel—22nd December (4th January)

O Emmanuel, our King and our Lawgiver, the Hope of the nations and their Saviour: Come and save us, O Lord our God.

Emmanuel—God-with-us. At Great Compline at the Vigil of Christmas we hear the verses proclaiming the kingship of Christ over the nations. After each is repeated “For God is with us”. The meaning cannot be in doubt: out of his immeasurable love for mankind, in order that man might become one with the life of God, God became man, one of us, living among us.

Isaiah prophesied this and we remember this when we venerate the Mother of God “Of the sign”. Our beloved Kursk root icon is one famous depiction of Our Lady of the Sign.

**"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign.
Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel"**

Isaiah 7:14

O Virgo Virginum—23rd December (5th January)

O Virgin of virgins, how shall this be? For neither before thee was any like thee, nor shall there be after. Daughters of Jerusalem, why marvel at me? The thing which you behold is a divine mystery.

The seven antiphons addressed to the Saviour are followed by this one, in which we confess that Christ’s coming only came about because of the faithful obedience of the holy Virgin. For this reason, we honour her as more honourable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim. Because she held within her womb the God Whom the universe could not contain, we describe her womb as “more spacious than the heavens”.

"For from now on all generations will call me blessed."

Luke 1:48





Saint of the Month

St Spyridon of Tremithus +348

*Feast day: 12th December
(25th December by the civil calendar)*

*Thou wast shown forth as a champion of the first Council
and a wonderworker, O Spyridon, our God-bearing father.*

*Therefore, thou didst speak to one dead in the grave,
and didst change a serpent into gold.*

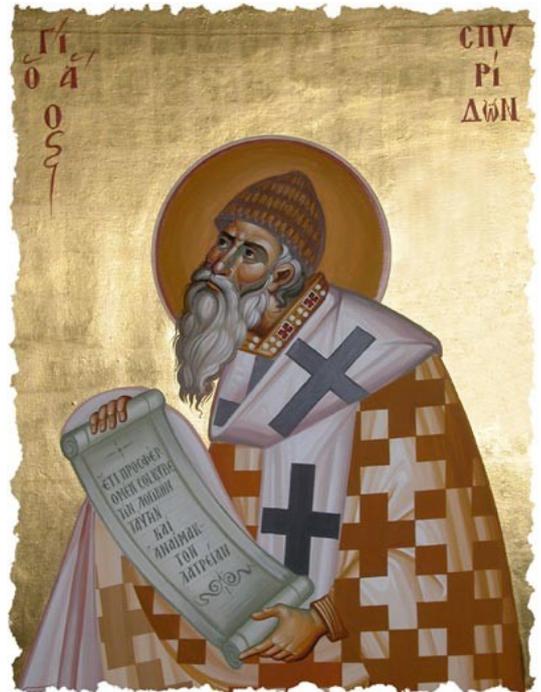
*And, whilst chanting thy holy prayers,
thou didst have angels serving with thee, O holy one.*

Glory to Him Who has given thee strength!

Glory to Him Who has crowned thee!

Glory to Him Who works healings for all through thee!

- troparion, tone 1



He was a humble shepherd who lived on the island of Cyprus with his wife and his one child, a daughter named Irene. Though he was poor himself, his house and table were always open to travellers and those in need. He kept his money in a box which he left open and available to all, not concerning himself with who took from it or whether they were deserving or not.

In time, his wife died and, with fewer worldly cares, he redoubled his prayers and his almsgiving. He became so well-loved on the island that, when the bishop of the town of Tremithus died, the faithful unanimously chose Spyridon to succeed him, and he thus became a shepherd of rational sheep as well as the beasts he had tended.

Despite his sudden elevation in rank, he kept to his former manner of life, travelling everywhere on foot, tending his animals as before, while fulfilling all the duties of a bishop as well. (To portray this godly humility, his icon shows him wearing bishop's vestments and a peasant's woven straw hat.)

His compassion for others was boundless. Though he was very strict with himself, he would always break a fast to give comfort to a traveller. Once a band of robbers broke into his sheepfold by night, but found themselves confined there by an invisible force. When Spyridon found them in the morning, he freed them, admonished them to live honestly, and gave them two sheep in compensation, he said, for their keeping of an all-night vigil.

Pages could be filled with stories of the miracles worked by the holy bishop for the good of his flock. His radiant virtue touched the consciences of those he met so that many would spontaneously fall at his feet and confess their sins.

When the Holy Emperor Constantine summoned the First Ecumenical Council in 325, Spyridon attended, dressed in his simple peasant's garb. At one of the sessions, a proud Arian philosopher challenged the Orthodox to a debate about the Holy Trinity, and was amazed when the simple Spyridon stepped forward to accept the challenge.



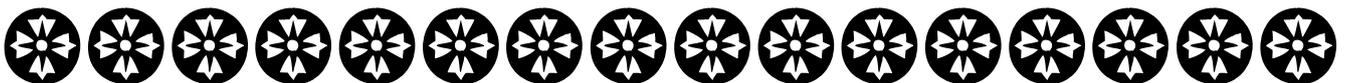


Above: The holy, wonder-working relics of St Spyridon, in the church named in his honour, on the island of Corfu.

He and all the other bishops were far more amazed when the uneducated peasant bishop confounded all the Arian's arguments with his eloquent, Spirit-inspired words. The humbled philosopher admitted that he was convinced, embraced the Orthodox faith, and called upon the other Arians to abandon their human wisdom and embrace the true and life-giving Faith.

The holy bishop always celebrated the Divine Liturgy with joy. Once, serving in a remote, almost empty church, he turned to the invisible congregation and said 'Peace be unto all!', and his disciple heard a choir of angels respond 'And with thy spirit!'

Saint Spyridon reposed in peace in 348 at the age of seventy-eight. His incorrupt and wonder-working relics poured forth miracles for the people of Cyprus until the seventh century, when they were moved to Constantinople to escape the Arab invasion; when the city fell to the Turks, the holy relics were again moved to Corfu, where they are venerated to this day. Even after 1500 years, the relics remain incorrupt and work many life-giving wonders. Saint Spyridon is venerated as the Patron of Corfu.

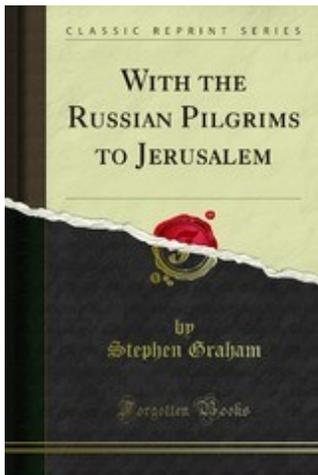


*O most sacred one, wounded with love for Christ,
and giving wings to thy mind through the radiance of the Spirit,
thou didst find thy work fulfilled in the activity of divine vision.
O thou who art pleasing to God, thou divine offering,
entreat Him that divine revelation may be granted to all.*

Kontakion—tone 2



Book Review



With the Russian Pilgrims to Jerusalem Stephen Graham

'Whoever has wished to go has already started on the pilgrimage.'

First published in 1913 this book is an account of the journey undertaken during Lent from Constantinople to the Holy Land as described by Englishman and Russophile Stephen Graham. While Graham was enamoured with the idea of Holy Russia he had many un-Orthodox beliefs about Christianity. Nevertheless he portrays the pilgrims with honesty and affection giving us a feeling for the texture of their lives and insight into their faith.

The strength of this book is that the author was able to pass himself off as a Russian pilgrim. And, as a fluent Russian speaker, he was able to listen, observe and communicate with the pilgrims, noting down their stories and details of their lives: 'roughing' it alongside them on the boat to Jaffa, experiencing their religious fervour during a storm at sea and sleeping beside them on a straw pallet in the crowded hostelry in Jerusalem. In doing so he met an array of interesting people, mainly peasants; indeed the book might well have been entitled *With The Russian Peasants to Jerusalem*: as the author notes, 'The dirt, the hardship and strict Lenten fare are an insuperable obstacle for sightseers and the curious.'

He might have added also for the nobility and middle classes who, when they came at all, clustered in the best hotels and spent their time speaking French to one another. By contrast the peasants brought bags of black bread with them, not as loaves but as off-cuts and mouldy crusts saved up over months. Many brought their life savings concealed beneath rags for it was only to be spent on 'God's work' - not on buying comfort for themselves: 'What good is it to come if we take no trouble over it?' Others came with only the alms they had begged while tramping the roads of Russia from shrine to shrine, regarded by some as 'stupid to the point of sanctity.'

What the sophisticates and chattering classes of his day, like ours, regarded as at best stupidity and at worst utter madness is simplicity of faith and the belief that this life is a preparation, a journey towards the life to come. This faith enabled the faithful to travel on foot in blazing heat from Jerusalem to the Jordan and, wearing their burial shrouds, immerse themselves in the waters. It strengthened hundreds of mainly elderly pilgrims who were caught in flash flooding on their return from Nazareth; hungry and exhausted yet determined to press on lest they miss a single moment of Holy Week in Jerusalem. It led a reformed alcoholic, armed with commissions from his neighbours to buy crowns of thorns and burial shrouds, to disdain to haggle for holy things, much to the excited bemusement of a greedy shopkeeper. The faith of the pilgrims manifests itself in the belief that Christianity is not a collection of nice stories but a reality: for them it was of great importance to travel in 'the land where God died.' One old peasant declined the offer of a lift in a cart saying that nothing would induce her to ride where the Saviour walked. 'What are our sufferings next to His?'

The book is awash with memorable characters and happenings: the joyful woman who emerges from the Russian cathedral, falls to her knees and washes their feet with her tears; how during the service, when a huge bible was brought to the monk who was to read, it was rested on the heads of the faithful 'and those to whom the privilege fell shed tears of joy;' and the monk with a drink problem who washes corpses and sews them in burial shrouds, crying tears of repentance as he prays to the Mother of God.

The expansion of rail and sea transport made it safer for Christians from Russia to travel to the Holy Land. The numbers increased to many thousands each year placing a strain on the paltry infrastructure in the Holy Land. There is an interesting chapter on the Imperial Palestine Society established by Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich and his wife the Grand Duchess Elisabeth – now St Elisabeth the New-Martyr and patron of our church – to take care of the pilgrims.

This book is now available again in 'print-on-demand' facsimile editions though sadly in mine many of the original photographs did not reproduce well.

Perhaps the last word should go to the elderly woman on the boat bound for the Holy Land. She took away the book Graham was reading saying, 'Don't read so much or God will make a saint out of you and take you from us. Tell us about yourself.' Instead, in telling us about the pilgrims he gave us this glimpse of living faith for which we should be truly thankful.

With the Russian Pilgrims from Jerusalem may be downloaded from Forgotten Books and bought as a printed copy from abebooks.co.uk.



Christmas Services

Sunday, 5th January—The Sunday of the Holy Fathers

9.45 am: Hours and Divine Liturgy

At this Liturgy, we remember all of the holy ones of God from the Old Testament era, whose faith and devotion in ancient times remind us of the preparation that we ought constantly to make for receiving the Christ.

Monday, 6th January—Christmas Eve

11 am: The Royal Hours

7.30 pm: The Vespers Divine Liturgy of Christmas Day

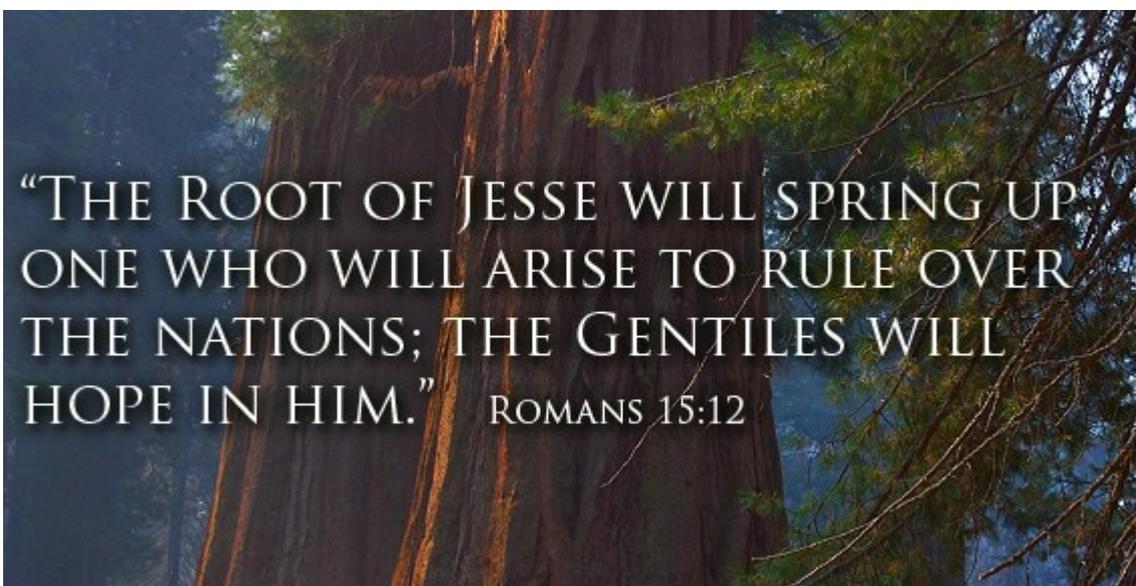
At this Vespers Liturgy, we hear the voices of the holy seers and sages of the Old Testament who prophesied the coming of the Christ. We glory in its fulfilment in the birth of the Son of God, which we celebrate on this night.

Please arrive early for confession. If you would like to help with the readings, please make yourself known to Subdeacon Michael over the next few weeks.

Tuesday, 7th January—The Nativity, according to the Flesh, of our Lord, God, and Saviour Jesus Christ (Christmas Day)

9.45 am: Hours and Festal Divine Liturgy

This joyous Liturgy is not to be missed. Please come and bring a friend. This is a weekday when public transportation is much more frequent and reliable than on Sundays. If you can, please come early for confession. There will be a bring-and-share Christmas luncheon after the Liturgy.



News

New Catechumen

On Sunday, the 24th of November, being the 11th of November by the Church calendar and the feast of St Martin the Merciful, bishop of Tours, John was made a catechumen.

Please remember John at the Divine Liturgy and in your private prayers as he prepares for Holy Baptism.

New Servers

We welcome Jakov and Seraphim to the Brotherhood of St Samuel, as they offer their service to God in his holy altar.

The Ark Project

Donations are still being accepted for the [Wirral Churches' Ark Project](#). Clothes, toiletries, and non-perishable foodstuffs may be left in the receptacle in church. Monetary donations may be made directly to the Ark Project or through Mrs Irina Burnip at church. The Ark Project supports homeless men and women in the Wirral area.

Dates for Your Diary

Sunday, 8th December—*The True Cross*

The Constantinopolitan relic of the Precious and Life-giving Cross of the Lord will be venerated throughout the day at the St Nicholas' Orthodox Church, Liverpool.

Wednesday, 25th December—*St Spyridon*

The Hours and Divine Liturgy will be served at 9.45 today for the feast of St Spyridon the Wonderworker.

Tuesday, 7th January—*Christmas Day*

This coming Christmas falls on a weekday. Please don't forget to make the necessary arrangements with work to ensure that you can attend services on the day. A full schedule of Christmas services may be found on the preceding page.

Sunday, 19th January—*Theophany*

After the Liturgy on this day, the Great Blessing of the Waters will be served at the River Mersey.

Sunday, 2nd February—*Episcopal Liturgy*

Archbishop Mark will serve the Divine Liturgy at [our sister parish in Colchester](#).

Namedays

Friday 13th December (30th November) - *The Holy Apostle Andrew, the First-Called*
Deacon Andrew Bond

Thursday, 19th December (6th December) - *St Nicholas, Wonderworker of Myra*
Reader Nicolas Mabin
Nikolai Hyland

Monday 23rd December (10th December) - *The Holy Virgin-Martyr Tatiana*
Tatiana Pike

Sunday, 29th December (16th October) - *The Holy Ancestors of God*
Ribca Stepanous
Rachael Symes

May God grant them many years!



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

1st December 18th November	<i>The 23rd Sunday after Pentecost</i>	Ephesians 2:4-10	Luke 12:16-21
8th December 25th November	<i>The 24th Sunday after Pentecost</i> <i>Afterfeast of the Entry of the Mother of God</i>	Ephesians 2:14-22 Hebrews 9:1-7	Luke 13:10-17 Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28
15th December 2nd December	<i>The 25th Sunday after Pentecost</i>	Ephesians 4:1-6	Luke 18:18-27
22nd December 9th December	<i>The 26th Sunday after Pentecost</i> <i>Conception of the Mother of God</i>	Ephesians 5:9-19 Galatians 4:22-31	Luke 17:12-19 Luke 8:16-21
25th December 12th December	<i>St Spyridon of Tremithus</i> <i>St Finian of Clonard</i>	Hebrews 13:17-21 Galatians 5:22-6:2	Luke 6:17-23
29th December 16th December	<i>The 27th Sunday after Pentecost</i> <i>The Sunday of the Holy Forefathers</i>	Colossians 3:4-11	Luke 14:16-24



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 Orthodox Catholic 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 the priest 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.

Contact us

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