



BASILDON ORTHODOX COMMUNITY BULLETIN

No. 10 ~ LATE SUMMER 2015



**ALL SAINTS ORTHODOX CHURCH
North Benfleet Hall Road
Basildon,
Essex SS12 9JR**

.....
SUNDAY:- DIVINE LITURGY, preceded by ORTHROS.

WEDNESDAY:- THIRD & SIXTH HOUR.

LAST SATURDAY IN THE MONTH:- ESPERINOS.

GREETINGS IN CHRIST

We are always in need financial assistance and practical help with maintaining the Holy Temple. The Orthodox Church in the UK exists and survives only because of the Will of God and the prayerful and financial generosity of the faithful. Unlike the Church in some other countries we receive no state aid – nothing from local or central government, no tax breaks, no subsidies; and we remain in need of support with services- regular attendance, help with serving, singing, tidying away, *etc.*, are all essential if our community is to survive, let alone expand and flourish.

The Church as a whole has always understood the singular importance of the parish, the local Church. It is essential that the Orthodox faithful gather together regularly in their locality to pray together and to celebrate the Holy Mysteries. Families should gather together to help constitute the Church at the local level. To maintain and to instil faith in our children is a God-given duty; it can be a great challenge in such a hostile environment and many fall, lured away by worldly temptations and distractions. Please pray for us just as we pray for all parents and God-parents to undertake their duties diligently and to be ever-vigilant in the raising of Christian children.

Our Metropolitan-elect, Archimandrite Silouanos, will be raised to the Episcopate at Balamand Monastery today, 30th August. His enthronement as Metropolitan will take place at St George's Cathedral in London on Sunday 28th November.

We are certain that a Metropolitan who is resident in the UK will act as a centre of gravity and grace and be of immense blessing to all the Orthodox clergy and people in these islands.

YOUR PRAYERS

Please pray for –

--**Dimitrios**. *A suitable bone-marrow donor has been found for him – Glory to God! Please pray for him and his family as they consult with doctors to discuss what happens next.*

-- **Ceolfrith**. *He is awaiting the results of a biopsy.*

-- **Emma**. *Who was recently bereaved.*

-- **Natasha**. *God willing, she will be received by Holy Chrismation on Sunday 13th September; and please pray for **Susannah**, the Godmother-to-be.*

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO GOD FOR . . .

-- **Hieromonk Patrick** who has rejoined us after a short absence and trip to Mount Athos.

-- **Presbytera Susanna & Susannah** who are doing such a great job tidying up the finances.

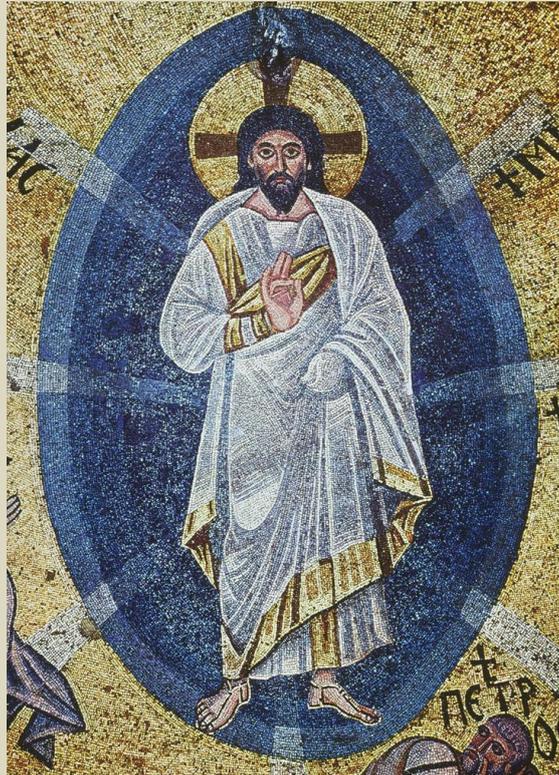
-- **Ernie** who maintains the churchyard and does a marvellous job of keeping the lawn and shrubs looking their best. On top of all that he has very generously given us a bench and repaired and restored the main gate to the churchyard.

-- **Daniel** who performs such a splendid job managing the website.

-- **Susannah & Ceolfrith** who have had so much to do recently; in particular, at the Transfiguration of Christ, and who – despite little experience - coped so admirably! Thanks, also, to them for the stepladder.

- **Dan-Mihail, Samir & family, Natasha, Erica, Ann**- the other new people who have visited us and joined us in prayer and worship.
- **The Clergy & People of St Botolf's parish** for the gift of the *dikiri & trikiri*.
- **Robert & family** for their continued support, and especially for restoring our electricity supply.
- the **Anonymous benefactors** who have paid for new tapers, *etc.*
- . . . and last but not least: the **many pains and joys** which help make up the spiritual life.

* * *



THE HOLY TRANSFIGURATION

I am the light of the world; anyone who follows me will not walk in the dark, he will have the light of life. - Jn. 8:12

The Feast of the Holy Transfiguration is a pivotal moment. This event is one of the greatest episodes of the incarnation, one of the greatest theophanies. Christ gives to his closest friends and followers a vision of who He is and of what is to come both in terms of *theosis* and of the second and glorious coming- the divine energies are revealed in fear and terror.

It is worthwhile making a brief comparison with Moses' experience on Mt Sinai and Mt Horeb- at the Transfiguration we have a similar 'high mountain', the presence and glory of God, and a cloud, but there are also crucial differences- the Law has been superseded not

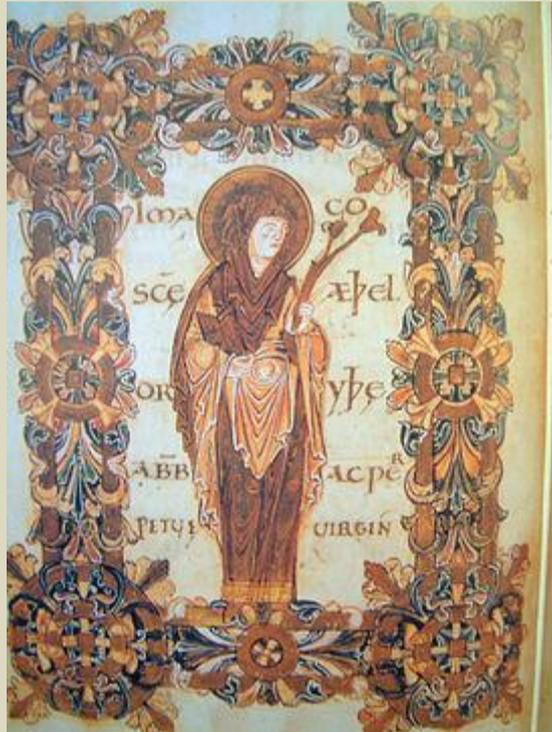
my another text not even by Holy Scripture but by the living Son, a person; and God, the father, who passed unseen – or *unseeable* – to Moses is made visible to us in the person of the Son.

The Old Covenant is ended. Moses and Elijah represent respectively the Law and the Prophets; and Christ is the closure and fulfilment of both. It is notable that the Transfiguration precedes Christ's sacrificial death. In Luke's Gospel we read that the three spoke together of Christ's forthcoming passion. In our own lives, we too, by accepting the cross make possible our personal transfiguration, or more precisely this enables our transfiguration into full person-hood. There is an acknowledgement here that the Law and the prophets alone cannot bring us back to God or to the full revelation of His Glory nor to salvation; and that Christ is incarnate not to affirm the values of this world but to transfigure the world, and to enable the divinization of humans and of the entire cosmos. We see examples of such a transfiguration in the lives of the saints, in Abba Pambo and Abba Arsenios in the desert and perhaps most famously perhaps in St Seraphim of Sarov's acquisition of the divine light before his friend and disciple, Nikolai Motovilov.

The Epistle of the Feast contains a moving eyewitness account by St Peter, in which he reports that 'we had seen [Christ's] majesty for ourselves' (2 Pet. 1:16), and mentions the heart as the place of *theosis* - of salvation, and of *theoria* - vision of God. He writes, 'and so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.' We note that, just as with walking on water and the fire of Pentecost, the sight of God is a privilege reserved only for the few – this is not to be misread as a justification for protestant and latin notions of covenantal legalism of who is 'good' or 'bad', but as an acknowledgment that transfiguration by and into the divine uncreated energies is possible only for those disciples who have undergone the steep hard climb of asceticism and lengthy preparation by teaching and example. Those who have followed the Way must as it says in the Epistle – 'remain vigilant' and as it says in the Beatitudes be 'of pure heart', only then may they experience and share in the divine energies of God.

We note also the cosmic and eschatological aspects. The double triad- Moses, Elijah and our Lord forming a heavenly triad- a *type* of the Holy Trinity; and Peter, James and John forming an earthly triad and a *type* of the three principal virtues- faith, hope and charity. The Father speaks almost the same words as He does at the Baptism of Christ; He speaks again of Jesus as 'my beloved son' just as Christ reveals His divine aspect; and in doing so He also shows to us what we and all creation shall become at His second and Glorious Coming.

In witnessing the magnificent glory of Christ transfigured we see His divinity. Let us keep this in our hearts always but also not lose sight of His human aspect. For in sanctifying our flesh by his incarnation and in the restoration of our human nature through His death and resurrection He enables all of us to share in His glory. AMEN.



A FENLAND ACROSTIC

Princess Æthelthrythe of beauty unblemished, when called by Christ,

— did her royal court and jewels and regal torqs renounce, and all man's carnal ways;

Although, to Tondberct and to Ecfriþ, she was married twice,

— did remain inviolate all her earthly days.

Numbered among the holiest Orthodox Saints of the English,

— chaste, devout, compassionate, sins-spurning;

Exceptional monastic, who followed the desert fathers' advice

— ate little and but once a day; turning

Radiant in the angelic-schema, no longer clad in temporal ermine, dispensed with courtly fashions,

— and cultivating knowledge of God, flew swiftly to the utter desert to mortify her passions,

East to Ely on brackish fenland bleak, in a devastation of restless reed and foetid mud.

— Into this great vacancy, she poured her love, protected by the prayers of the Holy Mother of God.

Meekly, in the turbid swamp, lived a life of purity, silence and austerity, humility and prayer;

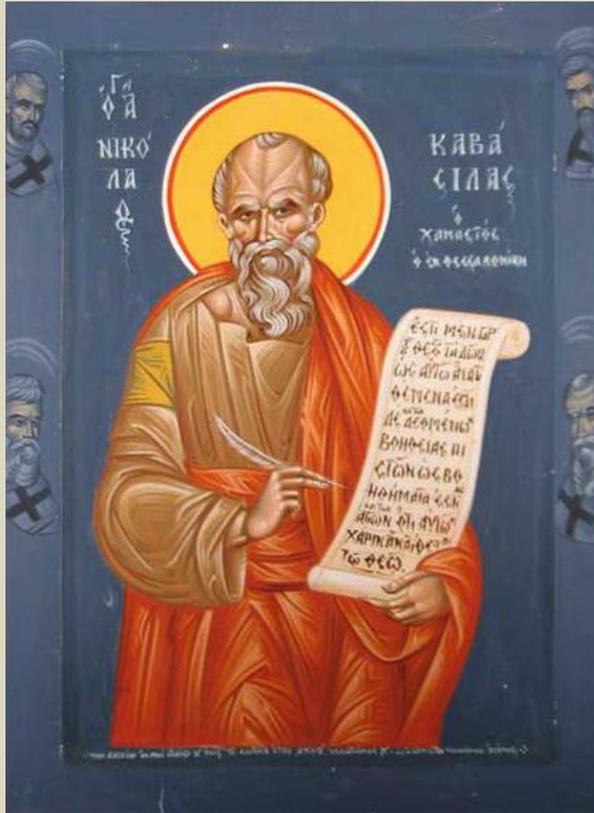
— struggled long, endured great illness, found joy, and reposed in blessed virginity there.

One wonder-working relic, a parched hand, small, incorrupt, survived the rod

— of bitter pagans, and tyrant-Henry's bloodied blasphemies.

Saint, ascetic, hermitess, venerable Abbess Æthelthrythe, pray to God -

— for mercy for our loved ones, friends and enemies.



A WORD OF SAINT NIKOLAOS KAVASILAS

The resurrection is the restoration of our human nature. Such things God gives freely, for just as He forms us without us willing it, so He forms us anew though we have contributed nothing to it. On the other hand, the Kingdom and Vision of God and union with Christ are privileges which depend on willingness. They are possible only for those who have been willing to receive them and have loved them and longed for them. For such it is fitting that they should enjoy the presence of the things for which they longed, for the unwilling it is impossible. . . . One need not therefore marvel that while all will live in immortality, it is not all who will live in blessedness. All equally enjoy God's providence for our nature, but it is only those who are devout towards God who enjoy the gifts which adorn their willingness.

+++++

EMAIL: orthodox.basildon@hotmail.co.uk TEL: 01702-305527

WEBSITE: www.orthodoxbasildon.org.uk

+ GLORY TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS +