



The Celtic Orthodox Church in Britain

Community of St Gwenn

Contact: Fr Leonard Hollands

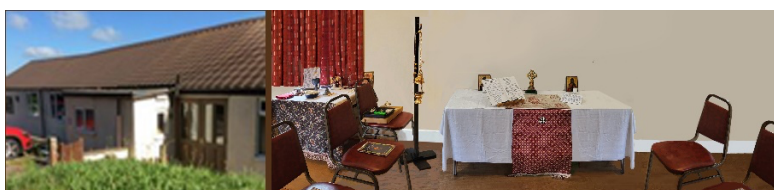
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*The **Celtic Orthodox Church** is an Ancient Christian Church, founded in AD37. It is the original Church of Great Britain, and its spirituality blessed our land for the first twelve centuries of the Christian era. Now it is revived!*

St Gwenn's News No 149 – May 2025



**We celebrate our
Liturgies at the
Woodbury Community
Hall, Woodbury Lane,
Axminster EX13 5TL**

May Liturgical Calendar

Thu 1 May	St Philip and St James (the Less), Apostles and Martyrs
Sun 4 May	PASCHA 3 – Liturgy: 10.30am
Thur 8 May	St John the Theologian, Apostle and Martyr
Fri 9 May	Holy Prophet Isaiah
Sun 11 May	PASCHA 4
Fri 16 May	St Brendan the Voyager
Sun 18 May	PASCHA 5
Wed 21 May	Emperor St Constantine and St Helena
Sun 25 May	PASCHA 6
Tue 27 May	St Bede the Venerable
Thu 29 May	ASCENSION of OUR LORD – Act of Praise: 7.30pm [ZOOM]

Sun 8 June* **PENTECOST – Liturgy: 10.30am**

*** NOTE: June Liturgy on SECOND Sunday in order for us to celebrate Pentecost.**

From Fr Leonard

Greetings to you all! **Christ is risen!** (yes, we keep that up until Ascension.)

During Lent and Holy Week this year we held some services via Zoom. Only a few joined in, but those who did seemed to have been uplifted by the experience. Accordingly, I am proposing a short ZOOM Act of Praise to bring us together for Ascension. Once again, our parish secretary, Diakonissa Clare [meganJ210618@

outlook.com] will be organizing the Zoom meeting. Please contact her or me if you would like to join us on 29th May at 7.30pm.

As I write I look out on a sunny garden; red camelias still abundantly in flower, the dark shiny leaves glinting like silver in the light, but the magnolia now has only a few blooms left, but the leaves, fresh yellowish green in the sun, flutter in the gentle breeze like the waving of banners welcoming our Lord. Wild flowers abound in the surrounding lanes, and all under a deep blue cloudless sky. Earlier, the birds were singing their hearts out, but now they are concentrating on 'birdy' household chores. This transition from Spring to Summer is like a natural icon of how our Faith has developed through Lent and has now emerged into the full-blown joy of New Life in the risen Christ.

Blessings to you all – I wish you the full joy of the risen Christ.

Fr Leonard +

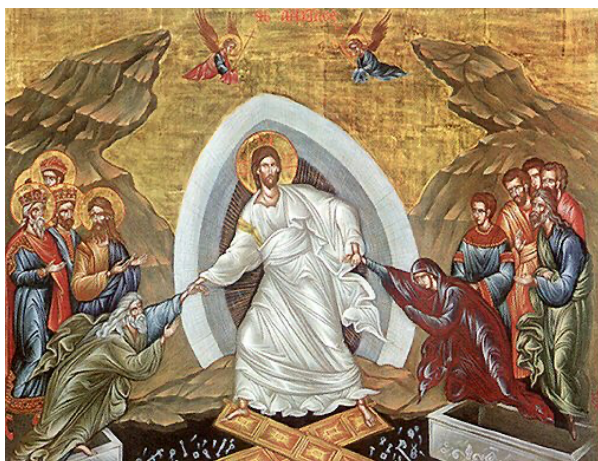
Paschal Message by the late His Beatitude Mael [to be canonised on 20 Jul '25]

Stichera – Paschal Matins

Your Resurrection, O Christ our Saviour,
the Angels in heaven sing.
Enable us on earth to glorify You
with pure hearts.

Paschal Troparion

Christ is risen from the dead,
trampling down death by death;
And upon those in the tombs
bestowing life.



If the angels sing of the Resurrection of Christ (*Stichera*), all the more reason we on earth should sing of it because "trampling down death by death" (*Troparion*) He has bestowed life to us.

The Resurrection of Christ is not a mere historical event that took place in time, but an event that transcends all time, because His Resurrection remains in Eternity.

Are we really aware of the infinite scope of this Resurrection of fallen human nature, this human nature plucked from the tomb to live eternally with Christ in "life without end"?

Certainly, human nature having fallen, we must all pass through the door of physical "death" which, like sickness and sin, is the consequence of this degeneration, this sin of pride of the "first man." The fault is forgiven, redeemed, but this does not necessarily imply the disappearance of all its consequences.

However, this inevitable earthly death is now taking place in hope and even in joy, for it is no more than a passage towards "life beyond life" towards participation in divine life itself, for "God became man so that man might become



god.” And this term, even if it does not include the same reality as that of God Himself, is not an exaggeration because, having become “children of God by adoption” we will be able to participate in this divine nature through the gift of life that God grants us in His infinite Love so that we can love Him freely, giving ourselves to Him, that He may live in us, as the Apostle says.

But let us not forget the last sentence of the Matins’ Stichera: “to glorify You with pure hearts!” because only purity of heart can allow us to approach the Divine; He who is alien to all defilement. And this pure heart, in view of our constant weaknesses and our inability to acquire it by our own (non-existent) strength, let us ask God for it, especially in this Paschal season, in the joy of the Resurrection, so that, purified, we may be ready to rise with Him.

Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is risen!

Bishop Mael April 1993

“May the Lord help us on our way into His Kingdom,” prays Bp Nicolas



“If we do not know that we are weak and incapable, what else can we say? For presumption and ignorance blind us...” (Pierre Damascène: from the Philocalia)

Without God we are nothing. If, however, we are sometimes able to do a little good, to serve Love, it is only by grace. It's God's flame within us, His Spirit, that makes our 'little self' understand what is Light and Love, what is Beauty. It's never our ego that has this wisdom. Our ego functions for the egocentric survival of our 'self,' and anything that serves anything else is to be fought. Let's accept our misery and ignorance, so we're in the best position to receive God's teaching.

If we think we have knowledge, we stop listening, because we think we already know everything. It's by emptying ourselves of everything we think we know, of our convictions and certainties, that

we free up space within ourselves for the true Knowledge of God.

Sincere, *truly* sincere, humility frees us from the shackles of our ego. Humility sets us free from what the world imposes on us.

May the Lord help us on our way into His Kingdom.

Bp Nicolas (our Bishop in Switzerland)

May – a poem by contemporary Christian Bard Malcom Guite

With the passing night the day
Shines upon her sleeping head
And all the fragrant flowers of May
Breathe upon her marriage bed
Light of light like music ringing
Melts her winter into mirth.
Buried seeds are blossoms springing
Out of the expectant earth
And a single maiden singing

Celebrates the promised birth.
Soon the day of love is dawning
And the time will not be long
When the radiance of morning
Breaks the darkness with a song.
Through the passing night the day
Shines upon his sleeping head
Who will wipe our tears away
And comfort the awakened dead.



Lord, in your mercy: Hear our Prayers

For our Patriarch His Beatitude Metropolitan Marc, Bishop Nicolas and all our clergy and people.

For Adam, newly baptised, chrismated and received into the Celtic Orthodox Church in the Paschal Octave. (Report next month when photos available.)

For King Charles and all the Royal Family, for our Government and Authorities

For the Leaders of all nations; that a spirit of peace may draw them rather than a spirit of conflict.

For all in suffering, sorrow, sickness or distress, and for those who care for them.

For Pope Francis and all who have died recently; for John, Sam, Maureen, Mark, Patrick, Sheila, Dom Kenneth, Agnes, Bill, Fr Peter, Sid, Alice, oblate Sylvia, Ilene, Linda, oblate Enid, Julia and Solange, whose anniversaries of reposing fall this month.

