



Celtic Orthodox Church

Parish of St Gwenn, Wessex

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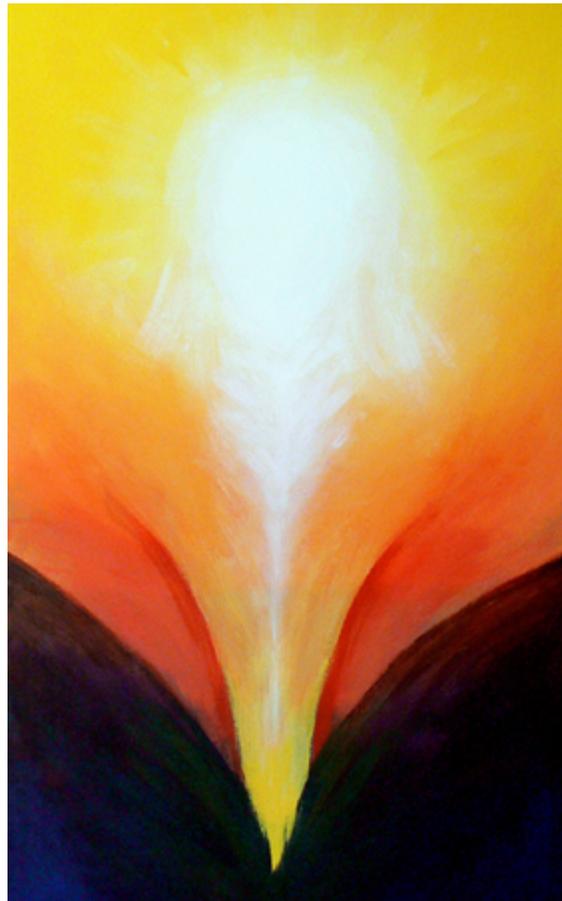
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www.stgwenns.org



St Gwenn's News 42 APRIL 2016

**Christ is
risen!**



**Indeed,
He is
risen!**

Services at St Gwenn's

Sun 3 Apr – PASCHA 2

Divine Liturgy 10.30am

Mon 4 Apr – ANNUNCIATION to the Theotokos

[Transferred from 25 March]

**Divine Liturgy
9.30am**

Sun 10 Apr – PASCHA 3

Divine Liturgy 10.30am

Sun 17 Apr – PASCHA 4

Divine Liturgy 10.30am

Sun 24 Apr – PASCHA 5

Divine Liturgy 10.30am

From your Parish Priest

Christ is risen! Greetings dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

Our early Pascha/Easter has duly arrived and all that Lenten fasting is but a memory. And Spring seems to be with us – flowers, blossoms, birdsong. After periods of torrential rain we are now seeing plenty of bright sunny days, albeit somewhat cold out of the sun. *All is well!* Hopefully, in our inner selves, that is true, but all is far from well in the world today. Satan has infiltrated so many people leading them to commit unspeakable acts of torture, murder, persecution, corruption, selfish greed and inhumanity. As I prepare this newsletter carnage has just been wrought in Brussels. Against such a background, is it right for us to be so jubilant in our resurrection faith? Yes, it is, because it is by the standards that Christ has taught us that we can perceive the wiles of the evil one. If we let this evil dampen our joy in Christ then evil has won. In faith and in *the* Faith let us keep up our prayers for peace. And, above all, we must not allow hatred and vengeance to enter our own hearts. That is just what the evil one wants...and certainly not the Easter message!

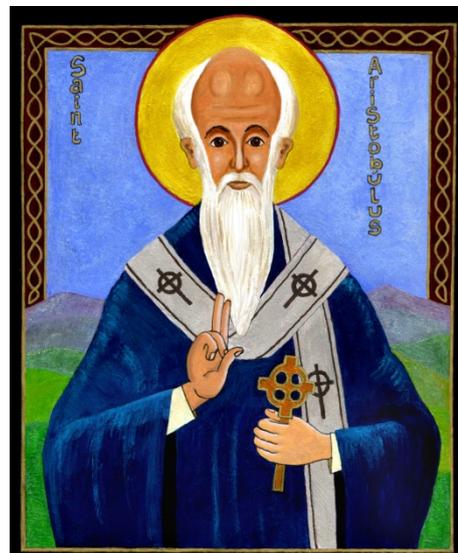
Paschal Blessings to you all.

Fr Leonard

St Aristobŭlus

Last month we drew attention to two important Celtic Saints in March – St Patrick and St David. The dozy editor apologises most profusely to St Aristobŭlus for having omitted him from the list! He was our very first bishop here in Britain (AD 67) and his (main) feast day is 15th March.

Aristobŭlus was the brother of the Apostle Barnabas, assisted the Apostle Andrew, accompanied St Paul, and, after being consecrated a bishop, was sent to our land to preach the gospel here. An important saint indeed in our tradition.



The great Miracle – Crucifixion/Resurrection

The events we have so recently recalled would probably be viewed by most believers as – Crucifixion, horrendous and appalling; Resurrection, gloriously miraculous. There is another way to view this, however: Crucifixion, miraculous; Resurrection, inevitable.

If one starts with a position of *Faith*, we know that God is the creator of *all* life. He *is* life. Viewed thus, it is a miracle that He who is Lord of all that *is* should *die*. How could Life itself die? And as to the resurrection, as Christ God is the Master of all things, the Lord of life and death, it is just inevitable that He could not remain dead.

We adore Christ's holy resurrection, but, O, the wonder of the cross!but none of this would be were it not for the miracle of the Incarnation.

Hating one's life

On Palm Sunday our gospel passage from St John included some very difficult words from Jesus: "Anyone who loves his life will lose it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." [Jn 12.25] Bishop Paul was brave enough to preach on this verse. (Those who do not receive Bishop Paul's sermons and would like to hear this one can contact Fr Leonard who will be happy to forward a recording of it.)

Our life is a God-given gift; how can we *hate* it? Given that the second half of the verse refers to life 'in this world,' it would seem reasonable to assume that Jesus means if we love our life *in this world* we will lose it. But to stretch things and say that, if we love '*worldly things*' we shall lose our life, would seem a linguistic stretch too far. Are we implying that Jesus couldn't express himself clearly? Why does Jesus want us to hate our life in this world? These words are puzzling enough for all Christians, but are especially so for those steeped in Celtic spirituality. The Celts put so much emphasis on the union of spirit and matter, and hold God's creation – our world – in such high regard as a manifestation of the Creator Himself (energies not essence), that the words 'world' and 'hate' do not sit comfortably together. We know that we press on towards a better and eternal life, but we are surely allowed to love for now the wonders of our life in this world? The only way one can begin to make sense of what Jesus means here is to interpret 'life in this world' as meaning a degenerate life, a self-centred life of indulgence – all that is associated with mankind's lower nature. But why not say that? There is so much one can, and should, legitimately love and value about our God-given life here and now, why did Jesus ask us to hate it? We can't say that the problem is poor translation for those are exactly the words found in the Greek.

Does context help? Jesus has just spoken about a grain of wheat dying in order to yield a new crop. He goes on to say that if we are to serve Him we must follow Him.....and Jesus was on His way to be crucified. St Paul would later immortalise this concept by telling us that we are to die to sin but be alive to God in Christ Jesus (Rom 6.11).

The key to these 'tricky' words might be to look at another part of St John's gospel to see how Jesus is using the word '*world*.' In chapter 17 verse 14 Jesus says to His heavenly Father, "I have given them [the disciples] Your word and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.....As You sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world." Clearly the 'world' in this context *must* mean *worldliness* rather than the entire earth and its inhabitants, for the earth is beautiful and not all its

inhabitants are wholly bad. So the life we are to 'hate' is any part of our life which has come under the influence of the evil one, any part of us which clings to worldliness rather than aspiring to the spiritual plane.

News from our Deacon at Saint Seiriol's Hermitage

It has been such a long time since I wrote anything for the newsletter. Since last writing I have moved from the splendid isolation of being a monk and hermit on the mountain, over on the East side of Anglesey, to the solitude of the West side and the coast. There is a nearby hamlet called Hermon; does this mean I am now a Hermon's hermit? (Anyone remember them from yesteryear. Ooh my misspent youth – a story not for the telling!)

It took a little while to get used to the idea of having neighbours about twenty metres either side, the traffic into and out of the street, it being a cul de sac, and the trains. However, the greetings I received from former neighbours and the folk in the village made it seem as though I had never left seven years ago. (A long story there, just right for a cold winter's eve.)

When I left the cottage it was properly maintained, well loved and cared for. It was so sad to see the neglect on taking it over this time. Therefore, it is a major renovation project.

Malltreath is, I would say, a very quiet place; one can walk to the beach, such as it is, and never meet a soul; watching the water fowl and seabirds, or walking the dog along the banks of Abercefnï (Cefni River). From here one can see Snowdonia. In addition, there is a shop very handy, and a pub – there used to be two. The railway station is but a mile and a half away, as is the GP and another shop. There is public transport to the main shopping areas.

I have completed my training in isolation, now I am embarking on training in solitude.

May everyone have a blessed and holy Paschal-tide.

Fr Dcn Cwyfan.

Monastery at Toms Brook, Virginia

We rejoice with our dear Bishop Paul as he oversees the building works for the new monastery in Virginia. It is hoped that Bishop Paul will be in residence there this summer! A long awaited vision being realised.

Bishop Paul spent a year or more searching for the right place to establish the monastery. When he saw this site at Toms Brook he knew immediately that his search was over – rather like St Tugdual finding Saint-Dolay. May God bless the venture.



PENTECOST

As Fr Leonard will be at our Monastery in Brittany during May, here is advance notice that we shall be transferring the Feast of Pentecost to Sunday 22 May.

For our Personal Prayers

For our Primate Metropolitan Marc, Bishop Paul, and all our monks, nuns, clergy and people, and for the future of the Celtic Orthodox Church. For the growth and renewing energy of Celtic spirituality in the world today.

For Bishop Paul in his founding and establishing the Monastery of Our Lady of the Holy Presence, and for the growth of the Celtic community in Virginia.

For our own Parish of St Gwenn, for our commitment and growth, and for the community in which we minister. For Geoffrey preparing to be received into the Celtic Orthodox Church

For all in sickness, sorrow or distress, especially those on our prayer lists and on the hearts of all who read this.

For PEACE and stability in our troubled world, especially **for an end to the horrors of religious extremism, radicalisation and persecution**. For **the refugees** fleeing from troubled homelands and those endeavouring to deal with the ever growing **refugee crisis**. For the people of Brussels.

For the Unity of Christ's Church.

For the departed – our loved ones and those whose anniversaries fall this month, Colin, Sophia, Edna, Bob, Arthur, Jodit, Daphne and Christian.

