



Celtic Orthodox Church

Parish of St Gwenn, Wessex

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St Gwenn's News 54 APRIL 2017

Services at St Gwenn's

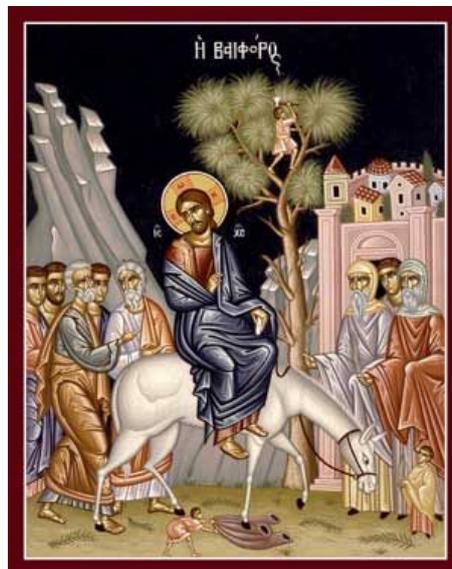
Sun 2 April – LENT 5
Divine Liturgy 10.30am



Tues 4 April
Divine Liturgy 9.30am



Sun 9 April – PALM SUNDAY
Divine Liturgy 10.30am
With Procession of Palms



Mon 10 April – Great and Holy Monday
Matins with Communion 9.30am



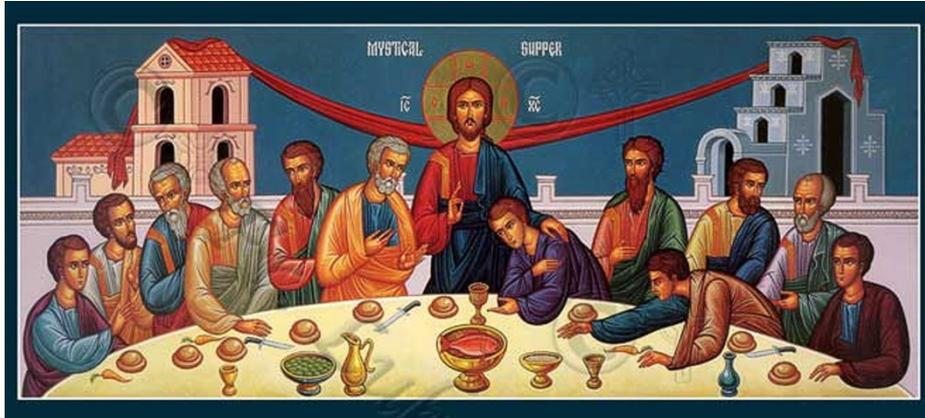
Tues 11 April – Great and Holy Tuesday
Matins with Communion 9.30am



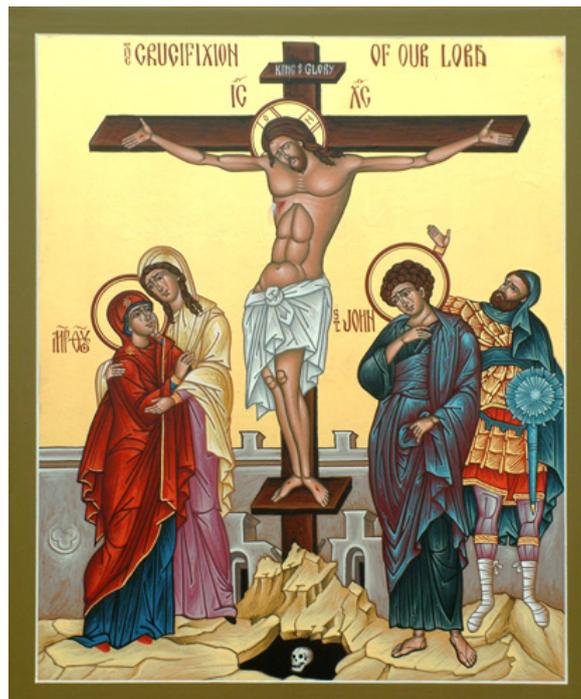
Wed 12 April – Great and Holy Wednesday
Matins with Communion 9.30am



Thursday 13 April GREAT and HOLY THURSDAY
Divine Liturgy 7.00pm
With washing of Feet



Friday 14 April GREAT and HOLY FRIDAY
VESPERS of the SHROUD 3.00pm

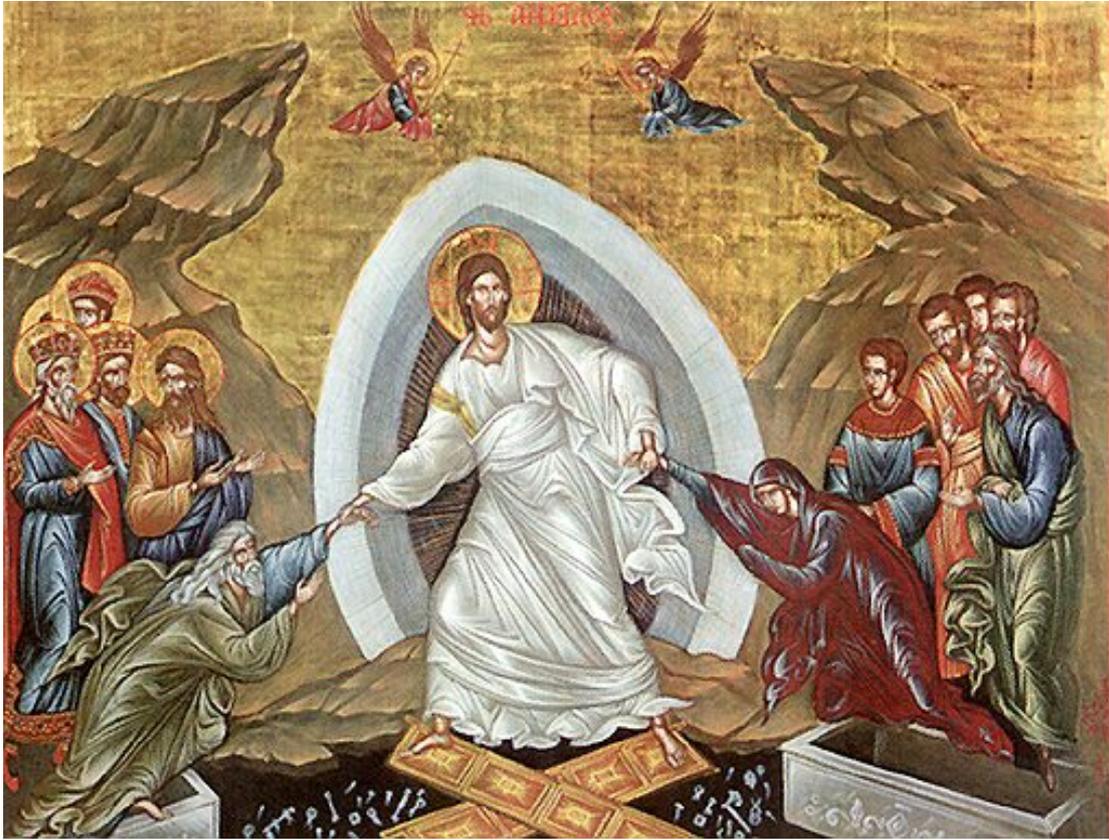


Sat 15/Sun 16 April

PASCHA

VIGIL and LITURGY 8.30pm (Sat)

Matins with Communion 10.30am (Sun)



Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!



Sun 23 April – **PASCHA 2**
Divine Liturgy 10.30am



Tues 25 April – St Mark
Divine Liturgy 9.30am



Sun 30 April – **PASCHA 3**
Divine Liturgy 10.30am



From your Parish Priest

Greetings in Christ!

As this goes out we are still in Lent, but before the next issue we shall reach Pascha so, in advance, I wish you all a most blessed, happy and joyful Pascha! How quickly the years turn. It seems so recently that we were greeting one another with, "Christ is risen." I hope that Lent is proving to be a spiritually fruitful time, and that having restrained ourselves in the fast, examined and 'cleansed' ourselves, and having spent extra time in quiet with our Saviour, the incomparable Easter feast will be the more special. And thinking of 'cleansing,' I am available for confession at a time to suit you.

How wonderfully Spring has come on! It is so lovely to here our regular chiffchaff back again, and so many of our resident birds now singing. Spring and Pascha make such wonderful partners. It is very much in the Celtic ethos to relate the new life of Spring with the New Life of the Resurrection.

Blessings and joy to you all.

Fr Leonard

Meditation: Part 2 From a talk given by Rev Rosemary Bassett ObOSB

Dom John Main OSB (1926–1982), you will remember, was a Benedictine monk and priest who presented a way of Christian meditation which utilised the practice of a prayer-phrase or mantra. Here Rev Rosemary concludes her thoughts on him and his method. One cannot help but make the obvious comparison with the Orthodox Jesus Prayer – we can substitute the sacred Name for Dom John's suggested Maranatha.



Where the Spirit is, there is liberty. (2 Cor 3:17)

The mantra introduces us to this liberty by helping us pass over to 'the other.' We move from ourselves to God in this way. It does so by helping us continuously to take our attention off ourselves. This gives an experiential meaning of leaving self behind. This is not an experience many modern people are familiar with or even understand clearly in a culture that nurtures self-fixation. The tendency of our society is to emphasize the importance of self-promotion, self-preservation, self-projection. Even with regards to meditation we think first of what we can gain from it rather than what we may lose or transcend. The materialism of our society puts 'what I want' at the centre of our life. It can render 'the other' (even God) merely an object that we see in terms of our own pleasure or advantage. 'The other' is only really "the other" if approached with reverence for itself. In learning to meditate we learn that essentially meditation is always a learning process. We learn to pay complete attention to the mantra and not to monitoring its effect on us. The more self-conscious we are the more we begin to objectify God. Then God's reality, uniqueness and central value escapes us and God becomes merely a projection of ourselves.

Many people confuse self-renunciation with self-rejection or escapism but meditation is not running away from ourselves or life. It is not an attempt to avoid responsibility of our own life and our relationships. Meditation is rather an affirmation of ourselves. Not the self that wants this or that – these aspects of our self are illusory and can become little egos when they become isolated from the central point of our being. The centre is where our self exists in complete harmony with God ('the other'). This is why meditation is called the 'prayer of the heart.' God is the source of our being and the sustainer of our selfhood. It is this whole or real self that we affirm and discover in the silence of meditation. We cannot get it by force ("trying to lay violent hands on it") or by trying to possess or control it. If we try to do this by force we are in the absurd position of the ego trying to command the self, or unreality dictating to reality, or the tail wagging the dog. In meditation, we affirm ourselves by becoming still, and silent and allowing the reality of our real self to become more and more apparent and to diffuse its light within our whole being. In the course of this natural process of spiritual growth **we do not try to do anything, we simply let ourselves be.**

When we are leaving self behind we are in that condition of liberty and receptivity (poverty of spirit and purity of heart) that allows us to be in relationship with God. This is the condition that makes it possible for us to experience God's personal and unique love for us. We can only make this movement of self if we leave self behind. That is, if we take our attention away from its involvement with 'me' and direct it on 'the other.' This experience in meditation itself then becomes the norm throughout our life. Self-obsession restricts and limits the self. Self-renunciation, on the other hand, is the means of liberating the self for its real purpose which is loving God. Meditation is a simple and natural process. It is the process that reveals our real being as a state of openhearted receptivity to the spirit of Jesus who dwells in our hearts. This revelation dawns when we step aside from the 'external' manifestations of consciousness such as thoughts, words and images. The less self-conscious we are the more we move into pure consciousness itself. We then become silent because we have entered silence and we are wholly turned towards the other. In this fully conscious, fully free silence we naturally open ourselves to the Word that proceeds from the silence. This is God's own Word in whom we are called into being, in which we ourselves are spoken by our creator. This is the living Word within us. Faith tells us that we are wholly incorporate in this Word, and that we need to know it fully in the height, length, breadth and depth of our spirit; and know it though it is beyond knowledge. The silence of meditation brings us to this knowledge which is so simple that no thought or image could ever contain or represent it. By renouncing self, we enter the silence and focus on the other. The truth to be revealed in this is the harmony of our self with God – and so with all.

In conclusion, a quotation from John Main's book *Word into Silence*:

"Meditation is not the time for words, however beautifully and sincerely phrased. All our words are wholly ineffective when we come to enter into this deep and mysterious communion with God. To come into this holy and mysterious communion with the Word of God, we must first have the courage to become more and more silent. In a deep, creative silence, we meet God in a way which transcends all our powers of intellect and language. We must listen, to concentrate, to attend rather than to think. Silence is absolutely necessary for the human spirit if it really is to thrive, and not only just to thrive, but to be creative, to have a creative response to life, to our environment, to friends – because the silence gives our spirit room to breathe, room to be. In silence, you don't have to be justifying yourself, apologising for yourself, trying to impress anyone. You just have to *be*, and it's a most marvellous experience when you come to it. And the wonder of it is in that experience; you are completely free. You are not trying to play any role; you are not trying to fulfil anyone's expectation."

QUIET DAY



There will be a Quiet Day at St Hugh's Charterhouse, on the Mendips, on Tuesday 20 June. It is being organised by the South West Benedictine Oblates of the Salisbury Priory, and the conductor will be Father Jonathan Herbert from Hilfield Priory. The day will begin with a Celtic Liturgy celebrated by Fr Leonard. The cost of the day will probably be about £15 and you are most welcome to come along. For further details please contact Fr Leonard.

"Be still and know that I am God."

For our Prayers

For our Primate Metropolitan Marc and all our monastics, clergy and people, and for the future of the Celtic Orthodox Church, and the Western Orthodox Communion.

For Bishop Paul and the Monastery at Toms Brook. For the growth of the parish there.

For the Unity of Christ's Church – the unity He came to give us, and which we continue to shatter.

For speedy and lasting relief for those starving in the severe FAMINE across the world. For faithfulness to Christ's injunction to love and serve one another; for generous hearts to impel us to give what we can.

For PEACE and stability in our troubled world. For an end to the horrors of terrorism, religious extremism and radicalisation. For all persecuted Christians and other religious and ethnic groups. For the refugees forced to flee their troubled homelands and those endeavouring to deal with the refugee crisis.

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

For the departed – Colin, Sophia, Edna, Bob, Arthur, Olivia, Jodit, Daphne and Christian whose anniversaries of reposing fall this month. Memory Eternal.

