



Celtic Orthodox Church

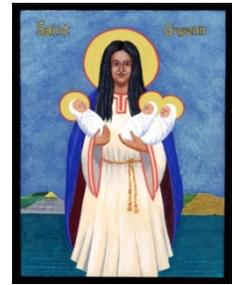
Parish of St Gwenn, Wessex

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St Gwenn's News 55 MAY 2017

*Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!
Christos Anesti! Alithos Anesti!
Christos Voskrese! Voistinu Voskrese!
Christ est Ressuscité! En Vérité, il est
Ressuscité!*

*Glory to His Holy Third Day Resurrection!
We adore His Third Day Resurrection!*

Services at St Gwenn's

Sun 1 May – **PASCHA 3** – SS Philip and James
Divine Liturgy 10.30am



Tues 2 May – S Athanasius
Matins + communion 9.30am



Sun 7 May – **PASCHA 4**
Divine Liturgy 10.30am



Mon 8 May – S John the Theologian
Matins + communion 9.30am



Sun 14 May – **PASCHA 5**
Divine Liturgy 10.30am



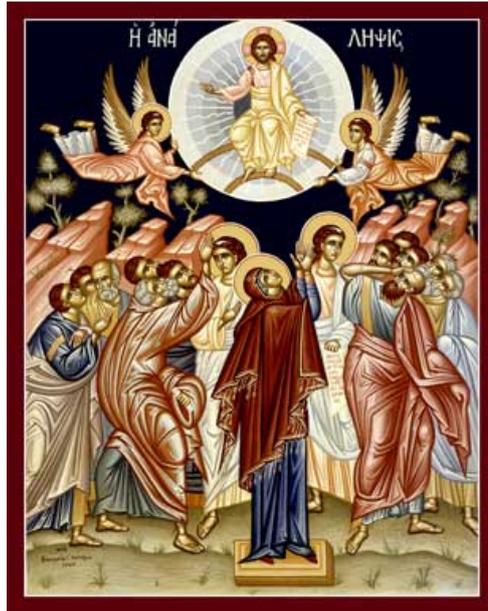
**Tues 16 May – S Brendan the Voyager
Matins + communion 9.30am**



**Sun 21 May – PASCHA 6
Divine Liturgy 10.30am**



**Thurs 25 May ASCENSION
Divine Liturgy 10.30am**



**Sun 21 May – PASCHA 7 – Sun after Ascension
Divine Liturgy 10.30am**



PASCHAL MESSAGE from our Primate, His Beatitude Metropolitan Marc

Beloved daughters and sons, Christ is risen and the whole world is bathing in the splendour of a marvellous light. Some men and women are receiving baptism tonight. Piercing through the veil of the world's deceitful appearances, they are receiving a blessed regeneration and the remission of all their sins. In Christ and in the baptismal waters, they are crossing over from death to Eternal Life. They are created anew in Christ's Resurrection. The old Adam is no longer, death is overcome, hades is freed, and the curse that had plunged the earth into darkness is wiped out. Behold the New Adam in whom humankind is reborn like new-born children emancipated from the old world. O Immeasurable Divine Love, You open to us all the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven and already here below give us a foretaste of its delights!



Until the Feast of the Ascension Orthodox Christians greet one another by saying, "Christ is risen!" However, Christians can really announce the Resurrection to all men and all creatures by giving a living witness of Christ's Love, because we have all been baptized in Christ and have put on Christ. (Gal 3:27) "In these luminous days, may by charity our joy be the expression of our full adherence to the new life which is henceforth accessible to all humankind. By our love let us testify that Christ is truly risen to those who are suffering from war, hunger, illness, poverty, and solitude!" (Excerpt from Bishop Mael's 2010 Paschal Message)



Primate

From your Parish Priest

Christ is risen, dear people!!

What a joy it is to be celebrating again the Paschal season. I never tire of the cries of "Christ is risen" or the singing of the Paschal Troparion:

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

And we keep this up until the 25th of this month when we celebrate the Ascension of our Lord after his forty days on earth following His resurrection. Then, just into next month, we shall celebrate Holy Pentecost – but more of that next time.

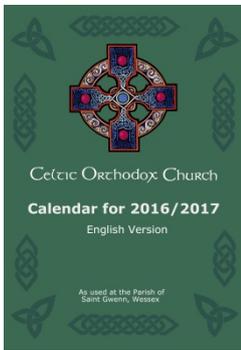
It has not been my custom to preach at the Paschal Vigil and Paschal Liturgy. This is partly because I feel the drama of the liturgical content speaks for itself – the readings from the Old Testament reminding us of the ancient roots of Christianity in Judaism, notably the crossing of the Red Sea as Israel is led out of bondage in Egypt, the lighting of the Easter fire and the cry of "Christ our Light." Then the singing of the Exsultet*, cross referencing the escape of the Israelites from Egypt with the rising of Christ from the realms of the dead – we hear these words: "*This is the night when of old You saved our fathers, delivering the people of Israel from their slavery, and leading them dry-shod through the sea. This is the night when Jesus Christ vanquished hell and rose triumphant from the grave*" – and partly because it is a long service, and, with the celebratory party afterwards, we need to consider those who have a long drive home. However, I do make sure that the Paschal Mystery gets an airing in the sermons on the Sundays during Paschaltide. 'The Easter Miracle?' later in this News is an example.

Paschal blessings and great joy to you all.

Fr Leonard+

*well, we are *Western* Orthodox

Calendar!!



I am extremely embarrassed by the large number of errors and misprints in the 2016/2017 St Gwenn's English edition of the Celtic Orthodox liturgical Calendar. So much so that, if you have purchased a copy, either from me or from Amazon and the like, please contact me and I (Lamorna Publications) will give you a refund. And you keep the Calendar – after all, there is, praise be, more right with it than wrong!

Fr Leonard Hollands – Editor

The Easter Miracle?

Fr Leonard ponders the hierarchy of the Passion and Resurrection miracles in the light of the respective Gospels.

While we are still in the euphoria of Paschaltide, I want to look at the ways the Divine Nature of Jesus is presented in the gospels; and through *that* examine what I might term the Hierarchy of Miracles. In the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, we have lots of narrative, telling us what Jesus did, where He went, and, of course, what He taught. In S John's gospel we get the addition of theological explanation to ensure the underlying teaching is understood.

In the Synoptic Gospels the Divinity of Jesus is implied. In the Prologue to S John's gospel – the first 18 verses – Jesus' Divinity is explicit.

The nearest we get to positive recognition of Jesus' deity in the 'Synoptics' is in Mark (Mk 14:62). Jesus is asked directly if He is the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God. And He answers, "I am." In Matthew and Luke, however, the answer is more veiled. Jesus says, "You say that I am." But we need to be sure whether 'Messiah,' and 'Son of God' are necessarily attributes of full divinity – we are, after all, each of us sons or daughters of God. I'm playing devil's advocate here, of course. I have no doubt as to Jesus' Divinity being implied in the Synoptic Gospels, but I am pointing out that some could find grounds to question it.

S John's Gospel is another matter altogether. No ambiguity here:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Now I may seem to be straying into the Nativity and Incarnation here, whereas I am actually pursuing the Paschal miracle.

That prologue to John's Gospel makes it clear before we even start on the story of Jesus' earthly life and His ministry that we are reading about GOD. The entire Gospel is presented on the premise that Jesus is God. Ten or more years before S John wrote his Gospel, S Paul, in his Epistle to the Colossians, sees that Jesus is God, specifically referring to Him as the image or icon through which we can glimpse the divinity of God – the great mystery revealed through the Incarnation. Paul writes: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible." (Col 1:15-16) This concept is paralleled by Jesus' words to Philip in S John's Gospel: "Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father." (Jn 14:9)

So where has this led us in respect of the miracles of the Passion and the Resurrection? Well, if you have come to these great events through the Synoptic

Gospels, then Jesus' crucifixion was extremely unfortunate for one in Whom so much had been anticipated, but, death on the cross is hardly a miracle. Resurrection on the other hand – now, that really is a miracle!

BUT, if we approach the Death and Resurrection of Jesus through S John's Gospel, it turns the situation on its head. Jesus is God. He is, therefore, the Author and Creator of ALL life. He is LIFE. That death could not hold Him; that the crucified Christ arose from death, is inevitable. Not so much a miracle as an inevitability. Great and Holy Friday, so-called Good Friday – to me, that is the Miracle. That God should, in the person of Jesus the Son, undergo death; that is the miracle. As S John explains, *"God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."* (Jn 3:16)

And that is what this wonderful season, and, indeed, our entire life as Christians, is all about. The miracle of that sacrificial Death and the inevitable glorious and holy Resurrection are the miraculous and generous means by which we, through our faith, receive the gift of Eternal Life in Christ.

Christ is risen! May our faith be strong enough to ensure that we are risen with Him.

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 the Liturgy celebrated by Fr Leonard. The cost for the day is £7 per person 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 peaceful solutions to the growing tensions in the Far East. 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 Bishop Marc's recovery of full mobility following his hip surgery.

For the departed – John, Sheila, Agnes, Sid, Sylvia (oblate OSB), and Enid (oblate OSB), whose anniversaries of reposing fall this month. Memory Eternal.

