



# Celtic Orthodox Church

*Parish of St Gwenn, Wessex*  
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## St Gwenn's News 63 JANUARY 2018

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### Services at St Gwenn's

Sat 6 Jan – **EPIPHANY**  
Divine Liturgy 9.30am



Sun 7 Jan – **THEOPHANY**  
Divine Liturgy with Blessing of  
Holy Water 10.30am  
Blessing of S Wite's Well 2.30pm



Sun 14 Jan – **THEOPHANY 2**  
Divine Liturgy 10.30am



Wed 17 Jan – **St Anthony of Egypt**  
Matins with Communion 9.00am



Sun 14 Jan – **THEOPHANY 3**  
Divine Liturgy 10.30am



Thurs 25 Jan – **Conversion of St Paul**  
Matins with Communion 9.00am



Sun 28 Jan – **THEOPHANY 4**  
Divine Liturgy 10.30am



## **From your Parish Priest**

Greetings in the Name of our Incarnate Lord! And a blessed and happy New Year.

It is to be hoped that you have all had and are having a wonderful – wonder-filled – Christmas/Nativity-tide.

This year, the way the dates fall, we celebrate Epiphany and Theophany on consecutive days. At Epiphany we think of the manifestation of God to the Gentiles, recalling the coming of the Magi. At Theophany we think of the manifestation of the Triune God at Jesus baptism. Generally the Eastern Church celebrates Theophany and the Western Church Epiphany. We in the Celtic Orthodox Church celebrate both; Epiphany because we are Western, and Theophany because we are Orthodox. It's called "having one's cake and eating it"!!

Seriously, this is a very special time, and there is much to be learned from the Magi who were guided to worship and adore the Saviour, and from the baptism of Jesus where the Trinitarian nature of God is revealed – the Father calling from heaven, "This is my beloved Son," the Son physically present in the Jordan, and the Spirit descending like a dove.

So, may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God the Father, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you in 2018 and always, and guide us all to worship and adore the Saviour.

Fr Leonard+

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## **A Carol by Sara Teasdale**

*I came across this little poem and, despite the confusion of both Kings and Wise Men, and their arrival before the Shepherds, I feel it has a certain charm.*

The kings they came from out the south,  
All dressed in ermine fine;  
They bore Him gold and chrysopease,  
And gifts of precious wine.

The shepherds came from out the north,  
Their coats were brown and old;  
They brought Him little new-born lambs--  
They had not any gold.

The wise men came from out the east,  
And they were wrapped in white;  
The star that led them all the way  
Did glorify the night.

The angels came from heaven high,  
And they were clad with wings;  
And lo, they brought a joyful song  
The host of heaven sings.

The kings they knocked upon the door,  
The wise men entered in,  
The shepherds followed after them  
To hear the song begin.

The angels sang through all the night  
Until the rising sun,  
But little Jesus fell asleep  
Before the song was done.

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## **The Celtic Saints – an occasional series**

*I am going to offer a little background on some of our Celtic saints. I am starting with St Hilda as the idea occurred to me at the beginning of the Nativity Fast when we celebrated her Feast Day (17 Nov). Much of the material is taken, without acknowledgement from various sources and edited and adapted by me. Please, therefore, do not post this in the public domain.*

Fr Leonard +

### **St Hilda or St Hild**

The princess, destined to become St Hilda, was born in AD614, into the Saxon royal families of Northumberland and East Anglia. In AD627, along with her great-uncle Edwin, King of Northumbria, Hilda heard the Italian bishop, St Paulinus, preach. She was just 14 years of age and was so impressed that she was baptized by Paulinus that Easter in York. For nearly 20 years after that Hilda lived the life of a noblewoman at the royal palace at Yeavering.

When St Aidan came to Northumbria to establish a monastery on Lindisfarne, he became a mentor to Hilda, and, inspired by his preaching and teaching, she decided to become a nun. She intended to join her sister Hereswid at the convent in *Chelles* near *Paris*, but she had not travelled far when a message came from Aidan asking her to return. Aidan took her on as a student and gave her a small plot of land by the River Wear where she could make a hermitage. Then, in AD649 he made her abbess of a religious house at Hartlepool, which she ran in accordance with one of the rules in use in the Celtic Church.

In AD659 she founded a monastery for both men and women at what is now called Whitby. Whitby became a centre for learning where literature and the arts were encouraged and vocations fostered.

The unfortunate conflict of authority and the differing traditions of the established Celtic Church and the Roman Church, evangelising from the South, was coming to a head at this time. St Hilda and St Cuthbert both worked tirelessly for a peaceful solution to this struggle, and in AD664 Hilda offered her monastery at Whitby as a meeting place for all the Church leaders to resolve the matter – the famous Synod of Whitby.

St Hilda, firmly of the Celtic tradition, hoped for reconciliation and perhaps compromise on both sides, she herself siding with St Colman in his arguments for the Celtic cause. But the erudite and persuasive Abbot Wilfred from Ripon spoke so eloquently on behalf of the Roman Church that the Synod decided that the Celtic Church must agree to come into line with Rome.

The Celtic delegates were bitterly disappointed. To them, this was the end of the Celtic Church, and the traditions they loved so much. Hilda, however, accepted defeat gracefully and humbly, and brought the monasteries under her control into line with the Roman order, even though she disagreed with it.

Celtic monasteries were now subject to the disciplines of the Roman Church; conformity and ritual overshadowing spiritual spontaneity; abstract piety overshadowing the 'ordinariness' of the connection the Celtic Church had with Creation and the people. Hilda, however, managed to retain a sense of the Spiritual spontaneity which she had learned from Aidan.

Hilda was held in affection and respect and was greatly loved. She was energetic and a master administrator and teacher. Bede tells us that due to her outstanding devotion and grace, everyone called her "mother." She was considered so wise that kings and princes sought her advice. But she was also very concerned with ordinary people.

She advocated Peace – Love – Respect for every person – Purity – Devotion – Grace

How much better our troubled world would be if we could heed Hilda's teaching. She stands as a shining example for us to follow. May God give us grace to live out the Gospel in our lives as Hilda did in hers:

Peace  
Love  
Respect and Justice  
Purity  
Devotion  
Openness to the Grace of God

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## **St Seiriol's Hermitage**

Fr Deacon Cwyfan has relocated – a few yards around the corner (!) so still in Malltreath on Anglesey. His new home is right opposite a little-used chapel, and our Welsh Deacon has his eye on it. Watch this space!

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## **For our Prayers**

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

For Fr Paul Zimmerman in Australia who has been received into the Celtic Orthodox Church; that with the grace of God our Church may be re-established in Australia.

For the Unity of Christ's Church, and for harmony among people of all religions and none.

For PEACE in our troubled world; that the love of God may be allowed into the hearts of all.

For all in sickness, sorrow or distress; for those devastated by conflict; for the persecuted; for the starving; for refugees; for the homeless; for those affected by storms, flooding, earthquake or fire. That 2018 may bring better times.

For the departed – Sybil, Archpriest Michael, Fr Anthony, Alan, Fr John, Eric, Bob, Ted, Chris, and Brenda, whose anniversaries of reposing fall this month. Memory Eternal.

