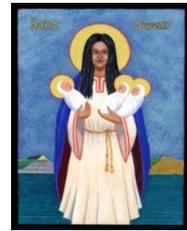




# Celtic Orthodox Church

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## **St Gwenn's News 68** **JUNE 2018**

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### **Services at St Gwenn's**

**Fri 1 June – St Wite [St Gwenn] of  
Whitchurch Canonorum**

**Typika with Communion 8.30am**



**Sun 3 June – PENTECOST 2**

**Divine Liturgy 10.30am**



**Sat 9 June – St Columba, Abbot of Iona**

**Typika with Communion 9.00am**



**Sun 10 June – PENTECOST 3**

**Divine Liturgy 10.30am**



**Fri 15 June – All the Saints and Righteous of the  
Celtic Orthodox Church**

**Typika with Communion 9.00am**



**Sun 17 June – PENTECOST 4**

**Divine Liturgy 10.30am**



**Fri 22 June – St Alban, Protomartyr of Britain**

**Typika with Communion 9.00am**



**Sun 24 June – PENT 5/Nativity of John the Baptist**

**Divine Liturgy 10.30am**



**Thurs 28 June – St Maelvon of Ireland**

**Typika with Communion 9.00am**



## From your Parish Priest

Greetings to you all!

For a variety of reasons I have not been able to find sufficient time to produce a full edition of St Gwenn's News this month, so do please forgive the brevity. I hope the little I am sending will serve to keep us in your prayers as you are in ours.

With loving blessings!

Fr Leonard+

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## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

All six of the services for our area (Lyme Bay) were well attended. There were 12 of us here at St Gwenn's for the final service – that's us to capacity!

Fr Leonard was invited to preach at the main service on the Sunday evening. This was held at the Anglican Church in Lyme Regis. The (approximate) text follows:

I confess to having a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards the Old Testament, the Bible as Jesus knew it. I love so many of its wonderful passages, especially from many of the Psalms, some of the Wisdom writing and parts of the Prophets.

But then there are passages that worry me deeply. One such we had as our first reading (Exodus 15.1ff). At each Paschal or Easter Vigil we jubilantly sing those words from Exodus – "I will sing to the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously." But the rejoicing is that God has drowned all the Egyptians. Time and time again in the OT God is praised for enabling the Jews mercilessly to slaughter thousands of their enemies, frequently completely destroying their towns.

In an age which, as much as any age before it, is beset with violence, hatred and massacre; with a disregard for the freedom of all, the freedom to be, without reprisal, different from our neighbour, it's all too easy to read much of the Old Testament and conclude – 'nothing much changes.'

On the other hand I especially love the Old Testament passage describing the calling of Isaiah (Isaiah 6.1ff). He witnesses the seraphim in their ceaseless cry of Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts. A cry echoed in the Book of Revelation, the Apocalypse, and central in every Eucharistic Liturgy.

Then, back to Isaiah, one of the seraphim touches his lips with a live coal purging away Isaiah's sins – as Christ purges away our sins when we become united with Him in the communion of His holy and precious Body and Blood.

That unity with Christ in the sacrament is what should also unite us with one another. Sadly, as is all too obvious, all Christians are *not* united.

Actually, that is not true. All Christians ARE united. We are united in Christ. There is one Christ and one baptism, and in baptism we are each united in Christ's death and in His resurrection. *De facto* we are united.....it's just that we don't or won't recognise it; we wilfully bring the Body of Christ, His Church, into disunity with our man-made denominational boundaries. And in some cases we even go so far as to proclaim that WE, our particular denomination is, to the exclusion of all others, the True Body of Christ because, we claim, we are led to this conclusion by the Holy Spirit. But what does that say about the Holy Spirit?

If the Paraclete, the Spirit of God, had led the Eastern Orthodox Church to its claim to be the one true Church, and had led the Oriental Orthodox Church, and the Roman Catholic Church, and so on, each to claim that they are the one true Church; that would make the Holy Spirit out to be devious and deceitful. Such would be blasphemy of the highest order!

NO, it is man who has made these claims and put the Church of God into the DISUNITY, which is such a dreadful disfigurement of the Holy Church, the Body of Christ, and is a stumbling block to the evangelistic work of the Church.

Working together in the common aim of ensuring "that all may be free," our theme for this year, is an opportunity to work in Christian Unity.

It is in the LOVE of Christ, the love that calls us to love Him, AND our neighbour as ourselves, that we shall find our way to Christian Unity. Theological debate will not bring Unity, it is love and obedience to the gospel that will.

I'm not blind to the doctrinal issues which divide denominations, but an unwillingness to listen to each other and seek for, and rejoice in, the common ground, is a blight on the Church. Surely Christ calls us to RECONCILIATION... .. "that they may be one," He prayed to the Father.

We need to cultivate a broader concept of Christian Unity, and stop expecting it to mean Uniformity. The whole of Nature, one of God's greatest masterpieces of Creation, is a balanced UNITY, yet it is made up of such a rich and varied diversity.

Think of a family. Mother and Father may like different things; Brother and Sister pursue different paths in life. Each will see various matters in a different way yet they are ONE Family, united in love and by blood and their genes.

We must, as I said, cease to expect Christian Unity to be Christian Uniformity. We must embrace each other in our common baptism into Christ; we must embrace each other in the love that Christ pours out on us; in the Salvation He offers to ALL BELIEVERS.

May God give us grace to overcome our prejudices and pre-conceptions, but instead, open our hearts to His indivisible and perfect love.

And may that love drive our endeavours to ensure that "all may be free."

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## **For our Prayers**

That the joy we find in serving Christ may fill our hearts with joy....and that we may share that joy with others.

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 the Unity of Christ's Church throughout the world; for a greater willingness for Christians to rejoice in what they hold in common.

For an end to the escalating tensions and hatreds associated with differing factions Religions. For harmony among people of all Faiths and none.

For PEACE in our troubled world; that the love of God may touch 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.

For the departed – Fr Kentigern, Nancy, Pamela, and Suzie, whose anniversaries of reposing fall this month. Memory Eternal.

