



The
Celtic Orthodox Church
in the United Kingdom
Fellowship of St Gwenn

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St Gwenn's Bulletin 88 – APRIL 2020: Part 1

Sadly, no services at present.

The *Celtic Orthodox Church* is one of the Ancient Christian Churches. Founded in AD37, it radiated across Europe, remaining faithful to its tradition and its spirituality during the first twelve centuries of the Christian era. It is the **original** Church of Great Britain.

Église Orthodoxe Celtique www.orthodoxie-celtique.net

LENT, HOLY WEEK and Coronavirus

These are extraordinary times (stating the obvious), but please be assured that I hold you all in my prayers.

I am intending to produce the April Bulletin in two parts, hopefully sending out Part 2 for PASCHA (Easter). Part 1 is mindful that we are still in Lent.

If I am able to get my head around how to do it I am hoping that I shall be able to post short video Devotions for Palm Sunday, Great and Holy Friday and PASCHA. If successful, these will be on our **Celtic Orthodox Church, Wessex and the UK** Facebook page. I do hope you all follow that?

This is an extremely worrying time and it is important that we don't allow it to extinguish the hope we have in Christ our Saviour. If, as most people are or should be, you are in isolation, find inventive ways to use the opportunity – more prayer, more reading, more reflection on the positives, and if you are not alone in your home, more time to appreciate the people in our lives. Rejoice in each new day that we are safe and well. Rejoice in all the blessings we receive even in this awful situation. Try something new – have you ever thought of drawing or writing a poem or a story, for example? But above all, always be aware that God is with you and in you. Take the time to realise this and meet with Him.

And a word on **Fasting**. It has always been the Orthodox custom, imperative actually, that we must not fast in a manner likely to be detrimental to our health. Whilst that has normally applied to the sick and the elderly, it is important at the present time that we all ensure that we receive enough nourishment to keep our immune systems as healthy as possible. We should, ideally, continue to refrain from meat, but totally vegan diets will not do us any favours (unless it is our norm and our bodies are used to it). The occasional tin of mackerel is especially beneficial.

Blessings and love to you all,

Fr Leonard †

Look well to this day

This poem chimes well with my advice above in framing our attitude to each day in isolation. It was sent to me by a friend. I don't know where it is from but is clearly of Indian origin as it is translated from Sanscrit.

Look well to this day
for it is life, the very best of life;
in its brief course lie all
the realities and truth of existence:
the joy of growth,
the splendour of action,
the glory of creation.

For yesterday is but a memory,
and tomorrow only a vision,
but today, if well lived, will make
every yesterday a memory of happiness
every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well therefore to this day.

We are His brothers and sisters

Some more thoughts from His Holiness the late Pope Shenouda III taken from his book on Repentance. Think on this and marvel in humility and wonder.



"You are a brother to the Messiah, a companion to Christ, and an heir with Him. It is an amazing humility for the Lord to call us His brothers. We do not dare to call Him by this title, because we have not reached even the level of the unprofitable servants who did everything they were commanded to do (Luke 17.10). But since He honours us, we should measure up to the standards God set when He called us.

It is amazing what is said about the Lord God: He is "the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8.29). Many brethren? How amazing! It is also amazing that "He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2.11). Yet more amazing than all of this is that "in all things He had to be made like His brethren" (Hebrews 2.17). We also see the Lord saying to the two Marys: "Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me" (Matthew 28.10). He repeats the same expression to Mary Magdalene: "Go to My brethren and say to them" (John 20.17).

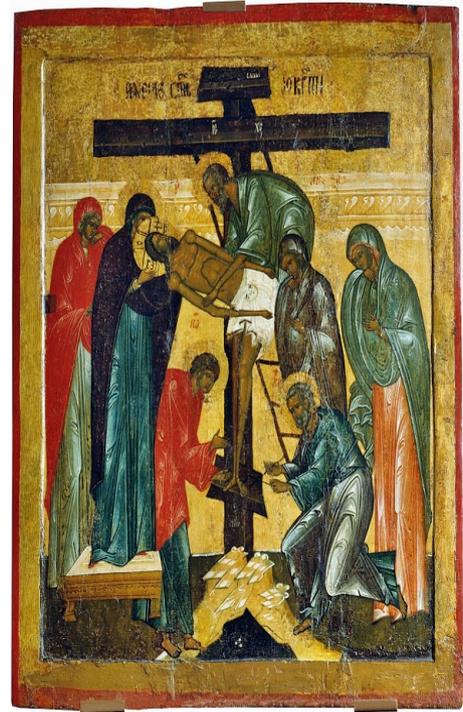
He does not say this about the apostles only, but about everyone. "For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother" (Matthew 12.50). Concerning the good done for the poor and needy, he says: "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one to the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me" (Matthew 25 .40).

So, you are a brother to Christ and you are also an heir with Him in the promise of eternal glory. in the parable of the evil earthly vineyard tenants, He is the Heir (Matthew 21. 38). We are therefore called "heirs-heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8.17).

Poem for Good Friday – Jesus' Body is taken down from the Cross

Malcolm Guite

His spirit and His life He breathes in all
Now on this cross His body breathes no more
Here at the centre everything is still
Spent, and emptied, opened to the core.
A quiet taking down, a prising loose
A cross-beam lowered like a weighing scale
Unmaking of each thing that had its use
A long withdrawing of each bloodied nail,
This is ground zero, emptiness and space
With nothing left to say or think or do
But look unflinching on the sacred face
That cannot move or change or look at you.
Yet in that prising loose and letting be
He has unfastened you and set you free.



For our Prayers

For our Primate Metropolitan Marc, Bishop Paul and all the monastics, clergy and people of the Celtic Orthodox Church; for all Christians; for the Unity of Christ's Church throughout the world.

For PEACE in our troubled world; that the love of God may touch the hearts of all, and have mercy on all who suffer and hunger because of conflict.

For all Nations and their leaders, and for each of us to take seriously and respect the environment before our planet is irrevocably impaired.

For our Government, Councils, the NHS, Hospitals, Clinics, Doctors, Nurses, all Medical Staff and all Volunteers as they fight against the Coronavirus pandemic.

For all in sickness, sorrow or distress; especially at this time for those with, or devastated by, the coronavirus pandemic including those in bereavement.

For all who are struggling with being isolated and those whose income has been lost or severely reduced by the coronavirus pandemic.

For our keeping of a good Lent against the difficult backdrop of our times.

For the departed – the thousands worldwide who have fallen victim to the coronavirus pandemic, starvation and warfare – for Colin, Sophia, Edna, Bob, Carol, Arthur, Maureen, Olivia, Jodit, Daphne and Christian whose anniversaries of reposing fall this month. Memory Eternal.

