

SELECTED LIVES OF THE SAINTS

OSITH (Osgyth, Osyth) (d. c.700) of Chich (Essex), was an obscure Anglo-Saxon princess. Her tribe was that of the Hwiccas; she was married to Sighere, king of the East Saxons (c.664-83), at the instigation of his overlord Wulfhere, king of Mercia (656-75). One purpose of the marriage may have been to consolidate Christianity in Essex, whose state was precarious owing to Sighere's apostasy; *Bede has nothing to say of Osith, but does recount the reconversion of Sighere by bishop Jaruman. The son of Sighere and Osith, called *Offa, became king of the East Saxons but abdicated in 709. Osith meanwhile had founded a convent at Chich, died there, and was venerated as a saint.

Bede's silence and the lack of corroborative evidence to support these details from her late Legend make the story suspect. Its more picturesque details include the appearance of a large and aggressive white stag whenever Sighere tried to consummate the marriage (ignoring the fact that they had a son), Osith's flight to some East Anglian bishops who accepted her vow of chastity and persuaded her husband to give her land for her nunnery, her violent death at Chich at the hands of pirates because she refused to commit idolatry, and her carrying her severed head after death to a church three miles away, where she was buried.

ETHELBURGA (1) (Edilburh) (d. 675), abbess of Barking. Of a wealthy (possibly royal) family and sister of *Erkenwald, Ethelburga was quite likely the owner, as well as the ruler, of Barking. A late tradition says that Erkenwald invited *Hildelith from Chelles to be prioress and future abbess of Barking; her difficult task was to teach Ethelburga monastic traditions while retaining a subordinate role.

*Bede devoted several chapters to marvellous events just before Ethelburga's death, such as the death of a three-year-old boy after calling 'Edith' three times for his favourite nun, and the cure of the nun *Tortgith after a vision of Ethelburga. Feast: 11 October; Barking had translation feasts - on 7 March, 4 May, and (with those of Hildelith and Wulfrida) 23 September.

ETHELFLEDA (Elfedda) (fl. c.960), abbess of Romsey. Daughter of Ethelwold of Wessex who founded Romsey; Ethelfleda joined the community at an early age under *Merewenna and eventually became abbess.

Her Legend tells that she was brought to the notice of the king and queen and stayed at court, where her habit, for ascetical reasons, of bathing in the nude at night-time was the occasion of the queen's nervous illness, caused by her indiscreet curiosity when she followed her to see where she went. The queen was afterwards cured by the abbess's intercession. Ethelfleda died at an advanced age. Feast: 23 October.

TECLA (Thecla) **OF ENGLAND** (Thecla of Kitzingen) (d. c.790), Benedictine nun and abbess. English by birth and a relative of *Lioba, Tecla was a nun of Wimborne (Dorset) who was sent by the abbess Tetta to help *Boniface in his missionary work in Germany. For a time she was a nun under Lioba at Tauberbischofsheim until becoming abbess of Ochsenfurt and later Kitzingen. The year of her death is unknown, but her cult is testified by liturgical books which assign her feast, with the Roman Martyrology, to 15 October. Dates of 27 or 28 September are also found. Her shrine remained at Kitzingen until her relics and others' were scattered during the Peasants' War of the 16th century.

BEGU (d. 660), Anglo-Saxon nun of Hackness (N. Yorkshire) who, according to *Bede, saw in a vision the death of *Hilda, the foundress of both Whitby and Hackness. In c.1125 the Whitby monks, short of relics of local saints owing to the translation of Hilda to Glastonbury and the lack of interest in *Caedmon, found at Hackness a sarcophagus, supposedly by revelation, which was inscribed *Hoc est sepulchrum Begu*. The relics in it were translated to Whitby, where miracles were reported, but another set of miracles was claimed by St. Bees, one of whose monks wrote this account of the Whitby translation. The two saints, the Irish Bega and the Yorkshire Begu, were thenceforth confidently identified. The lack of literary survivals of the Whitby cult is notable. Feast: 31 October.

ST FURSEY'S ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY & PARISH CHURCH

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COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

AM

OCTOBER 2021

23RD ANNIVERSARY OF OUR DEDICATION



The proposed parish church from Yarmouth Road Stalham.



The view from the drive into the church car park area.

BRITISH ORTHODOX SAINTS COMMEMORATED IN OCTOBER

- 03 Ewald the Fair and Ewald the Dark, Martyrs
- 07 Osyth of Chich, Martyr
- 08 Iwi of Lindisfarne, Hermit
- 10 Paulinus, Bishop of York
- 11 Ethelburgh, Abbess of Barking
- 12 Edwin, King and Martyr
Wilfrid, Bishop of York
- 14 Burchard, Bishop and Missionary*
- 15 Thecla of Wimborne, Abbess and Missionary
- 16 Lull, Archbishop and Missionary
Vitalis, Hermit*
- 17 Ethelbert and Ailred, Martyrs
Nothelm, Archbishop of Canterbury
- 19 Ednoth, Bishop of Dorchester-on-Thames, Martyr
Frideswide of Oxford, Virgin
- 20 Acca, Bishop of Hexham
- 21 Condedus, Hermit*
- 23 Tuda, Bishop of Northumbria
Elfreda of Glastonbury, Virgin
Ethelfleda, Abbess of Romsey
- 26 Albinus, Bishop and Missionary*
Cedd, Apostle of Essex
Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury
Eata, Bishop of Hexham
Edfrid, Abbot of Leominster, Confessor
- 28 Eadsige, Archbishop of Canterbury
- 30 Ethelnoth the Good, Archbishop of Canterbury
- 31 Begu, Nun
Foillan, Missionary in East Anglia

TROPARION OF ST. FURSEY

tone five

Establishing thy monastery in a Roman fortress /
thou didst teach men that the Orthodox Faith is a
true bastion / against the onslaughts of every evil
force O Father Fursey. / Wherefore pray to God
for us / that we may all be bastions of Faith /
standing firm against the rising tide of falsehood /
that our souls may be saved. //



HOMILY PAGE

From a sermon by Saint Augustine, bishop

[Sermon 336, 1.6: PL 38 [ed.], 1471-1472, 1475]

THE BUILDING AND DEDICATION OF GOD'S HOUSE WITHIN US

We are gathered together to celebrate the dedication of a house of prayer. This is our house of prayer, but we too are a house of God. If we are a house of God, its construction goes on in time so that it may be dedicated at the end of time. The house, in its construction, involves hard work, while its dedication is an occasion for rejoicing.

What was done when this church was being built is similar to what is done when believers are built up into Christ. When they first come to believe they are like timber and stone taken from woods and mountains. In their instruction, baptism and formation they are, so to speak, shaped, leveled and smoothed by the hands of carpenters and craftsmen.

But Christians do not make a house of God until they are one in charity. The timber and stone must fit together in an orderly plan, must be joined in perfect harmony, must give each other the support as it were of love, or no one would enter the building. When you see the stones and beams of a building holding together securely, you enter the building with an easy mind; you are not afraid of its falling down in ruins.

Christ the Lord wants to come in to us and dwell in us. Like a good builder he says: *A new commandment I give you: love one another.* He says: *I give you a commandment.* He means: Before, you were not engaged in building a house for me, but you lay in ruins. Therefore, to be raised up from your former state of ruin you must love one another.

The work we see complete in this building is physical; it should find its spiritual counterpart in your hearts. We see here the finished product of stone and wood; so too your lives should reveal the handiwork of God's grace.

Let us then offer our thanksgiving above all to the Lord our God, from whom every best and perfect gift comes. Let us praise his goodness with our whole hearts. He it was who inspired in his faithful people the will to build this house of prayer; he stirred up their desire and gave them his help. He awakened enthusiasm among those who were at first unconvinced, and guided to a successful conclusion the efforts of men of good will.

Sat October 30 th	Vespers 4pm.
Sun October 31 st	19 th Sunday after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 9:30am (Venerations of Relics)

Daily Services at St Fursey's Chapel

(Neville Road)

These are normally, 3rd Hour and reading from the Fathers 9am (NB: at the Parish Church on Thursday).

COMMUNITY NEWS & NOTICES

Bible Study resumes on Thursday evenings 7pm with St Matthew's Gospel.

Our Parish Church in Stalham

Wonderful progress has been made with the building of our new parish church, thanks to the excellent work of Alan, Tony and Tony Junior, our builders. As I write this newsletter, we look forward to the dome being put into place with a crane, painted in gold leaf paint. The half dome over the apse is already in place and looks very beautiful. The arches will be erected soon and then new Icons will be needed for the walls of the church.

Market Stalls

Sadly, no progress on these yet. Hopefully, there will be some progress next year.

Every blessing to our readers.

Father Stephen

Saturday night out with "Street Presence" in Norwich.

Soon after 10pm, we tour the main clubbing, drinking and dining areas, to get an overview. On foot patrol, we gather glass bottles and sweep up smashed glass, which could cut bare feet, due to sore heels later. We meet the homeless and others that are vulnerable, raised as a concern by other agencies. Queues indicate where we may encounter vulnerable people later. We find at risk individuals or have them referred to us by police, door staff, taxis or a passer-by. We assist the person to recover, if it is safe for them to move, we help to ensure they get to home or to A&E safely, if there is no other option, we may convey them. This saves the police from having to wait, and saves calling out a hard-pressed ambulance. If there is a non-urgent injury there may be a few hours wait for an ambulance. We resolve conflicts and reunite friends; we also might talk and support someone who is in distress or suicidal. We discourage dopey intoxicated people from walking in the road, while other people may simply want a loo, a shop, taxi, bus or train.

At 3am most clubs close, the pavements fill up, people head for food, transport and home. Taxis tend to avoid those likely to vomit. Conflicts, domestic or otherwise tend to peak, our team gets stretched thin dealing with multiple separate incidents, maybe even assisting police with a situation. Progressively they are resolved allowing us to aim to finish by 4am. However, we do a final check of the area to confirm that there are no last-minute issues and stay as long as needed.

By Ralph.

Subject:

MODERN DAY SLAVERY

As things now are again opening up in these challenging times with COVID. I am again going to write articles on Awareness of MODERN DAY SLAVERY. Our projects have not come to a halt completely through out lockdowns. We have sent small donations that I have raised and donations from people etc For BAKHITA HOUSE both for Art Dept and Babies born in the house .Also my Rotary Club from Glassgiving sent in Christmas gifts for the guests and also a beautiful glass hanging and rainbow these are made by Caroline look up Rotary Club of Innovation Glassgiving website it is really fantastic work and all profits go to charity etc For THE FALCONER TRUST FOR THE ORPHANAGE both money and goods from churches and people that care. I have raised throughout monies for POLIO which every £1 put through my Rotary Club turns into £3. I have raised awareness where and when I could and much more even attended global meetings on ZOOM to places I could never have had a chance to attend. And much much more.

I have at the moment a small amount of monies for BAKHITA HOUSE for the fund for babies born in the house but need to top this up a bit more first.

Next month I will write more of a update on our journey forward for our ACTION AGAINST CHILD SLAVERY please pray for all children in slavery that they can be freed and have a life from fear CO-ORDINATOR

Pat Hinkins member of RAGAS (Rotary Club of Innovation) East Anglia
ST FURSEYS CHURCH COMMUNITY ACTION AGAINST CHILD SLAVERY
SPONSOR OF RAGAS (Give the children a Voice global) *By P & S*

LITURGY PAGE

For the Dedication

(Tone 6)

6. The ancient Law commanded the celebration of the dedication, and it did well. But it is better to celebrate a dedication by a renewal; for, as Isaiah says, "the islands are renewed at the presence of God." These islands are the Churches of the Gentiles, which came to be founded and established in God. Thus, as we commemorate the dedication, let us celebrate a renewal!
5. Brethren: renew yourselves and begin a new life, putting aside your old nature. Let us control our passions which lead to death, re-dedicating all the faithful, so that they can hate the taste of evil. Let us no longer remember the former things, except to flee from them. In this way, man is renewed and the feast of the dedication may be celebrated.
4. O Christ, who are the eternal Word, establish Your Church as a tower of strength. Because You have founded it upon the Rock of Faith, it remains unshaken from age to age, since it contains You who became man for the Church in these latter days. We thank You, praising and singing: "You are from the beginning and eternal; O our King, glory to You!"

Troparion of the Dedication

(Tone 4)

As You had shown from on high the splendor of the firmament, so did You show on earth the splendor of the dwelling-place of Your holy glory: make it stand firm forever and ever, and accept the supplications which we offer there to You, unceasingly, through Your Mother, O You the Life and Resurrection of all!

SERVICES AT THE PARISH CHURCH

Sat October 2 ND	Vespers for the Dedication 4pm.
Sun October 3 RD	23 rd Anniversary of our Dedication 15 th Sunday after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 09:30am. (Hieromartyr Dionysius The Areopagite).
Tues October 5 th	Holy Apostle Thomas Vespers 4pm. (St Fursey's Chapel, Neville Road)
Friday October 8 th	Holy Apostle James Son of Alphaeus. Vespers 4pm. (St Fursey's Chapel, Neville Rd).
Sat October 9 th	Vespers 4pm. Righteous Alphaeus & Lot.
Sun October 10 th	16 th Sunday after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 9:30am. (St Paulinus).
Sat October 16 th	Vespers 4pm. (Martyr Longinus 1st).
Sun October 17 th	17 th Sunday after Pentecost (Fathers of the 7 th Ecumenical Council 787). Divine Liturgy 9:30am. Vespers 4pm St Fursey's Chapel – St Luke.
Mon October 18th	St Luke Apostle & Evangelist TYPIKA 9am (St Fursey's Chapel).
Fri Oct 22 nd	Liturgy of St James 7pm.
Sat October 23 rd	Vespers 4pm. (St James).
Sun October 24 th	18 th Sunday after Pentecost. Divine Liturgy 9:30am.
Wed October 27 th	Protection of our Most Holy Lady Vesperal Liturgy 7pm.

Knowledge

Faith and hope go together with knowledge. They are built on knowledge and lead to knowledge. For what is "not seen" is believed and hoped on the basis of what is seen. And the understanding of what is seen depends on belief and hope in what is not seen. One's belief and hope in the ability to know, to trust his senses, his mind and the revelation of his God, are the foundations of all knowledge.

Man was created to know God; not only to believe in Him and to hope in Him, but to know Him and so to love Him and to serve Him. Knowledge of God is the aim and goal of man's life, the purpose of his creation by God.

And this is eternal life, that they know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.

O Righteous Father, the world has not known Thee; and these know that Thou hast sent me. I made known to them Thy name, and I will make it known, that the love with which Thou has loved me may be in them, and I in them. (John 17:3, 25-26)

Faith, given as a gift by God, results in the knowledge of God. The Lord desires that man would "know the truth," and so become free from all blindness, ignorance and sin. (John 8:32) This is the central teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, of the law and the prophets of the Old Testament and of the apostles and teachers of the Church.

That men might know wisdom and instruction, understand words of insight, receive instruction in wise dealing, righteousness, justice and equity, that prudence may be given to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth . . . The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:1-7)

In all of his letters, the Apostle Paul prays that the faithful would "be filled with the knowledge of Christ's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" since "God our Savior desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (Colossians 1:8-9, 1 Timothy 2:4)

In all of his writings, the apostle insists as well that the faithful have "all the riches of knowledge of God's mystery of Christ in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," and that the "spiritual man" has "the mind of the Lord . . . the mind of Christ." (Colossians 2:2-3; 1 Corinthians 2:6-16)

The Apostle John gives the same doctrine as Saint Paul when he claims that the "Spirit of Truth" whom Christ has given in order to "teach you all things" and to "guide you into all the truth" (John 14:26, 16:13), is truly living in the midst of the believers.

. . . you have been anointed by the Holy One and you know all things. I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and know that no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?

I write this to you about those who would deceive you; but the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that any one should teach you; as His anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie, just as it has taught you, abide in Him. (1 John 2: 20-29)

This teaching of Saint John is in fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, quoted directly by Jesus Himself, that in the Messianic Age of the new covenant church, ". . . they shall all be taught by God." (John 6:45; Isaiah 54:13)

In the spiritual tradition of the Church, the knowledge of God and His truth is the main goal of life. "For what meaning would there be for creation," asks Saint Athanasius the Great (4th c.), "if man should not know God?" (*On the Incarnation, Book I*) Knowledge of God, indeed knowledge itself, according to the scriptures and the saints, is not mere "knowledge about," the abstract knowledge of information and rational propositions, devoid of living experience. Knowledge is primarily and essentially an existential union, a cleaving together of the spiritual man and the object of his knowledge. Saint Gregory of Nyssa (4th c.) has said, "The Lord does not say that it is blessed to know something about God, but rather to possess God in oneself." (*On the Beatitudes, Sermon 6*) The possession of God within the mind and heart is the true knowledge of God. It comes through faith and repentance in the life of the Church. It comes essentially through the gracious purification from all sinful passions. Saint John of the Ladder (6th c.) has written:

The growth of fear is the beginning of love, but a complete state of purity is the foundation of all divine knowledge.

He who has perfectly united his feelings to God is mystically led by Him to an understanding of His words. But without union one cannot speak about God..

The engrafted Word (James 1:21) perfects purity . . . and the disciple of divine knowledge is illumined. (. . .) but he who has not come to know God merely speculates.

Purity makes a theologian (i.e. one who knows God), who of himself grasps the teachings of the Trinity. (*The Ladder of Divine Ascent, Step 30*)

Hope

The virtue of hope goes together with the power of faith. The patriarch Abraham **"in hope believed against hope that he should be the father of many nations."** (Romans 4:18) And hope, like faith, is in that which is not seen.

For in this hope we are saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?

But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. (Romans 8:24-25)

Hope is the assurance of the good outcome of our lives lived by faith in God. Hope is the power of certain conviction that the life built on faith will produce its fruits. Hope is the confidence, that despite all darkness and sin, the light of the loving forgiveness of God is upon us to do with us and for us, what we ourselves cannot do.

Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and shield. Yea our hearts are glad in Him, because we trust in His holy name. Let Thy steadfast love, O Lord be upon us, even as we hope in Thee. (Psalm 33:20-22)

The opposite of hope is despondency and despair. According to the spiritual tradition of the Church, the state of despondency and despair is the most grievous and horrible condition that a person can be in. It is the worst and most harmful of the sinful states possible for the soul.

The loss of hope is the worst possible state because without hope, nothing else is possible; certainly not faith. If a person is faithless, he can be chastized and convinced. If a person is proud, he can be humbled; impure, he can be cleansed; weak, he can be strengthened; wicked, he can be made righteous. But if a person is despondent and despairing, the very condition of his sickness is such that his heart and soul are dead and unresponsive to the grace of God and the support of his brothers.

. . . the force of despondence . . . overwhelms him and oppresses his soul; and this is a taste of hell because it produces a thousand temptations: confusion, irritation, protesting and bewailing one's lot, wrong thoughts, wandering from place to place, and so on. (Saint Isaac of Syria, 6th c., *Directions on Spiritual Training*)

The demon of despondency, which is called the "noon-day demon" (Psalm 91:6) is more grievous than all others. (. . .) It arouses in him vexation against the place and mode of life itself and his work, adding that there is no more love among the brethren, and no one to comfort him. (. . .) Then it provokes in him a longing for other places . . . (Evagrius of Pontus, 4th c., *To Anatolius: On Eight Thoughts*)

The only remedy for despair is humility and patience, the steadfast holding to the life of faith, even without conviction or feeling. It is the simplification of life by going through each day, one day at a time, with the continual observances, however external, of scriptural reading, liturgical worship, fasting, prayer, and work. In the advice of Saint Benedict (6th c), it is to remain stable in one's place, and to "to what you are doing" as well as you can, with all possible attention. In the advice of Saint Seraphim (19th c.), it is to visit with spiritual friends, with those who are hopeful, merciful, joyful and strong. It is to stand fast to the end while passing through aridity and darkness, until the light of blessed hope and comfort are found. There is no other way; and **"those who find it are few"** (Matthew 7:14). But when one "fights and conquers against despondency and despair, this struggle is followed by a peaceful state and the soul becomes filled with ineffable joy." (Evagrius, *To Anatolius: On Eight Thoughts*)

When we are attacked by the demon of despondency — the most grievous of all, but who more than all makes the soul experienced — let us divide our soul in two, and making one part the comforter and the other part the comforted, let us sow seeds of good hope in ourselves, singing with David the psalmist: "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I will again praise Him, my help and my God." (Psalm 42:5; Evagrius of Pontus, To Anatolius: Texts on Active Life)

Sometimes people think that a certain "lack of hope" is a Christian virtue. They think that by proclaiming that "all is lost" they please God by their humility and sorrow over sins, their own and those of the world. They think that the more they concentrate on the evils of men, the more they exalt the strength of the wicked, the more they sigh and say, "There is no help for us in God!", the more righteous and pious they become. But this is all wrong. It has nothing to do with the patient suffering at the hands of the wicked, and the patient struggle against the powers of evil that the righteous must endure, being absolutely certain of their ultimate and total victory in God, the source of their strength and their hope.

It is no virtue to feel weak and helpless in the presence of the wicked. It is no virtue to consider oneself totally at the mercy of evil and sin. It is a virtue rather to be always **"rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation"** knowing and believing that the final victory is God's. (Romans 12:12)