

ST. FURSEY'S ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND PARISH,
ST. FURSEY'S ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN PARISH CHURCH,
YARMOUTH ROAD, STALHAM . NR12 9PG.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

JANUARY 2022



*The Epiphany, or the Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ in
the Jordan (January 6th)*

Troparion

WHEN thou wast baptized in Jordan, O Lord, then
was made manifest the worship of the Trinity:
for the Voice of the Father bare witness to thee,
naming thee his beloved Son; and the Spirit in form
of a dove made good the certainty of his word. O
Christ our God, who wast manifested and hast
enlightened the world, glory be to thee.

BRITISH ORTHODOX SAINTS
COMMEMORATED IN
JANUARY.

- 01 Elvan and Mydwyn, Missionaries
03 Fugatius and Damian, Missionaries
06 Peter, Abbot of Canterbury
07 Brannoc of Braunton, Monk
08 Athelhelm, Archbishop of Canterbury
Ethelbert, Bishop in Ireland*
Pega, Anchoress
Wulsin, Bishop of Sherborne
09 Adrian, Abbot of Canterbury
Berhtwald, Archbishop of Canterbury
10 Sethrid, Abbess in France
12 Benedict, Abbot of Wearmouth
13 Kentigern (Mungo), Apostle of North-West England
15 Ceolfwulf, King of Northumbria, Monk
16 Fursey of East Anglia, Missionary
17 Mildgyth, Virgin
18 Wilfrid, Missionary and Martyr in Sweden*
22 Berhtwald, Bishop of Ramsbury
25 Sigebert, King of East Anglia, Martyr
Thordgyth of Barking, Nun
28 John the Wise of Malmesbury
30 Bathild of Chelles, Queen*
31 Adamnan of Coldingham, Monk
Wilgils, Hermit

TROPARION OF ST. FURSEY.

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.

Where fore pray to God for us that we may all be
bastions of the Faith standing firm against the rising
tide of falsehood that our souls may be saved.

KONTAKION OF ST. FURSEY.

Thou didst need the walls of stone to defend the Faith
against its pagan enemies , O Father Fursey, but pray
for us that we may have a spiritual wall around us to
defend the Faith against its enemies. Following thee
and praising they eternal memory we stand firm against
every error ever singing ; Rejoice beloved of God,
our Father Fursey



JANUARY 2022

Sat Jan 1 st	St Basil the Great Vespers 4pm
Sun Jan 2 nd	Sunday before Theophany Divine Liturgy 09:30am. (St Seraphim of Sarov)
Wed Jan 5 th	Forefeast of the Theophany Vespers 4pm
Thurs Jan 6 th	Theophany of Our Lord & God Divine Liturgy 9:30am. Blessing of the Waters
Sat Jan 8 th	Saturday after the Theophany Vespers 4pm
Sun Jan 9 th	Sunday after Theophany Divine Liturgy 9:30am. Blessing of the Waters
Sat Jan 15 th	St Paul of Thebes Vespers 4pm.
Sun Jan 16 th	Patronal Festival St Fursey of Burgh Castle 650 Divine Liturgy 9:30am. (St Sigebert King & Martyr 635)
Thurs Jan 20 th	Pilgrimage to Burgh Castle 3 rd Hour + Pilgrim Prayers
Sat Jan 22 nd	St Timothy Apostle of the 70 Vespers 4pm.
Sun Jan 23 rd	14 th Sunday of St Luke Divine Liturgy 9:30am.
Sat Jan 29 th	Translation of the Relics of St Ignatius of Antioch Vespers 4pm.
Sun Jan 30 th	The Three Hierarchs Divine Liturgy 9:30am.

Daily Services at St Fursey's Chapel

(Neville Road)

In addition to the above services in the Parish Church we have daily services at St Fursey's Chapel at Neville Road, Sutton. Normally, 3rd Hour 9am and Reading from the Fathers.' Vespers 4pm. (On Tuesdays and Thursdays 3rd Hour at the parish church).

THEOPHANY HOUSE BLESSINGS

It is the custom in the Orthodox Church for the faithful to have their homes blessed with the Holy Water Blessing at the Theophany Liturgy commemorating the Baptism of Our Lord and the revelations of the Holy Trinity. If you would like your home blessed, please tell Fr Stephen.

CHRISTMAS THANKS

As I prepare this Newsletter on 14 December may I thank all those who have sent cards and donations; they are much appreciated.

OUR NEW PARISH CHURCH IN STALHAM

Our new parish church in Stalham is completed and we cannot thank our builders Alan, Tony and Tony Junior enough for the beautiful job they have done and also, the work of David for the electrics and putting into place 11 chandeliers! As I write, we are getting things ready to celebrate our first Liturgy in the new church on Christmas Eve December 24th. God willing Metropolitan Silouan will come during the New Year to Consecrate our new church we have a stone altar. (This is being investigated at the moment).

METROPOLTAN SILOUAN'S VISIT OF SATURDAY 27/11/2021

We were delighted to receive Metropolitan Silouan for the ordination of Subdeacon David as Deacon, (it is a great help to have a Deacon assisting at the Liturgy) and Reader William was ordained Subdeacon in place of David. Joe was ordained Reader in place of Will. Every prayer and blessing to them in their ministry.

ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." (Matthew 5:6) Strictly speaking, this beatitude of the Lord blesses, not the righteous, but the seekers of righteousness. It is those who are hungry and thirsty for what is just and good who receive the blessings of God who also says:

Do not be anxious, saying "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we wear?" For the heathen seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first His kingdom and its righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well. (Matthew 6:31-33)

Man's life consists in seeking, in hungering and in thirsting for righteousness. This is the spiritual teaching of the scriptures and the saints. The satisfaction and rest comes from God, but is a satisfaction and rest which itself always and for eternity becomes the basis of a new hunger and thirst. This is not in contradiction to Christ's teaching that **"he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst."** (John 6:35) It is rather the affirmation that the "inquiet" of man's heart, as Saint Augustine (5th c.) has said, is created "toward God," and that the "rest" which is found in Him is itself, as Saint Maximus (7th c.) has said, an "ever-dynamic rest," always growing and developing in ever greater union with the uncontainable and inexhaustible richness and fulness of divine being and life.

Saint Gregory of Nyssa (4th c.) said it this way:

. . . the human mind . . . constantly flowing and dispersing to whatever pleases the senses . . . will never have any notable force in its progress towards the True Good. (i.e. God)

For it is impossible for our human nature ever to stop moving; it has been made of its Creator ever to keep changing. Hence when we prevent it from

using its energy on trifles, and keep it on all sides from doing what it should not, it must necessarily move in a straight path towards truth. (On Virginity)

Thus, in a certain sense, it (our humanity) is constantly being created, ever changing for the better in its growth in perfection; along these lines no limit can be envisaged, nor can its progressive growth in perfection be limited by any term. In this way, in its state of perfection no matter how great and perfect it may be, it is merely the beginning of a greater and superior stage. (Commentary on the Song of Songs)

This spiritual teaching means that the truly spiritual person will not merely move from unrighteousness to righteousness, but will move for all eternity in God to ever-greater righteousness and perfection. The hunger and thirst in this way is an essential characteristic of the living soul of the righteous person; it is the essential dynamic of spiritual life. The Apostle Paul has given this very doctrine.

. . . But one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind, and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature be thus minded . . . (Philippians 3:13-16)

And we all, with unveiled faces, reflecting the glory of the Lord, are being changed into His likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

There is no satisfaction for man's spirit but God. It is the satisfaction of perpetual growth in union with God. To hunger and thirst for God, "for the living God" (Psalm 42:2) is spiritual life. To be filled and contented with anything else is death for the soul.

Mercy

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (Matthew 5:7) To be merciful is to be like God, for "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." (Psalm 103:8)

The Lord passed before Moses and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin . . ." (Exodus 34:6-7)

This also is the teaching of Christ in His Sermon on the Mount:

. . . love your enemies and do good and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for He is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. (Luke 6:35-36)

To be merciful does not mean to justify falsehood and sin. It does not mean to be tolerant of foolishness and evil. It does not mean to overlook injustice and iniquity. God is not this way, and does not do this.

To be merciful means to have compassion on evildoers and to sympathize with those who are caught in the bonds of sin. It means to forego every self-righteousness and every self-justification in comparison with others. It means to refuse to condemn those who do wrong, but to forgive those who harm and destroy, both themselves and others. It is to say with utter seriousness, **"forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."** (Matthew 6:12)

According to Jesus, the spiritual person will be merciful because he himself is in need of mercy. The spiritual person will be merciful because he knows that he himself is a sinful man in need of God's mercy and help. There is no one without sin, no one who can claim righteousness before God. If one claims to have no sin,

says Saint John, he is a liar, and makes God a liar as well. (1 John 1:10, 2:4) The spiritual person, because he is in union with God, acknowledges his sin and his need for forgiveness from God and from men. He cannot condemn others for he knows, but for the grace of Christ, that he himself stands unworthy and condemned.

If Thou O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayst be feared. (Psalm 130:3-4)

The merciful person is merciful toward himself as well as others. This does not mean that he makes light of his sins and takes God's forgiveness for granted. It means rather that he does not plague himself with neurotic guilt and remorse, surrendering to sinful scruples which are the death of the soul. It means that he trusts in the loving-kindness of God and knows, as Saint Paul has said, that no works of his own will ever deliver him from the need of God's mercy and love.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Thus it is the continual reception of the mercy of God and nothing else, which empowers the soul to good works. And it is only the merciful who attain mercy from God. For all eternity man will be at the disposal of God's mercy. At whatever stage of development he will reach, man's prayer will always remain the central prayer of the Church: Lord have mercy on me a sinner! The holier the person, the greater is his sense of sinful unworthiness, the stronger is his dependence on the mercy of God, and the more he is merciful to the weaknesses of others.

Isaac's Baptism and Chrismation

On Sunday November 28th Isaac was Baptised and Chrismated before the Liturgy; it was a very joyful occasion and we were very pleased to welcome several of his friends and family. He is a chef at a "Local" hotel and is a great help with practical jobs at the church.

ADDITIONAL WELCOMES

We have been pleased to welcome Russel at St Fursey's; he is a local businessman and we look forward to blessing him as a Catechumen during the New Year and receiving him into the church by Chrismation.

We also welcome Penelope who has come to us from the Russian Church in Norwich; we pray that she will find a good spiritual home with us.

We also welcome John and Jonathan who have come to us from a "reformed" group in Norwich and God willing we will be able to receive them into the church in due course.

PRAISE GOD FOR HIS MANY BLESSINGS TO US

**EVERY BLESSING TO OUR READERS FOR THE NEW YEAR AND MAY
THE PROBLEM OF THE COVID VIRUS COME TO AN END!**

God Bless you all

Father Stephen

Subject:

Draft JANUARY ST FURSEYS NEWSLETTER (ANTI -SLAVERY)

MODERN DAY SLAVERY

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SPOT THE SIGNS THAT SOMEONE IS IN SLAVERY

DO NOT confront them or cause a scene as this can be very dangerous both for yourself and very much harm for them.

Inform the relevant authorities or organisations

CALL MODERN SLAVERY HELPLINE ON 08000 121 700

CONTACT The GANGMASTERS AND LABOUR ABUSE AUTHORITY to report if your concerns about mistreatment of workers on 0800 432. 0804

OR if worried dial 999

For a list of signs that can be helpful and if you have a computer etc look up www.antislavery.org for spot the signs and info on slavery.

CO-ORDINATOR

Pat Hinkins Member of Rotary Action Group Against Slavery (Rotary e Club of Innovation)

ST FURSEYS ORTHODOX COMMUNITY (Action Against Child Slavery)

Supporters of RAGAS www.ragasonline.com

Modern Day Slavery Helpline 08000 121 700

THE HOLY THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD

Vespers

On Lord, I have cried, *eight stichera are sung:*

TONE TWO

(by John the Monk)

The Forerunner beheld our Enlightenment, who has brought light to all mankind, draw near for baptism: and he rejoiced in soul while his hand trembled. And he shewed Him to the people, saying: 'Behold, the Redeemer of Israel, who sets us free from corruption.' O sinless Christ our God, glory to Thee (*twice*).

The hosts of angels were filled with fear, as they saw our Deliverer baptized by a servant and receiving witness through the coming of the Spirit. And the Father's voice was heard from on high: 'He upon whom the Forerunner lays his hand, the same is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.'¹ O Christ our God, glory to Thee (*twice*).

The streams of the Jordan received Thee who art the fountain, and the Comforter descended in the form of a dove. He who bowed the heavens,² bowed His head, and the clay cried aloud to Him that formed him: 'Why dost Thou command of me what lies beyond my power? For I have need to be baptized of Thee.'³ O sinless Christ our God, glory to Thee (*twice*).

From a sermon by Saint Proclus of Constantinople, bishop

[Sermon 7 in sancta Theophania, 1-3: PG 65, 758-759]

THE WATERS ARE MADE HOLY

Christ appeared in the world; and, bringing beauty out of disarray, gave it luster and joy. He bore the world's sin and crushed the world's enemy. He sanctified the fountains of waters and enlightened the minds of men. Into the fabric of miracles he interwove ever greater miracles.

For on this day land and sea share between them the grace of the Savior, and the whole world is filled with joy. Today's feast of the Epiphany manifests even more wonders than the feast of Christmas.

On the feast of the Savior's birth, the earth rejoiced because it bore the Lord in a manger; but on today's feast of the Epiphany it is the sea that is glad and leaps for joy; the sea is glad because it receives the blessing of holiness in the river Jordan.

At Christmas we saw a weak baby, giving proof of our weakness. In today's feast, we see a perfect man, hinting at the perfect Son who proceeds from the all-perfect Father. At Christmas the King puts on the royal robe of his body; at Epiphany the very source enfolds and, as it were, clothes the river.

Come then and see new and astounding miracles: the Sun of righteousness washing in the Jordan, fire immersed in water, God sanctified by the ministry of man.

Today every creature shouts in resounding song: *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord*. Blessed is he who comes in every age, for this is not his first coming.

And who is he? Tell us more clearly, I beg you, blessed David: *The Lord is God and has shone upon us*. David is not alone in prophesying this; the apostle Paul adds his own witness, saying: *The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation for all men, and instructing us*. Not for some men, but for all. To Jews and Greeks alike God bestows salvation through baptism, offering baptism as a common grace for all.

Come, consider this new and wonderful deluge, greater and more important than the flood of Noah's day. Then the water of the flood destroyed the human race, but now the water of baptism has recalled the dead to life by the power of the one who was baptized. In the days of the flood the dove with an olive branch in its beak foreshadowed the fragrance of the good odor of Christ the Lord; now the Holy Spirit, coming in the likeness of a dove, reveals the Lord of mercy.

SELECTED LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

PETER OF CANTERBURY (d. 607), abbot. First abbot of St. Augustine's (then called SS. Peter and Paul), Peter was probably the monk of that name who was sent by *Augustine to give news of the first Anglo-Saxon conversions to *Gregory the Great and who brought back to England Gregory's replies to Augustine's questions. Peter was sent later on a mission to Gaul, but was drowned in the English Channel in the bay of Ambleteuse (Amfleet). The local inhabitants, according to Bede, buried him in an 'unworthy place' but, as the result of a prodigy of mysterious light appearing over his grave at night, translated his relics to a church in Boulogne with suitable honour. At St. Augustine's, Canterbury, his feast was kept on 30 December; other authorities give 6 January.

Bede, *H.E.*, I, 27, 33; *AA.SS. Ian. I* (1643), 334.

SIGEBERT (1) (d. 635), king of East Anglia and martyr. Virtually all we know of him comes from *Bede. During the reign of his predecessor Redwald (who had attempted to combine the worship of Christ with that of the Germanic gods in the same church), Sigebert went into exile in Frankia and became a Christian. He returned as king in 630, a very learned man (*doctissimus*), and with the help of Honorius, archbishop of Canterbury, introduced *Felix as bishop of East Anglia, based at Dunwich (or possibly Felixstowe) and enabled with royal endowment *Furseus to establish his monastery at Burgh Castle. Felix under royal patronage also set up schools in East Anglia.

Sigebert did not reign for long: he resigned in favour of Ecgric and became a monk, possibly at Burgh Castle. Meanwhile Penda, king of Mercia, the scourge of other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, made war on East Anglia. Sigebert's countrymen, fearful of the morale of the troops in battle, took him against his will out of his monastery and brought him to the army, hoping that the presence of one who had been a brave and famous general would allay their fears. He, however, refused to carry a weapon but only a staff. He was killed with Ecgric in the total defeat which followed. Sigebert, like some other Anglo-Saxon kings who died in battle, was venerated as a martyr. East Anglian liturgical books were destroyed in the Danish invasions and his feast has been variously assigned to 16 January and 27 September.

FURSEY (Fursa) (d. 650), Irish abbot or bishop. He became a monk in Ireland but left it as a 'pilgrim for Christ', coming to East Anglia c.630. King *Sigebert received him and his companions, especially *Foillan, kindly and gave them the old fortress of Cnobheresburg (Burgh Castle, Suffolk) with adjacent lands for a monastery. On the death of Sigebert in battle against Penda, king of Mercia, Fursey left for France. Again he was helped by a ruler, Erchinoald, mayor of Neustria, who gave him land for another monastery, which he built at Lagny-sur-Marne. He died at Mezerolles (Somme); his body was buried at Péronne (Picardy), afterwards called *Perrona Scultorum*, in another Irish monastery.

In 654 his relics were translated to a shrine 'in the shape of a little house', supposedly made by *Eloi. Another translation took place in 1056. Most of the relics remained until the French Revolution; a head reliquary survived even the Prussian bombardment of 1870. French, Irish, and English calendars (especially Canterbury, which claimed head-relics) attest his cult.

This was assisted by Bede's account of his vision of the after-life, one of the earliest of its kind. During a state of trance he saw visions of heaven and hell, angels and devils; on recovering he described his experiences and warned against future and detailed punishments for sins. Feast: 16 January.

AA.SS. Ian. II (1643), 35-55; Bede, *H.E.*, iii, 19; *Vita Prima S. Fursei* in *M.G.H., Scriptores rerum iberov.*, iv, 423-49; W. Stokes, 'Betha Fursa', *Revue Celtique*, xxv (1904), 385-404; J. Hennig, 'The Irish Background of St. Fursey', *I.E.R.* (1952), 18-28.

PEGA (d. c.719), virgin, sister of *Guthlac. She lived as an anchoress at Peakirk (i.e. 'Pega's church') in Northamptonshire, not far from Guthlac's hermitage at Crowland. When he realized that his end was near (714), he invited her to his funeral. For this she sailed down the Welland, curing a blind man from Wisbech on the way. She inherited Guthlac's psalter and scourge, both of which, it was claimed, she later gave to Crowland. She went on pilgrimage to Rome and died there c.719. Ordericus Vitalis claimed that her relics survived in an unnamed Roman church in his day, and that miracles took place there. Feast: 8 January.