

## SELECTED LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

**BOSA**, bishop of York 678-86 and 691-705. This monk of Whitby was consecrated by \*Theodore bishop of Deira (the southern half of Northumbria, roughly the equivalent of modern Yorkshire) when \*Wilfrid had been expelled from Northumbria following his quarrels with King Egfrith. Bosa ruled his diocese until his death except for the years of Wilfrid's restoration. \*Bede praised his 'singular merit and holiness'; one of his disciples was \*Acca, later the follower and successor of Wilfrid at Hexham. Feast: 9 March.

Bede, H.E., iv. 12; v. 19-20.

**EOSTERWINE** (650-86), abbot of Wearmouth. Of noble birth, he joined the service of Egfrith, king of Northumbria, and fought in his army. At the age of twenty-four he became a monk at Wearmouth, the monastery just founded by his cousin \*Benedict Biscop. Here he followed all the regular observance, taking his full share in the menial tasks. He milked the cows and the sheep, he worked in bakehouse, garden, and kitchen, he shared in the harvesting and winnowing. In 679 he was ordained priest and in 682 he was appointed abbot by Biscop to rule during his own absence. As abbot, he was kind and accessible to all, just as he had been before his promotion. He had the same food and sleeping accommodation as the rest of his community and joined in the manual work. He died at the early age of thirty-six, on 6 March, while the community were at Matins. He was buried by the church-door, but his relics, with those of Benedict Biscop and \*Sigfrid, were translated by \*Ceolfrith to a shrine close to the high altar. His cult was mainly local but his name also occurs in the OE martyrology from Mercia. Feast: 7 March.

C. Plummer (ed.), *Baedae Opera Historica* (1956), I. 364-404; II. 355-77; J. F. Webb and D. H. Farmer, *The Age of Bede* (1983).

**ALKELDA** (1) (Athilda) (d. c.800). She was patron of the church of Middleham (Yorkshire), also of Giggleswick (West Riding). Edward IV's patent survives which enabled his brother Richard (subsequently Richard III) to set up the college of Middleham in honour of Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and St. Alkeld. Local tradition claimed that she was a Saxon princess, (presumably a nun), who was strangled to death by Viking women and buried in the church at Middleham. Feast: 28 (27) March.

R. Challoner, *Memorials of Ancient British Piety* (1761), v. Stranion, p. 135.

**WITHBURGA** (1) (Witburh) (d. c.743), virgin. The youngest daughter of Anna, king of East Anglia and a sister of \*Etheldreda, she lived as a solitary at Holkham (Norfolk), and later at East Dereham, where she is reputed to have founded a community and to have died before the buildings were completed. She was buried in the churchyard, but after fifty years her body was exhumed, found incorrupt and enshrined in the church.

In 974 Brithnóth, abbot of Ely, stole the body under the pretext that she would have wanted to be buried near her sisters. A band of his monks accompanied by soldiers went secretly by night to Dereham, having obtained the approval of King Edgar and \*Ethelwold. They removed the body to their wagons, drove twenty miles to the river Brandun, on which they continued their journey by boat to the dismay of the men of Dereham, who had pursued them by land and could only watch helplessly while their treasure slipped away. The body was reburied at Ely where, however, the incorruption story was never exploited, as it might have detracted from Etheldreda's glory. In 1102 Withburga's relics were moved into the new part of the church; in 1106 they were joined by the bones of the other three Ely saints (Etheldreda, \*Sexburga, and \*Ermeigild). The church at Holkham is dedicated to her; water in Withburga's well at Dereham churchyard was reputed to have sprung up when her body was first exhumed. Withburga's emblem in art, as on six Norfolk screens, is a tame doe, which William of Malmesbury described as her companion in solitude who provided her with milk. Feast: 17 March; translation 8 July.

**ALFWOLD** (d. 1058), monk of Winchester and bishop of Sherborne. William of Malmesbury recorded the following details, derived from a priest of his diocese who knew him. He was noted for his habitual abstinence at a time when self-indulgence was said to be general; he used at table common wooden platters and bowls. He was specially devoted to \*Swifhun, whose image he set up in the church at Sherborne, and to \*Cuthbert, whose shrine he used to visit and whose antiphon he would often repeat. He quarrelled at least once with Godwin earl of Wessex, who was smitten with sudden illness and recovered only at the saint's pardon. After his death, the sees of Sherborne and Ramsbury, both poorly endowed, were reunited and in 1070 became the see of Salisbury. Feast: 25 March.

## ST FURSEY'S ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY & PARISH CHURCH

YARMOUTH ROAD, STALHAM NR12 9RR

Tel: 01692 580552

COMMUNITY PROGRAMME & NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2023



**T**ODAY is the fountainhead of our salvation and the manifestation of the mystery which was from eternity. The Son of God becometh the Virgin's Son, and Gabriel proclaimeth the good tidings of grace; for this cause, we also cry to the Mother of God with him: Rejoice, thou who art full of grace; the Lord is with thee.

BRITISH ORTHODOX SAINTS  
 COMMEMORATED IN  
 MARCH.

( See selected lives of Saints on another page.)

- 01 Swithbert the Elder, Bishop of the Frisians
- 02 Chad, Bishop of Lichfield
- Cynibil, Confessor
- 04 Owen of Lichfield, Hermit
- 06 Baldred and Billfrith, Hermits
- Cyneburgh and Cyneswith, Abbesses of Castor and Tibba,  
     Anchoress
- 07 Eosterwine, Abbot of Wearmouth
- 08 Felix, Bishop of Dunwich
- 09 Bosa, Bishop of York
- 12 Alphege the Elder, Bishop of Winchester
- Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome and Apostle of the English
- 13 Gerald of Mayo, Abbot
- 16 Aristobulus the Holy Apostle, Bishop of Britain
- 17 Withburgh of Dereham, Virgin
- 18 Edward the Martyr, King of England
- Egbert of Ripon, Confessor
- 19 Alcmund, Martyr
- 20 Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne and Wonderworker of Britain
- Herbert of Derwentwater, Hermit
- 23 Ethilwald of Farne, Hermit
- 24 Hildelith, Abbess of Barking
- 25 Alfwold, Bishop of Sherborne
- 27 Alkeld, Martyr in Yorkshire
- 30 Osburgh, Abbess of Coventry

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.



SERVICES IN MARCH 2023

Mon Feb 27 <sup>th</sup>	First Day of Great Lent St Fursey Chapel 3 <sup>rd</sup> Hour 9am + Reading from the Fathers. 6 <sup>th</sup> Hour 12 Noon St Fursey Chapel. Vespers 4pm. <b>Compline Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete          7pm.</b>
Tues Feb 28 <sup>th</sup>	First Tuesday of Great Lent Parish Church 3 <sup>rd</sup> Hour 9am Reading from the Fathers. <b>Compline &amp; Great Canon of St Andrew of          Crete 7pm.</b>
Wed March 1 <sup>st</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Hour 9am + Reading (St David of Wales). 6 <sup>th</sup> Hour 12 Noon <b>Vespers.</b> <b>Compline &amp; Great Canon of St Andrew of          Crete 7pm.</b>
Thurs March 2 <sup>nd</sup>	First Thursday of Great Lent Parish Church. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Hour 9am + Reading from the Fathers. <b>Compline &amp; Great Canon of St Andrew of          Crete 7pm.</b>
Fri March 3 <sup>rd</sup>	First Friday of Great Lent. (Chapel). 3 <sup>rd</sup> Hour 9am + Reading. St Non mother of David. <b>Compline + First Salutations/Akathist 7pm</b>
Sat March 4 <sup>th</sup>	First Saturday of Great Lent. Commemoration of St Theodore the Recruit. <b>Vespers 4pm.</b>
Sun March 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>First Sunday of Great Lent.</b> <b>Sunday of Orthodoxy</b> <b>Divine Liturgy of St Basil 9:30</b> <b>(Shortened Vespers 12 Noon Approx).</b>
Wed March 8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts</b> <b>(Chapel 7pm).</b>
Sat March 11 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday of All Souls <b>Vespers 4pm.</b>
Sun March 12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Second Sunday of Great Lent.</b> <b>St Gregory Palamas.</b> <b>Divine Liturgy of St Basil 9:30am.</b>

Wed March 15 <sup>th</sup>	Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts. 7pm (Chapel).
Sat March 18 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday of All Souls Vespers 4pm St Edward The Martyr. 978.
Sun March 19 <sup>th</sup>	Third Sunday of Great Lent. Venerations of the Cross Divine Liturgy of St Basil 9:30am.
Fri March 24 <sup>th</sup>	Vesperal Divine Liturgy for the Annunciation 7pm.
Sat March 25 <sup>th</sup>	Vespers 4pm.
Sun March 26 <sup>th</sup>	Fourth Sunday of Great Lent St John Climacus Divine Liturgy of St Basil 9:30am.
Wed March 29 <sup>th</sup>	Compline + Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete 7pm (Chapel).
Fri March 31 <sup>st</sup>	Akathist Hymn 7pm.

**NB: All the above services will be in the Parish Church unless otherwise stated.**

**Confessions: At Any Time: By Appointment**

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### Daily Services in St Fursey's Chapel (Neville Road) Sutton

There continue to be 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour 9am with a Reading from the Fathers. Vespers 4pm. During Great Lent the weekday services have a more penitential character with the use of the Prayer of St Ephraim the Syrian below for use at home.

### Prayer of St Ephraim the Syrian

O LORD AND MASTER OF MY LIFE  
GRANT NOT TO ME A SPIRIT OF LAZINESS, OF DESPONDENCY,  
OF LUST OF POWER OR OF GOSSIPING. (prostration)  
BUT GRANT TO ME, THY SERVANT, THE SPIRIT OF PURITY,  
OF HUMILITY, OF PATIENCE AND OF LOVE. (prostration)  
YEA O LORD AND KING, GRANT THAT I MAY SEE MY OWN  
ERRORS AND TRANSGRESSIONS AND NOT JUDGE MY BROTHERS  
AND SISTERS, FOR BLESSED ART THOU UNTO THE AGES OF AGES,  
AMEN. (prostration)  
O GOD CLEANSE ME A SINNER (12 times with the sign of the cross and a bow  
each time then the whole prayer is repeated again with a final prostration)  
Orthodox Christians use this prayer at home in their icon corner on weekdays in Lent  
but it can be used to great benefit by all Christians.

### Community News & Notices

### Our Observance of Great Lent

During Great Lent Orthodox Christians try to follow a vegan diet (*no animal products like meat, fish, milk, eggs, or cheese*) but this can be difficult in our missionary situation, especially for a single Orthodox in a non-Orthodox family or at work. Do the best you can prayerfully but avoid red meat. The principle behind the Fast is to uphold the fact that we are in charge of our bodies rather than our bodies in charge of us. Fasting assists our prayer and goes back to the practice of Our Lord Himself, so we follow his example for the benefit of our souls.

### Our Catechumens

Our Catechumens Jane and William have begun their teaching sessions. Jane on a Monday afternoon and William at a distance due to living in Gravesend but spends a lot of time on his boat in Sutton Staithe in the summer. They hope to be Chrismated at Pascha (*Easter*).

### BIBLE STUDY

Please note that our mid-week Lenten Services have replaced the Bible Study which will be resumed on a Thursday night after Pascha (*Easter*).

**Spirituality** in the Orthodox Church means the everyday activity of life in communion with God. The term **spirituality** refers not merely to the activity of man's spirit alone, his mind, heart and soul, but it refers as well to the whole of man's life as inspired and guided by the Spirit of God. Every act of a Christian must be a spiritual act. Every thought must be spiritual, every word, every deed, every activity of the body, every action of the person. This means that all that a person thinks, says and does must be inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit so that the will of God the Father might be accomplished as revealed and taught by Jesus Christ the Son of God.

**... whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.**  
(1 Corinthians 10:31)

Doing all things to the glory of God is the meaning and substance of life for a human being. This "doing" is what Christian **spirituality** is about.



Christian spirituality is centered in God; in fact, its very goal is communion or union with God, which is attainable through the accomplishment of His will. To be what God wants us to be and to do what God wants us to do is the sole meaning of our human existence. The fulfillment of the prayer "Thy will be done" is the heart and soul of all spiritual effort and activity.

In the Old Testament law, it is written:

**I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.** (Leviticus 11:44)

In the New Testament, the first letter of Saint Peter refers to this fundamental command of God.

**... as He who called you is holy, be holy yourself in all your conduct; since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."** (1 Peter 1:16)

That human beings should be holy by sharing in the happiness of God Himself is the meaning of union with God. All are "called to be saints" (Romans 1:7) by becoming "partakers of the nature of God." (2 Peter 1:4) This is what Jesus meant when He said in the Sermon on the Mount, "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)

The teaching that man must be holy and perfect like God Himself through the accomplishment of the will of God is the central teaching of the Orthodox Christian faith. This teaching has been stated in many different ways in the Orthodox spiritual tradition. Saint Maximus the Confessor (7th c.) said it this way: "Man is called to become by divine grace all that God Himself is by nature." This means very simply that God wills and helps His creatures to be like He is, and that is the purpose of their being and life. As God is holy, man must be holy. As God is perfect, man must be perfect, pure, merciful, patient, kind, gentle, free, self-determining, ever-existing and always, for eternity, the absolute superabundant realization of everything good in inexhaustible fulness and richness . . . so man must be this way as well, ever growing and developing in divine perfection and virtue for all eternity by the will and power of God Himself. The "perfection" of man is his growth in the unending perfection of God.

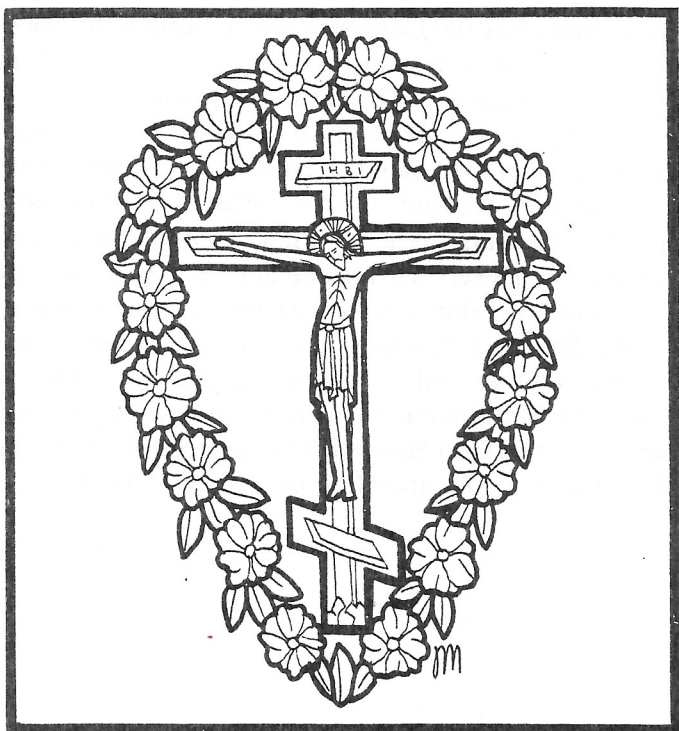
The season of **Great Lent** is the time of preparation for the feast of the Resurrection of Christ. It is the living symbol of man's entire life which is to be fulfilled in his own resurrection from the dead with Christ. It is a time of renewed devotion: of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. It is a time of repentance, a real renewal of our minds, hearts and deeds in conformity with Christ and his teachings. It is the time, most of all, of our return to the great commandments of loving God and our neighbors.

In the Orthodox Church, Great Lent is not a season of morbidity and gloominess. On the contrary, it is a time of joyfulness and purification. We are called to "anoint our faces" and to "cleanse our bodies as we cleanse our souls." The very first hymns of the very first service of Great Lent set the proper tone of the season:

Let us begin the lenten time with delight . . . let us fast from passions as we fast from food, taking pleasure in the good words of the Spirit, that we may be granted to see the holy passion of Christ our God and his holy Pascha, spiritually rejoicing.

Thy grace has arisen upon us, O Lord, the illumination of our souls has shown forth; behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the time of repentance. (Vesper Hymns)

It is our repentance that God desires, not our remorse. We sorrow for our sins, but we do so in the joy of God's mercy. We mortify our flesh, but we do so in the joy of our resurrection into life everlasting. We make ready for the resurrection during Great Lent, both Christ's Resurrection and our own.



Each of the Sundays of Great Lent has its own special theme. The first Sunday is called the **Feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy**. It is a historical feast commemorating the return of the icons to the churches in the year 843 after the heresy of iconoclasm was overcome. The spiritual theme of the day is first of all the victory of the True Faith: "This is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith." (I John 5:4) Secondly, the icons of the saints bear witness that man, "created in the image and likeness of God" (Genesis 1:26), becomes holy and godlike through the purification of himself as God's living image.

The Second Sunday of Lent is the commemoration of **St. Gregory Palamas**. It was St. Gregory (d. 1359) who bore living witness that men can become divine through the grace of God in the Holy Spirit; and that even in this life, by prayer and fasting, human beings can become participants of the uncreated light of God's divine glory.

The Third Sunday of Lent is that of the **Veneration of the Cross**. The cross stands in the midst of the church in the middle of the lenten season not merely to remind men of Christ's redemption and to keep before them the goal of their efforts, but also to be venerated as that reality by which man must live to be saved. "He who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me." (Matthew 10:38) For in the Cross of Christ Crucified lies both "the power of God and the wisdom of God" for those being saved. (I Corinthians 1:24)

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is dedicated to **St. John of the Ladder (Climacus)**, the author of the work, **The Ladder of Divine Ascent**. The abbot of St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai (6th century) stands as a witness to the violent effort needed for entrance into God's Kingdom. (Matthew 10:12) The spiritual struggle of the Christian life is a real one, "not against flesh and blood, but against....the rulers of the present darkness....the hosts of wickedness in heavenly places . . ." (Ephesians 6:12) Saint John encourages the faithful in their efforts for, according to the Lord, only "he who endures to the end will be saved." (Matthew 24:13)

The Fifth Sunday recalls the memory of **Saint Mary of Egypt**, the repentant harlot. Mary tells us, first of all, that no amount of sin and wickedness can keep a person from God if he truly repents. Christ himself has come "to call sinners to repentance" and to save them from their sins. (Luke 5:32) In addition, Saint Mary tells us that it is never too late in life—or in lent—to repent. Christ will gladly receive all who come to him even at the eleventh hour of their lives. But their coming must be in serious and sincere repentance.

## THE CONSECRATION OF THE PARISH CHURCH

A the time of writing (Feb 15<sup>th</sup>) we look forward to Metropolitan Silouan coming to consecrate the Parish Church. The Icon Screen is almost finished thanks to the help of John and Andrew. Various other jobs have been done outside the church such as the step at the west door for easier access into the church for processions. The new altar has a stone top with a recess for the reliquary plus the names of living Orthodox of the parish and members who have fallen asleep in the Lord. The altar is symbolic of Our Lord it is dressed as for Our Lord's Body ready for burial.

## ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES IN THE DEANERY & ARCHDIOCESE

The Holy Synod of Antioch appointed Metropolitan Silouan as our Archbishop. This structure has existed alongside that of the Deanery due to some legal complications which have now been resolved and the Deanery has come to an end and with the office of the Dean. Metropolitan Silouan has appointed Fr Philip our former parish priest as adviser in spiritual matters and Fr Paulinus our former assistant priest as adviser in legal and administrative matters. Our Fr Michael from the Cathedral as adviser in matters relating to the Cathedral We pray for them in the new structure and thank Fr Gregory Hallam for his labours as Dean

## LOCAL EVANGELISM

We hope to resume our labours in Stalham with regular coffee mornings and open days.

PLEASE NOTE: First Friday in June, September, December for coffee mornings and Open Days with sale of Icons, books, prayer leaflets, cake stall and raffle etc – Talks of Orthodoxy.

Every Blessing to our Readers

Father Stephen

From a letter by Saint Leo the Great, pope

(Epist. 28 ad Flavianum, 3-4: PL 54, 763-767)

## THE MYSTERY OF MAN'S RECONCILIATION WITH GOD

Lowliness is assured by majesty, weakness by power, mortality by eternity. To pay the debt of our sinful state, a nature that is incapable of suffering was joined to one that could suffer. Thus, in keeping with the healing that we needed, one and the same mediator between God and men, the man Jesus-Christ, was able to die in one nature, and unable to die in the other.

He who is true God was therefore born in the complete and perfect nature of a true man, whole in his own nature, whole in ours. By our nature we mean what the Creator had fashioned in us from the beginning, and took to himself in order to restore it.

For in the Savior there was no trace of what the deceiver introduced and man, being misled, allowed to enter. It does not follow that because he submitted to sharing in our human weakness he therefore shared in our sins.

He took the nature of a servant without stain of sin, enlarging our humanity without diminishing his divinity. He emptied himself; though invisible he made himself visible, though Creator and Lord of all things he chose to be one of us mortal men. Yet this was the condescension of compassion, not the loss of omnipotence. So he who in the nature of God had created man, became in the nature of a servant, man himself.

Thus the Son of God enters this lowly world. He comes down from the throne of heaven, yet does not separate himself from the Father's glory. He is born in a new condition, by a new birth.

He was born in a new condition, for, invisible in his own nature, he became visible in ours. Beyond our grasp, he chose to come within our grasp. Existing before time began, he began to exist at a moment in time. Lord of the universe, he hid his infinite glory and took the nature of a servant. Incapable of suffering as God, he did not refuse to be a man, capable of suffering. Immortal, he chose to be subject to the laws of death.

He who is true God is also true man. There is no falsehood in this unity as long as the lowliness of man and the preeminence of God coexist in mutual relationship.

As God does not change by his condescension, so man is not swallowed up by being exalted. Each nature exercises its own activity, in communion with the other. The Word does what is proper to the Word, the flesh fulfills what is proper to the flesh.

One nature is resplendent with miracles, the other falls victim to injuries. As the Word does not lose equality with the Father's glory, so the flesh does not leave behind the nature of our race.