

## 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., lv. 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* (1771), v: Staninn, 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 Brithnoth, 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 Brändun, 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 \*Ermegild). 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 \*Swthun, 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.



Pantiochian Orthodox

St Fursey's Antiochian Orthodox

Christian Parish Church Stalham

Archdiocese Of the British Isles And Ireland

Parish Priest Fr Stephen Weston

Archbishop: His Eminence

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Metropolitan Silouan Oner

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## COMMUNITY PROGRAMME & NEWSLETTER

March 2025



**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.

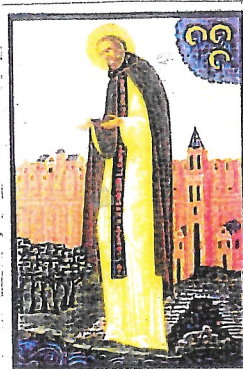
( See selected lives of Saints on another page.)

- 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 Furse.

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 2025

(In the Parish Church unless otherwise stated)

Sat March 1 <sup>st</sup>	Saturday of Cheesefare (Meat Fast) Commemoration of all Monks & Nuns. St David of Wales 6 <sup>th</sup> C. <b>VESPERS 4pm.</b>
Sun March 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Sunday of Cheesefare (Meat Fast) Expulsion of Adam from Paradise Forgiveness Sunday Divine Liturgy 9:30am. (Vespers of Forgiveness 12 Noon) (No more Dairy products) Vegan Fast. <b>LENT BEGINS</b>
Wed March 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Compline and                  Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete                  7PM (Parish Church)</b>
Sat March 8 <sup>th</sup>	First Saturday of Great Lent St Felix of Burgundy 1 <sup>st</sup> Bishop of East Anglia <b>VESPERS 4PM.</b>
Sun March 9 <sup>th</sup>	First Sunday of Great Lent Sunday of Orthodoxy Divine Liturgy of St Basil 9:30AM.
Wed March 12 <sup>th</sup>	Akathist Hymn 1 <sup>st</sup> Salutation 7PM.
Sat March 15 <sup>th</sup>	Second Saturday of Great Lent Saturday of Souls Saint Aristobulus of Britain <b>VESPERS 4PM.</b>
Sun March 16 <sup>th</sup>	Second Sunday of Great Lent Saint Gregory of Palamas Divine Liturgy of St Basil 9:30AM.
Wed March 19 <sup>th</sup>	Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts <b>7PM (Parish Church)</b>
Sat March 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Third Saturday of Great Lent Saturday of Souls <b>VESPERS 4PM.</b>
Sun March 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Third Sunday of Great Lent Veneration of the Cross Divine Liturgy of St Basil 9:30AM

Mon March 24 <sup>th</sup>	Forefeast of the Annunciation 4PM.
Tues March 25 <sup>th</sup>	Annunciation to Our Most Holy Lady The Mother of God. Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom 10AM. (Fish, Wine, and Oil allowed).
Sat March 29 <sup>th</sup>	Fourth Saturday of Great Lent. Saturday of Souls VESPERS 4PM.
Sun March 30 <sup>th</sup>	Fourth Sunday of Great Lent St John Climacus of Sinai, Author of "The Ladder." 7C.

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

### In Addition to the Above Services

These are normally 3<sup>rd</sup> hour 9am with a reading from the Fathers, **Monday & Friday** (in the Parish Church on Tuesday and Thursday). Vespers daily at 4pm. Local Readers are very welcome but please ring 01692 581849 to make sure it is still on.

**NB: Fr Stephen has some time off on Wednesdays and Saturdays to spend with Rosalind. Confessions by appointment before or after services.**

### Community News & Notices

During Great Lent the weekday services have a more penitential character with the use of the Prayer of St Ephraim the Syrian. The is found 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, DESPONDENCY, LUST OF POWER OR GOSSIPING (prostration)**

**BUT GRANT TO ME THE SPIRIT OF PURITY HUMILITY PATIENCE AND OF LOVE, (prostration)**

**YEA O LORD AND KING, GRANT THAT I MAY SEE MY OWN ERRORS AND TRANSGRESSIONS AND NOT TO 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 and the whole prayer is repeated 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.*

### 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. If you need any help see Fr Stephen.

### SOME WONDERFUL NEWS

Father Gregory of our Manchester Parish has emailed the clergy of the Archdiocese to tell us that an evangelical congregation in Halifax had been blessed as Catechumens of the Orthodox Church with an additional group of five from Burnley. He will be helped with teaching these catechumens with help from our York Parish. It may be that there are other protestant congregations who desire the fullness of Orthodoxy: "Let us pray for this."

Every Blessing to our Readers | **Father Stephen**

## A Lovely Experience at St. John the Baptist Essex Monastery

I arrived at St. John the Baptist, Essex Monastery Monday morning, 10<sup>th</sup> February and was greeted by Father Andrew. He immediately informed me that it was customary at this particular monastery to refer to all monks as "Father" rather than "Brother" so that the hieromonks could avoid being tempted to pride. After being shown my room I went to the breakfast hall where I had a long conversation with a recently baptised convert who – like me – had also pursued Psychology at University before he found the true faith. We then went to Lunch together, the food was absolutely delicious and abundant – there were no meat dishes but lots of bread, fish, fruit and vegetables. While we ate in silence a monk read the Sayings of the Desert Fathers. While helping clean dishes afterward, I bonded with a young novice who was only baptized 9 months ago, his name was Theodore and I found out he is a friend of my spiritual Godmother, Amy from the Greek Orthodox Church in Yarmouth. On both Monday and Tuesday lots of the visitors participated in common work – on this occasion we had the humble job of cutting roots and weeds along two long ditches on opposite sides of the road so water would not get blocked should it rain. At 5pm we had the Jesus Prayer service, we stood in the main church where 10 different monastics said the Jesus Prayer over 100 times – this service lasted 2 hours. There must have been at least 50 monastics gathered in the church – and about the same number of visitors. I was particularly impressed by the novice Theodore's manifest love for Christ and his prostrations during the service – make sure to pray for his success as a novice. After Dinner we all went to bed edified by another meal-time reading. The next morning we began liturgy at 7am (after that you won't think 9:30am is too early ever again). I don't know why I was surprised to find that not a single word was different compared to the St. Fursey's liturgy – this service also lasted 2 hours. Tuesday's events were more or less the same as Monday, except after common work me and a few young converts – some of whom were catechumens - decided to take a walk to an old Celtic Church down the road which the monastery owns. In that group was an older Roman Catholic man called Martin who was staying with the converts. He told me that while he had little intention of converting to Orthodoxy that he was starstruck by the multitude of young converts to the faith in the past decade. He mentioned that in his experience visiting a Roman Catholic monastery there was not a person below the age of 40 to be found. Despite his age he seemed very open-minded and I think that with few prayers Martin may convert to the true faith yet. Right before bed, the aforementioned group and I were given permission by Fr. Andrew venerate a relic belonging to the St. Siloam the Athonite – the spiritual father of St. Sophrony who co-founded the monastery. The relic was a large piece of forearm bone and didn't smell at all. On my last day, I decided to pick up some reading about Gregory Palamas and his theological writings on the essence-energy distinctions of the uncreated God. I found the book so interesting that I ended up buying it. In conclusion, I would highly recommend St. John the Baptist Essex Monastery to anyone who desires to recharge their spiritual batteries, meet the kind-hearted brothers and sisters in Christ and get sore feet for the glory of God. Just phone up and they'll reserved you a room. And yes, St. John the Baptist is under the ecumenical patriarch and is in communion with Antioch.



NOAH AND THE ARK FRESCO AT THE MONASTERY

## A PILGRIMAGE TO ST WITHBURGA'S HOLY WELL IN DEREHAM ON MONDAY 17<sup>th</sup>.

We invite you to join us for a pilgrimage to Saint Withburga's Holy Well in Dereham on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March, at 2:00 PM, meeting at Saint Nicholas Churchyard. Saint Withburga is the daughter of King Anna of the East Angles and a revered Anglo-Saxon princess and monastic. She founded a monastery in Dereham at the site where the holy well now stands, before her burial there when she reposed in the year 743. Her body was found totally incorrupt at his site over 150 years after she was buried there, a great sign of Divine Grace.

A Priest will be attending to bless us with holy water from the well. This pilgrimage is a time to pray, reflect, and honor Saint Withburga's legacy, and there will be a short service followed by refreshments. All are welcome to attend and bring your prayers and intentions.

May Saint Withburga's holy life of devotion and her prayers for us now strengthen our faith. Remember the English Saints, for they have never forgotten us!

Sub-Deacon William.

## ANNUNCIATION OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

### Small Vespers

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

#### TONE FOUR

Taking pity upon that which He has made and bending down in His tender mercy, the Maker hastens to dwell in the womb of a Maiden, the Child of God. To her the great Archangel came, saying to her: 'Hail, O thou who art full of divine grace, our God is now with thee.<sup>1</sup> Be not afraid of me, the chief commander of the armies of the King. For thou hast found the grace that thy mother Eve once lost: and thou shalt conceive and bring forth Him who is one in essence with the Father.' (*twice*).

Mary said to the Angel: 'Strange is thy speech and strange thine appearance, strange thy sayings and thy disclosures. I am a Maid who knows not wedlock, lead me not astray. Thou sayest that I shall conceive Him who remains uncircumscribed: and how shall my womb contain Him whom the wide spaces of the heavens cannot contain?' 'O Virgin, let the tent of Abraham that once contained God teach thee:<sup>2</sup> for it prefigured thy womb, which now receives the God-head.'

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.