

ST FURSEY'S ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY & PARISH
CHURCH

YARMOUTH ROAD, STALHAM NR12 9RR

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COMMUNITY PROGRAMME & NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2022



TODAY 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 2022

(In the Parish Church unless otherwise stated)

Sat Mar 5 th	Saturday of Cheese Fare (Commemoration of All Monks and Nuns) Vespers 4pm
Sun Mar 6 th	Sunday of Cheese Fare Expulsion of Adam from Paradise Forgiveness Sunday Divine Liturgy 9:30am. Vespers of Forgiveness 11:30am
Mon Mar 7 th (St Fursey's Chapel) →	First week of Lent (Vegan) 3rd Hour 9am + Reading from the Fathers. 6th Hour 12Noon. Reading from Isaiah. Vespers 4pm. Reading from Genesis + Proverbs. Compline 7pm Great Canon of St Andrew (This is our Psalter of Daily Worship) during the first week of Lent, except 3rd Hour on Tuesday + Thursday in the Parish Church and Compline of Thursday.
Sat Mar 12 th	Commemoration of St Theodore the Recruit. Vespers 4pm.
Sun Mar 13 th	First Sunday of Great Lent Sunday of Orthodoxy Divine Liturgy of St Basil 9:30am Vespers 12 Noon.
Thurs Mar 16 th	Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts 7pm.
Sat Mar 19 th	2 nd Saturday of Great Lent Saturday of All Souls Vespers 4pm + Memorial Service.
Sun Mar 20 th	Second Sunday of Lent St Gregory Palamas Sunday of the last Judgement Divine Liturgy of St Basil 9:30am.
Thurs Mar 24 th	Forefeast of the Annunciation Vesperal Divine Liturgy 7pm.

Fri March 25 th	Typika 9am (St Furseys Chapel).
Sat Marc 26 th	Third Saturday of Great Lent Vespers 4pm + Memorial Service.
Sun Marc 27 th	Third Sunday of Great Lent Divine Liturgy of St Basil 9:30am. Veneration of the Cross 11:30am apprx.
Thurs Mar 31 st	Akathist to the Mother of God 7pm.

NB: All the above services will be at the Parish Church unless otherwise stated. Confessions at any time by appointment.

Daily Services at St Furseys Chapel

These continue to be 3rd Hour at 9am with a reading from the Fathers. Vespers 4pm. During Lent the weekday services have a more penitential character with the use of the Prayer of St Ephraim the Syrian printed below for ruse 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 of gossiping (*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 then the whole prayer is repeated with a final prostration*).

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 John, Jonathon and Russell-John have begun their teaching sessions on a Tuesday night in the library at St Fursey's House. Please pray for them. We look forward to their Chrismation at Pascha.

Bible Study

Please note that our mid-week Lent Services have replaced the Bible Study which will be resumed after Pascha (Easter).

Finishing Touches on The Parish Church

Various jobs still need to be done on the Parish Church especially the construction of the Icon Screen but some have already been done, such as varnishing the wooden pillars and the pine panelling on the apse. Thanks are due to Isaac for his help. We will need to plan some working parties for the decorations of the passage, entrance, priests' room, kitchen and toilet. Then there will be the ongoing task of maintaining the grounds. Thanks are due to all those who have helped so far and also for John's gift of a magnificent Welsh dresser for the display of books and Icons in the entrance porch; also, Jonathon for the gift of a table in front of St Fursey's Icon. **Blessings to our Readers | Father Stephen**

MODERN DAY SLAVERY

As I write this months article for Modern Day Slavery Snowdrops are now out in flower . Showing us that spring is not far off.

What Comes to mind for me is SNOWDROPS STARTING ANEW the girls and woman that have been trafficked in to this country from around the world. in BAKHITA HOUSE that have been rescued some from the worst kind of Slavery.

94% have been Sexual Exploitated others Sham marriages and also Domestic Slavery etc.

The woman that have been put on the path with rehab of all kinds are from 44 countries around the world and to date 145 woman have been helped.

The house was opened in 2015 and welcome woman aged 15yrs to 70yrs of all faiths and none.

Since opening 12 Babies have been born to woman staying in BAKHITA HOUSE.

They work so hard to try to get the mothers to bond with their babies..

They have helped to secure prison sentences Totalling 134.8 years for those that have trafficked and exploited woman.

These woman and all the staff and volunteers need your prayers.

So much more can be done to get them to be able to be independant both in Education and work for a future. Which Bakhita House is trying to do.

Karen Antiss Service Manager sent me the 2021 yearly update and thanked all those that have donated etc co-ordinator

Pat Hinkins member of RAGAS (Rotary e Club of Innovation) East Anglia

www.ragasonline.com

ST FURSEYS ORTHODOX COMMUNITY (ACTION AGAINST CHILD SLAVERY)

Modern Day Slavery Helpline 08000-121-700

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.' 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:² for it prefigured thy womb, which now receives the God-head.'

Glory be to the Father . . . Both now . . .

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.

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 (c.550-86), 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. Stanton, 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 Braundun, 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 *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.

Poverty in Spirit

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3) This first beatitude is the fundamental condition for all man’s spiritual progress and growth. Before everything else, if a person wants to live the life of God, he must be poor in spirit.

To be poor in spirit is to recognize clearly that one has nothing which he has not received from God, that one is nothing except by the grace of God. This blessed poverty is called “spiritual” in Saint Matthew’s Gospel because first of all, it is an attitude of mind and heart, a conviction of the soul. It is the condition of man in total emptiness and openness before God, primarily in relation to the things of the Spirit, that is, to understanding and insight, to will and desire.

To be poor in spirit is to be devoid of all pride and trust in the power of one’s own spirit. It is to be freed from all reliance on one’s own ideas, opinions and desires. It is to be liberated from the “vain imaginations” of one’s own heart. (Jeremiah 23:17, Romans 1:21) For as the holy Virgin Mary, the perfect model of poverty in spirit, has sung in her magnificent song:

**God has shown strength with His arm,
He has scattered the proud in the imagination of
their hearts,
He has put down the mighty from their thrones,
And has exalted the humble and meek,
He has filled the hungry with good things,
And the rich He has sent away empty. (Luke 1:51-54)**

Jesus Himself was poor, not only in body but in spirit. Not only was the Lord a poor man, without “**place to lay His head**” (Matthew 8:20) but His physical poverty was the direct result of His perfect poverty of spirit.

Truly, truly I say to you, the Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing . . . I can do nothing on my own authority . . . (John 5:19, 30)

If a person wishes to embark on the spiritual life, he must abandon all things and follow Christ in poverty of spirit. To be poor in spirit is simply to be wholly set free from the sinful lusts of this world.

If anyone loves this world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

The first revelation of the will of God is that His creatures must be poor in spirit. The violation of this spiritual attitude is the original sin and the source of all sorrows.





The Beatitudes

In the Gospel writings, the **beatitudes** introduce the teachings of Jesus and are traditionally considered to contain the most concise summary of the spiritual life of man. In the Orthodox Divine Liturgy, the beatitudes are chanted when the Book of the Gospels is carried in solemn procession to the sanctuary to be proclaimed as the Word of God to the faithful. Thus it is the clear teaching of the Gospel and the Church that one enters into the mysteries of Christ and the Kingdom of God only by way of following the Lord's teachings in the beatitudes.

And He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for your reward is great in heaven . . . ”
(Matthew 5:2-12; Cf. Luke 6:20-26)