

ST FURSEY'S ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY & PARISH
CHURCH

YARMOUTH ROAD, STALHAM NR12 9PG

Tel: 01692 580552

COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

MAY 2021



IN the grave bodily; in Hades with Thy soul,
Although Thou wast God; in Paradise with the
thief; and on the Throne with the Father and
the Spirit wast Thou Who fillest all things,
O Christ the Uncircumscribable.

Daily Services at St Fursey's Chapel

In addition to the services at the Parish Church there will be our normal daily services in St Fursey's Chapel. These are usually 3rd Hour 9am with a reading from the Fathers. (Not Tuesday as we will be at the Parish Church).

Vespers 4pm. Local readers are welcome but please check (Ring 01692-580552).

Compline 9pm after evening event (Teaching Catechumens) occasionally.

COMMUNITY NEWS AND NOTICES

As the COVID restrictions are eased we are able to have more normal services and with the blessing of the Bishop we can have more people in church, social distancing and wearing masks with one person singing. Hopefully, by June the situation will be better. COVID infections in North Norfolk are low but we need to be careful.

MARKET STALL

As we are not able to have a market stall in Norwich, (as the Council demolished the stall), it is hoped that we will be able to have a small stall for the sale of Icons, books and cards outside the Parish Church. We will start on Tuesday May 4th and see how we do.

Building our Parish Church

We had a very sad experience with our previous builder and most of what he erected will have to come down. We are seeking estimates for restarting the building project. I was too optimistic about getting there in March. Hopefully, we will be successful in May. ~The Trustees of the Archdiocese have been very sympathetic and may well be able to support us with grants for the commencement of the building work by a local professional builder but we will need more donations as well.

BLESSINGS TO OUR READERS

Father Stephen

ST. FURSEY'S COMMUNITY Acc Jan - Mar, 2021			
INCOME		EXPENSES	
2020	2021	2020	2021
€ 1108	€ 18801	165 Postage	117
1431 Donations	945	25 Icon prints	-
424 Icon sales	50	110 Chapel	-
<u>2963</u>	<u>19795</u>	514 Books	-
	Less 2235	265 Miscellanous	1008
	<u>€ 17560</u>	450 Fr. Ste	NIL
		300 Bishop	300
		149 Office	60
		750 Loan	750
		<u>2728</u>	<u>2235</u>

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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 3:13-14)

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. 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 content with anything else is death for the soul.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."
(Matthew 5:5) Meekness is an essential possession of the spiritual person. Jesus Himself was meek.

All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son, and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.
(Matthew 11:27-30)

The apostles of Christ taught meekness. Saint Paul mentions it in all his writings and Saint James insists upon it.

Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good life let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This wisdom is not such as comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits . . . (James 3:13-17)

To be meek means to be gentle and kind, to be empty of all selfishness and earthly ambition. It means, in a word, never to return evil for evil, but always in everything to overcome evil by good. (Cf. Romans 12:14-21)

Meekness means to distrust and reject every thought and action of external coercion and violence, which in any case can never produce fruitful, genuine and lasting results.

Meekness is to have the firm and calm conviction that the good is more powerful than evil, and that the good ultimately is always victorious.

To refer once more to Saint John Climacus:

Meekness is an unchangeable state of mind which remains the same in honor and dishonor. Meekness is the rock overlooking the sea of irritability which breaks all the waves that dash against it, remaining itself unmoved. Meekness is the buttress of patience, the mother of love and the foundation of wisdom, for it is said, "The Lord will teach the meek His way." (Psalm 24:9) It prepares the forgiveness of sins; it is boldness in prayer, an abode of the Holy Spirit. "But to whom shall I look," says the Lord, "to him who is meek and quiet and trembles at my word." (Isaiah 66:2) In meek hearts the Lord finds rest, but a turbulent soul is the seat of the devil. (*The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, Step 24)

Lauds. Four stichera are sung:

TONE TWO

Today a tomb holds Him who holds the creation in the hollow of His hand; a stone covers Him who covered the heavens with glory. Life sleeps and hell trembles, and Adam is set free from his bonds. Glory to Thy dispensation, whereby Thou hast accomplished all things, granting us an eternal Sabbath, Thy most holy Resurrection from the dead.⁵²

What is this sight that we behold? What is this present rest? The King of the ages, having through His Passion fulfilled the plan of salvation, keeps Sabbath in the tomb, granting us a new Sabbath. Unto Him let us cry aloud: Arise, O Lord, judge Thou the earth, for measureless is Thy great mercy and Thou dost reign for ever.⁵³

Come, let us see our Life lying in the tomb, that He may give life to those that in their tombs lie dead. Come, let us look today on the Son of Judah as He sleeps, and with the prophet let us cry aloud to Him: Thou hast lain down, Thou hast slept as a lion; who shall awaken Thee, O King? But of Thine own free will do Thou rise up, who willingly dost give Thyself for us. O Lord, glory to Thee.⁵⁴

TONE SIX

Joseph asked for the body of Jesus and he laid it in his own new tomb: for it was fitting that the Lord should come forth from the grave as from a bridal chamber. O Thou who hast broken the power of death and opened the gates of Paradise to men, glory to Thee.

Glory be to the Father. . . .

TONE SIX

Moses the great mystically prefigured this present day, saying: 'And God blessed the seventh day.'⁵⁵ For this is the blessed Sabbath, this is the day of rest, on which the only-begotten Son of God rested from all His works. Suffering death in accordance with the plan of salvation, He kept the Sabbath in the flesh; and returning once again to what He was, through His Resurrection He has granted us eternal life, for He alone is good and loves mankind.

Both now. . . .

Theotokion

Ewe that bore the Lamb, Thy Mother stood, O Master, by the Cross and wept for Thee, O Creator of all things, as she looked upon Thy great longsuffering. For by Thine own will Thou wast born incarnate, and hast suffered in the flesh all Thy Passion that Thou mightest save the world.