

## SELECTED LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

**WISTAN** (Wynstan, Winstoh), prince of the royal family of Mercia, murdered 850. Grandson of Wiglaf, king of Mercia 827-40 and son of Wigmund who died in 839, Wistan was chosen as king in 840 on his grandfather's death, according to his Legend, but asked his mother Elfreda to rule as regent. Berhtric (Brifardus), Wistan's cousin, wished to marry her and seize power, but Wistan refused to allow the marriage, which he regarded as incestuous. Berhtric then murdered him at a place called Wistanstowe (probably Wistow, Leicestershire); three of Wistan's followers fell with him. Wistan's body was buried in the royal monastery of Repton with those of his father and grandfather.

In 1019 Alfwaerd, abbot of Evesham (later bishop of London) asked King Cnut to give him Wistan's relics. From then on Evesham was the centre of the cult. It is of special interest because some of Wistan's miracles were suspected and verified twice over. In Lanfranc's time, his former chaplain, Walter of Cerisy, was abbot of Evesham and subjected Wistan's relics, especially his head, to an ordeal by fire, from which it emerged unscathed. Over a century later, according to Thomas of Marleberge, the supposed miracle of 'hair' growing at Wistanstowe on the ground where the martyr fell, each year on his feast day, was verified by a commission sent by Baldwin, archbishop of Canterbury. Whatever the substance may have been, there was no doubt of the extraordinary phenomenon. Three ancient church dedications to Wistan are known, including Wistow and Wigston (Leics.). The Shropshire village of Wistanstow has a less convincing claim to be the site of the saint's death. Feast: 1 June.

**ETHELDREDA** (Æthelthryth, Ediltrudis, Audrey) (d. 679), queen, foundress and abbess of Ely. She was the daughter of Anna, king of East Anglia, and was born probably at Exning (Suffolk). At an early age she was married (c.652) to Tondberht, ealdorman of the South Gyrras, but she remained a virgin. On his death, c.655, she retired to the Isle of Ely, her dowry. In 660, for political reasons, she was married again, this time to Egfrith, the young king of Northumbria, then only fifteen years old and several years younger than her. He agreed that she should remain a virgin, as in her previous marriage. But twelve years later he wished their marital relationship to be

normal; Etheldreda, advised and aided by \*Wilfrid, bishop of Northumbria, refused. Egfrith offered bribes in vain. Etheldreda left him, became a nun at Coldingham under her aunt \*Ebbe (672), and founded a double monastery at Ely in 673. Egfrith married again: Wilfrid, some years later, was exiled from Northumbria.

Etheldreda meanwhile restored an old church at Ely, reputedly destroyed by Penda, the pagan king of Mercia, and built her monastery on the site of the present Ely cathedral. For seven years she lived an austere life of penance and prayer, eating only one meal a day, wearing woollen clothes instead of linen, watching each morning between Matins and dawn. In this wealthy family monastery, where she was joined or succeeded by sisters and nieces, she died of a tumour on the neck, interpreted as a divine punishment for her vanity in wearing necklaces in her younger days. It was the result of the plague, which also carried off several other nuns in her community.

Seventeen years later her body was found incorrupt: Wilfrid and her physician Cynefrid were among the witnesses. The tumour on her neck, which had been cut by her doctor, was found to be healed. The linen cloths, in which her body had been wrapped, were as fresh as the day when she was buried. Her body was placed in a stone sarcophagus of Roman workmanship found at Grantchester and translated by \*Sexburga on 17 October 695. Her shrine was much frequented and she became the most popular of the Anglo-Saxon women saints.

Ely was refounded by \*Ethelwold in 970 as a monastery for monks only; it was so lavishly endowed by him and King Edgar that it became the richest abbey in England except Glastonbury. Etheldreda's shrine remained and was presented by Emma, wife of King Cnut, with a purple cloth, richly worked with gold and jewels. After the Norman Conquest a new choir was built, which made necessary a new translation. This was eventually accomplished in 1106 and involved the relics of the other Ely saints: Sexburga, \*Ermengild, and \*Werbunga also. Ely became a bishopric in 1109, and the shrine was rich enough for it to be stripped in 1144 by bishop Nigel to pay a fine of 300 marks. It was restored by bishop Geoffrey in 1225 and yet another translation took place in 1252, with some supposed relics of \*Alban; when the cathedral was consecrated. The shrine

ST FURSEY'S ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY & PARISH CHURCH  
YARMOUTH ROAD, STALHAM NR12 9RR  
Tel: 01692 580552  
COMMUNITY PROGRAMME & NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2023



Pentecost

Troparion

**BLESSED** art thou, O Christ our God: who didst shew the fishermen to be most wise by the sending them of the Holy Spirit; and didst use them to draw the whole world into thy net. O thou that lovest all men, glory be to thee.

**BRITISH ORTHODOX SAINTS  
COMMEMORATED IN  
JUNE.**

See selected lives of Saints on another page.

- 01 Wistan of Evesham, Martyr
- Wite of Dorset, anchoress and Martyr
- 02 Oda the Good, Archbishop of Canterbury
- 04 Edfrith, Bishop of Lindisfarne
- Petroc, Abbot and Missionary
- 05 Boniface of Crediton, Apostle and Patron-Saint of Germany and  
his 52 Companion-Martyrs
- 10 Ithamar, Bishop of Rochester
- 11 Herebald, Hermit in Brittany\*
- 15 Edburgh of Winchester, Virgin
- 17 Botolph and Adulf, Confessors
- Briavel, Hermit
- Nectan, Hermit and Martyr
- 20 Edburgh of Castor, Virgin
- 21 Engelmund, Abbot and Missionary\*
- 22 Alban of Verulamium, Protomartyr of Britain
- 23 Audrey, Abbess of Ely
- 25 Adalbert of Egmond, Archdeacon and Missionary\*
- Cyneburgh of Gloucester, Martyr
- 29 Peter and Paul, Holy Apostles.

**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.

Wherefore 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 thy eternal memory we stand firm against  
every error ever singing; Rejoice beloved of God,  
our Father Fursey.



**SERVICES IN JUNE 2023**

(In the Parish Church unless otherwise stated).

Sat June 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Saturday of Souls Vespers 4pm.</b>
Sun June 4 <sup>th</sup>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pascha – Pentecost Chrismation of James 9:00am. Divine Liturgy 9:30am Vespers of Kneeling 11:30am.</b>
Tues June 6 <sup>th</sup>	Third Day of the Trinity. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Hour + Reading from the Fathers 09:00am.
Sat June 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Vespers 4pm.</b>
Sun June 11 <sup>th</sup>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Pentecost Sunday of All Saints Divine Liturgy 9:30am.</b>
Mon June 12 <sup>th</sup>	Beginning of the Apostles' Fast.
Tues June 13 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Hour + Reading from the Fathers 09:00am. (Prayers for the Fast).
Sat June 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Vespers (St Nectarios of Holland)</b>
Sun June 18 <sup>th</sup>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost All Saints of Britain Divine Liturgy 9:30am.</b>
Wed June 21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Vesperal Liturgy 7pm for St Alban Protomartyr of Britain 209. (St Fursey Chapel, Neville Road).</b>
Sat June 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Nativity of John the Baptist. Vespers 4pm.</b>
Sun June 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost. New Martyrs of the Turkish Yoke (Nativity of St John the Baptist). Divine Liturgy 09:30am.</b>
Wed June 28 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Vesperal Liturgy 7pm. The All Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. (St Fursey Chapel, Neville Road)</b>

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

These are 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour with reading from the Fathers 9am. (Parish Church on Tuesday and Thursday. Vespers 4pm. Local readers are very welcome but please ring 01692 580552 to make sure the service is still on.

### **Community News & Notices**

#### **COFFEE MORNING & OPEN DAY**

Last year we had several open days not only for fund raising but also to bring to the notice of local people the significance of the Orthodox Church. Weather permitting, there will be various stalls on the lawn in front of the church: an Icon and bookstall with many free leaflets for information, a raffle and homemade cake stall, tombola, bric-a-brac, second-hand books, DVDs, costume jewellery. We need to repay a loan of £20,000 to the Archdiocese so the support of our readers will be much appreciated.

#### **BIBLE STUDY**

The Thursday evening Bible Study has been resumed at St Fursey's House, Neville Road, Sutton, at 7pm.. We are nearly at the end of St Matthew's Gospel and we use the Orthodox Study Bible as our guide. We will have a break during the summer and resume in the autumn.

#### **PENTECOST & THE CHRISMATION**

As we write this we look forward to the Chrismation of James at Pentecost. The Orthodox practice of Baptism and Chrismation goes back to New Testament times as the means of reception into the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church: the Body of Our Lord and God. The Patriarchate of Antioch accepts the Baptism of converts from other Christian bodies if they are sure that such a Baptism is in the Name of the Trinity with a threefold immersion or pouring of water: a simple sprinkling is not accepted. Chrismation:

anointing with oil and prayer completes reception into the Church. To be a Christian means to be an anointed one: hence the anointing with oil and prayer completes reception into the Church. To be a Christian means to be an anointed one: hence the anointing with oil and the gift of the Holy Spirit which comes with the anointing.

#### **PILGRIMAGE TO BURGH CASTLE**

From the founding of St Fursey's Community in 1998, to the COVID outbreaks it was our custom to have an annual pilgrimage to an Anglo-Saxon site of interest because Anglo-Saxon England was Orthodox England. We hope to revive this practice in September with a pilgrimage to Burgh Castle on Saturday September 30<sup>th</sup> as a part of our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations.

A November visit by Metropolitan Silouan is also planned; a date to be fixed. Hopefully, by the most of the job in the church and grounds will be finished by then.

#### **CORONATION CELEBRATIONS**

**Sunday May 7<sup>th</sup>**

Stalham town council planned an excellent celebration of the coronation of King Charles and Queen Camilla. Several of t Fursey's people attended this and we also set up our Icon and book stall on the recreation ground for the interest of those who attended.

**Every Blessing to our Readers**

**Father Stephen**

# Ascension



to come to assure the Lord's presence with them, enabling them to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth. (Luke 24:48-53; Acts 1:8-11; Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:16-19)

In the Church the believers in Christ celebrate these very same realities with the conviction that it is for them and for all men that Christ's departure from this world has taken place. The Lord leaves in order to be glorified with God the Father and to glorify us with himself. He goes in order to "prepare a place" for us, and to take us also into the blessedness of God's presence. He goes to open the way for all flesh into the "heavenly sanctuary. . . the Holy Place not made by hands." (See Hebrews 8-10) He goes in order to send the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father, to bear witness to him and his gospel in the world, by making him powerfully present in the lives of his disciples.

The liturgical hymns of the feast of the Ascension sing of all of these things. The antiphonal verses of the Divine Liturgy are taken from Psalms 47, 48 and 49. The troparion of the feast which is sung at the small entrance is also used as the post-communion hymn.

Thou hast ascended in glory O Christ our God, granting joy to Thy disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit. Through the blessing they were assured that Thou art the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world! (Troparion)

When Thou didst fulfill the dispensation for our sake, and didst unite earth to heaven, Thou didst ascend in glory, O Christ our God, not being parted from those who love Thee, but remaining with them and crying: I am with you and no one will be against you! (Kontakion)

# Pentecost: The Descent of the Holy Spirit

In the Old Testament Pentecost was the feast which occurred fifty days after Passover. As the passover feast celebrated the exodus of the Israelites from the slavery of Egypt, so Pentecost celebrated God's gift of the ten commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai.

In the new covenant of the Messiah, the passover event takes on its new meaning as the celebration of Christ's death and resurrection, the "exodus" of men from this sinful world to the Kingdom of God. And in the New Testament as well, the pentecostal feast is fulfilled and made new by the coming of the "new law," the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples of Christ.

When the day of Pentecost had come they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed as resting upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. . . (Acts 2:1-4)

The Holy Spirit that Christ had promised to his disciples came on the day of Pentecost. (John 14:26, 15:26; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:5) The apostles received "the power from on high," and they began to preach and bear witness to Jesus as the risen Christ, the King and the Lord. This moment has traditionally been called the birthday of the Church.

In the liturgical services of the feast of Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit is celebrated together with the full revelation of the divine Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The fulness of the Godhead is manifested with the Spirit's coming to man, and the Church hymns celebrate this manifestation as the final act of God's self-disclosure and self-donation to the world of His creation. For this reason Pentecost Sunday is also called **Trinity Day** in the Orthodox tradition. Often on this day the **icon of the Holy Trinity**—particularly that of the three angelic figures who appeared to Abraham, the forefather of the Christian faith—is placed in the center of the church. This icon is used with the traditional **pentecostal icon** which shows the tongues of fire hovering over Mary and the Twelve Apostles, the original prototype of the Church, who are themselves sitting in unity surrounding a symbolic image of "cosmos," the world.

On Pentecost we have the final fulfillment of the mission of Jesus Christ and the first beginning of the messianic age of the Kingdom of God mystically present in this world in the Church of the Messiah. For this reason the **fiftieth day** stands as the beginning of the era which is beyond the limitations of this world, fifty being that number which stands for eternal and heavenly fulfillment in Jewish and Christian mystical  
niety: seven times seven plus one

Thus, Pentecost is called an **apocalyptic day**, which means the day of **final revelation**. It is also called an **eschatological day**, which means the day of the **final and perfect end** (in Greek *eschaton* means the end). For when the Messiah comes and the Lord's Day is at hand, the "last days" are inaugurated in which "God declares: . . . I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." This is the ancient prophecy to which the Apostle Peter refers in the first sermon of the Christian Church which was preached on the first Sunday of Pentecost. (Acts 2:17; Joel 2:28-32)

Once again it must be noted that the feast of Pentecost is not simply the celebration of an event which took place centuries ago. It is the celebration of what must happen and does happen to us in the Church today. We all have died and risen with the Messiah-King, and we all have received his Most Holy Spirit. We are the "temples of the Holy Spirit." God's Spirit dwells in us. (Romans 8; I Corinthians 2-3, 12; II Corinthians 3; Galatians 5; Ephesians 2-3). We, by our own membership in the Church, have received "the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit" in the sacrament of chrismation. Pentecost has happened to us.

The **Divine Liturgy** of Pentecost recalls our baptism into Christ with the verse from Galatians again replacing the Thrice-Holy Hymn. Special verses from the psalms also replace the usual antiphonal psalms of the liturgy. The epistle and gospel readings tell of the Spirit's coming to men. The kontakion sings of the reversal of Babel as God unites the nations into the unity of his Spirit. The troparion proclaims the gathering of the whole universe into God's net through the work of the inspired apostles. The hymns **O Heavenly King** and **We have seen the True Light** are sung for the first time since Easter, calling the Holy Spirit to "come and abide in us", and proclaiming that "we have received the heavenly Spirit." The church building is decorated with flowers and the green leaves of the summer to show that God's divine **Breath** comes to renew all creation as the "life-creating Spirit." In Hebrew the word for Spirit, breath and wind is the same word, *ruah*.

Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, who hast revealed the fishermen as most wise by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit: through them Thou didst draw the world into Thy net. O Lover of Man, Glory to Thee. (Troparion)

When the Most High came down and confused the tongues, he divided the nations. But when he distributed the tongues of fire, he called all to unity. Therefore, with one voice, we glorify the All-Holy Spirit! (Kontakion)

LITURGY PAGE.

PENTECOSTARION

ODE SIX  
Heirmos

TOSSED by the tempest of the cares of life, and cast into the deep by the sins that sail with me, and being thrown to the soul-corrupting beast, like Jonas I cry to Thee, O Christ: Draw me up out of the depth that bringeth death.

Troparion

THOU hast abundantly poured forth of Thy Spirit upon all flesh, even as Thou didst say, and all creation is filled with Thy knowledge, O Lord; for Thou, the Son, didst come forth immutably from the Father; and the Spirit indivisibly proceedeth.

The Second Canon  
Heirmos

THOU hast shone forth from the Virgin As forgiveness and salvation for us, O Christ Master, That, like as Jonas was reft from the belly of the sea monster, Thou mightest snatch from corruption All the fallen race of Adam.

Troparia

ORULER of all, renew within us the cherished, upright Spirit, That we may eternally have Him Who proceedeth from the Father, With Whom He is most perfectly united; He is a burning heat, purging away hateful, polluted matter And cleansing our minds of defilement.

As for the Apostles in Sion who awaited Thy coming, O Spirit, Thou, with Thy fiery breath, Hast consecrated them with a coveted dignity, Even the knowledge of the Word, begotten of the Father, Which swiftly exposed the cruel prattle of the heathens' babblings.

Katavasia: Tossed by the tempest . . .  
Thou hast shone forth . . .

KONTAKION  
Plagal of Fourth Tone

ONCE, when He descended and confounded the tongues, the Most High divided the nations; and when He divided the tongues of fire, He called all men into unity; and with one accord we glorify the All-holy Spirit.

OIKOS

GRANT Thou speedy and lasting consolation unto Thy servants, O Jesus, when our spirits are despondent. Be Thou not parted from our souls when they be in affliction; be Thou not far from our minds when we are in perils, but do Thou ever anticipate our needs. Draw nigh unto us, draw nigh, O Thou Who art everywhere present, and even as Thou art ever with Thine Apostles, thus do Thou also unite unto Thyself us who long for Thee, O Compassionate One, that, being united with Thee, we may praise and glorify Thine All-holy Spirit.

HOMILY PAGE.

From the treatise Against Heresies by Saint Irenaeus; bishop  
(Lib. 3, 17, 1-3: SC 34, 302-305)

THE SENDING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When the Lord told his disciples to go and teach all nations and to baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, he conferred on them the power of giving men new life in God.

He had promised through the prophets that in these last days he would pour out his Spirit on his servants and handmaids, and that they would prophesy. So when the Son of God became the Son of Man, the Spirit also descended upon him, becoming accustomed in this way to dwelling with the human race, to living in men and to inhabiting God's creation. The Spirit accomplished the Father's will in men who had grown old in sin, and gave them new life in Christ.

Luke says that the Spirit came down on the disciples at Pentecost, after the Lord's ascension, with power to open the gates of life to all nations and to make known to them the new covenant. So it was that men of every language joined in singing one song of praise to God, and scattered tribes, restored to unity by the Spirit, were offered to the Father as the firstfruits of all the nations.

This was why the Lord had promised to send the Advocate: he was to prepare us as an offering to God. Like dry flour, which cannot become one lump of dough, one loaf of bread, without moisture, we who are many could not become one in Christ Jesus without the water that comes down from heaven. And like parched ground, which yields no harvest unless it receives moisture, we who were once like a waterless tree could never have lived and borne fruit without this abundant rainfall from above. Through the baptism that liberates us from change and decay we have become one in body; through the Spirit we have become one in soul.

The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of God came down upon the Lord, and the Lord in turn gave this Spirit to his Church, sending the Advocate from heaven into all the world into which, according to his own words, the devil too had been cast down like lightning.

If we are not to be scorched and made unfruitful, we need the dew of God. Since we have our accuser, we need an Advocate as well. And so the Lord in his pity for man, who had fallen into the hands of brigands, having himself bound up his wounds and left for his care two coins bearing the royal image, entrusted him to the Advocate.