

SELECTED LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

ALCMUND (1) (Ealhmund), seventh bishop of Hexham, ruled 767-81. He was buried beside *Acca outside the church; during the Danish invasions all trace of his grave was lost, but in 1032, following a supposed revelation, his relics were found and reburied inside the church. In 1154 the relics of all the saints of Hexham were collected into a single shrine; in 1296 they were scattered by the Scots. The date of Alcmund's death was 7 September, but no trace of a feast apart from the general one of the saints of Hexham has been found.

ETHELBURGA (1) (Ædiburh) (d. 675), abbess of Barking. Of a wealthy (possibly royal) family and sister of *Erkenwald. Ethelburga was quite likely the owner, as well as the ruler, of Barking. A late tradition says that Erkenwald invited *Hildelith from Chelles to be prioress and future abbess of Barking; her difficult task was to teach Ethelburga monastic traditions while retaining a subordinate role.

*Bede devoted several chapters to marvellous events just before Ethelburga's death, such as the death of a three-year-old boy after calling 'Edith' three times for his favourite nun, and the cure of the nun *Tortgith after a vision of Ethelburga. Feast: 11 October; Barking had translation feasts on 7 March, 4 May, and (with those of Hildelith and Wulfrida) 23 September.

LIoba (Liobgytha) (d. 782), abbess of Bischofsheim. Born of a noble Wessex family (her mother was a relative of *Boniface), Lioba was educated first at the nunnery of Minster-in-Thane and then at Wimborne (Dorset), where she became a nun under abbess Tetta. After some years correspondence Boniface asked in 748 and obtained that she should be sent to help him in the evangelization of Germany by establishing convents. About thirty nuns were sent in all; they were settled at Tauberbischofsheim, possibly in Boniface's own previous residence, under Lioba as abbess. The Life by Rudolf of Fulda, written about fifty years after her death and based on the testimony of four companions, paints an attractive portrait. Lioba was both beautiful and accessible, intelligent and patiently kind. Her community was so highly esteemed that abbesses of other houses were taken from it, while Lioba's advice was sought by magnates of both Church and State. Her monasteries followed the Rule of

St. Benedict: all the nuns had to learn Latin: manual work in scriptorium, kitchen, bakery, brewery, and garden was assiduously practised, but all was subordinate to the public prayer of the Church.

Before his final mission to Frisia in 754 Boniface said goodbye to her, recommended her care both to *Lull and to the monks of Fulda, and said that he would like her body to be buried near his. After his death she used to visit Fulda on privileged terms. When she had been abbess for twenty-eight years, she resigned and retired to Schornheim, but once visited Charlemagne's court at the invitation of his queen Hildegard. Lioba died soon afterwards and was buried near Boniface's tomb at Fulda. Her relics were translated in 819 and again in 838, this time to the church of Mount St. Peter. Hrabanus Maurus inserted her name into his martyrology c.836; it also occurs in litanies of the 9th century. Her cult has always been centred in Germany, but seems surprisingly to have been little known in England. Feast: 28 September.

Life by Rudolph of Fulda in *AA.SS.* Sept. VII (1757), 748-69; Eng. tr. by C. H. Talbot, *Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany* (1954); M. Tangl, *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (M.G.H., 1916); W. Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (1946); B.T.A., iii. 668-71. See also T. Schieffer, *Witfrid-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas* (1954), pp. 162-6.

HONORIUS (d. 653), archbishop of Canterbury. He came to England in 601, one of the second band of Roman missionaries to Kent. He succeeded *Justus as archbishop in 627, being consecrated at Lincoln by *Paulinus. He received the pallium from Pope Honorius with the instruction that when one archbishop died, the other would consecrate his successor. During his twenty-five years' rule he consolidated the work of conversion by sending the Burgundian *Felix to evangelize East Anglia. He received the exiled Paulinus to the see of Rochester after the disastrous battle of Hatfield Chase (634). He lived to see the apostolate of *Aidan in Northumbria, the replacement of *Birinus of Wessex by *Agilbert, the conversion of Peada and the Middle Angles, and the arrival of the young *Wilfrid in Kent on his way to Rome. Honorius, like his predecessors, was buried at Canterbury in the monastery of SS. Peter and Paul (later St. Augustine's), the centre of his cult. He is mentioned in the Roman and other martyrologies. Feast: 30 September.



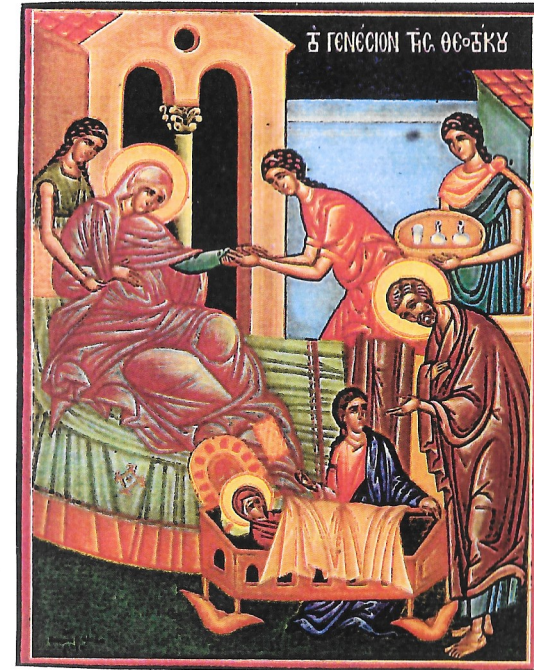
Mount
26 Millers

Antiochian Orthodox
Christian Archdiocese
of the British Isles And Ireland
Archbishop: His Eminence
Metropolitan Silouan Oner

St Furseys' Antiochian Orthodox
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COMMUNITY PROGRAMME & NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2024



The Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God (September 8th)
Troparion

THEY birth, O Mother of God and Virgin, hath declared joy to all the universe: for from thee arose the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God: who brake the curse and gave the blessing, who abolished death and bestowed upon us the life which is eternal.

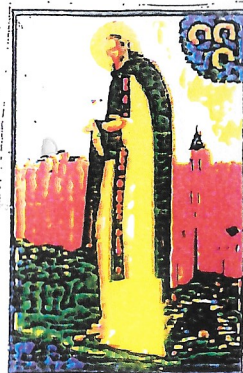
BRITISH ORTHODOX SAINTS
 COMMEMORATED IN
 SEPTEMBER.

- 01 Drithelm of Melrose, Monk
 02 Hieu, Abbess of Tadcaster
 03 Balin, Monk
 Herewith of Chelles Widow
 06 Bega, Anchoress
 Felix and Augebert, Martyrs*
 07 Almund and Tilbert, Bishops of Hexham
 08 Ethelburgh, Abbess of Lyminge
 Ina and Ethelburgh, King and Queen of Wessex
 09 Bettelin of Crowland, Hermit
 Wulfhild, Abbess of Barking
 10 Frihstan, Bishop of Winchester
 Otger, Missionary
 13 Wilfrida, Abbess of Wilton
 16 Edith of Wilton, Virgin
 17 Socrates and Stephen, Martyrs in Britain*
 19 Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury
 23 Cissa of Crowland, Hermit
 25 Ceolfrith (Geoffrey), Abbot of Wearmouth
 Egelred of Crowland, Martyr
 28 Lioba, Abbess and Missionary
 Tetta, Abbess of Wimborne
 30 Honorius, Archbishop of Canterbury
 Taucred, Torfhred and Tova, Hermits and Martyrs

TROPARION OF ST. FURSEY

tone five

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 Faith /
 standing firm against the rising tide of falsehood /
 that our souls may be saved. //



Services in September 2024

(In the Parish Church unless otherwise stated).

Sun Sept 1 st	10 th Sunday after Pentecost Church New Year Day of Prayer for the Protection of the Environment. St Symeon Stylites, Righteous Joshua the Son of Nun. Divine Liturgy 9:30am
Thurs Sept 5 th	Prophet Zechariah & Righteous Elizabeth Parents of St John the Baptist Typika 9:30am
Fri Sept 6 th	Vespers 4pm Commemoration of the Miracle of the Archangel Michael at Colossae. 3 rd Hour 9am.
Sat Sept 7 th	Forefeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos. Vespers 4pm.
Sun Sept 8 th	11 th Sunday After Pentecost The Nativity of The Theotokos. King Ina of Wessex & Queen Ethelburga. Divine Liturgy 9:30am
Sat Sept 14 th	Vespers of the Exaltation of the Cross 4pm (Translated to Sept 15 th , Dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Jerusalem 335).
Sun Sept 15 th	12 th Sunday after Pentecost The Exaltation of the Cross (Uncovering of the Relics of St Stephen) Divine Liturgy 9:30am.
Thurs Sept 19 th	St Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury 690 - 3 rd Hour.
Sat Sept 21 st	Vespers 4pm Prophet Jonah, Apostle Quadratus the Apologist 130.
Sun Sept 22 nd	13 th Sunday after Pentecost St Phocas the Gardener of Sinope (320). Divine Liturgy 9:30am
Tues Sept 24 th	St Thecla First Woman Martyr 1 st C. 3 rd Hour 9am.

Thurs Sept 26 th	St John the Theologian Apostle and Evangelist The Forerunner Divine Liturgy 9am
Sat Sept 28 th	Vespers 4pm Prophet Baruch St Lioba of Wimborne Abbess 780.
Sun Sept 29 th	14 th Sunday after Pentecost St Kyriakos the Hermit 556 Divine Liturgy 9:30am St Honorius Archbishop of Canterbury 653

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

These are normally 3rd hour with reading from the Fathers, Monday & Friday (at 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, hopefully on the beach at Lowestoft.

Community News & Notices

NEXT OPEN DAY FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 6TH (Coffee Morning)

FROM 10AM ONWARDS

These open days and coffee mornings (we have three per year) are a part of our Evangelisation work and fund raising (we have a £20,000 debt to the Archdiocese to repay). There will be an Icon and book stall with many free leaflets on various aspects of our Orthodox Christian Faith, a raffle, bric-a-brac, home-made cake stall, tombola, coffee, and tea. See posters, leaflets, and internet.

SEPTEMBER INTRODUCTORY TALKS ON OUR ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FAITH AND CHURCH

1) Thursday September 5th – 7pm

“Finding the New Testament Church.”

(as founded by Our Lord Jesus Christ)

2) Thursday September 12th - 7pm

“Heaven upon Earth: Orthodox Worship.”

3) Thursday September 19th – 7pm

“Deification” Our Human Destiny.

4) Thursday September 26th – 7pm

“Windows into Heaven.” Icons.

These talks are open to everyone and sometimes lead to some people being Baptised and Chrismated into the Orthodox Church. In the Antiochian Patriarchate of our Patriarch John is the 167th successor to St Peter in the See of Antioch. He went there after the Persecution of St Stephen, before he went to Rome.

October 3rd will be the 26th anniversary of the founding of St Fursey's Orthodox Christian Community in 1998. To celebrate this we will have a pilgrimage to the round towered church of Beeston St Lawrence on Saturday October 5th. The programme will be:

Nativity of the Theotokos

In addition to the celebration of the Annunciation, there are three major feasts in the Church honoring Mary, the Theotokos. The first of these is the feast of her nativity which is kept on the eighth of September.

The record of the birth of Mary is not found in the Bible. The traditional account of the event is taken from the apocryphal writings which are not part of the New Testament scriptures. The traditional teaching which is celebrated in the hymns and verses of the festal liturgy is that Joachim and Anna were a pious Jewish couple who were among the small and faithful remnant—"the poor and the needy"—who were awaiting the promised messiah. The couple was old and childless. They prayed earnestly to the Lord for a child, since among the Jews barrenness was a sign of God's disfavor. In answer to their prayers, and as the reward of their unwavering fidelity to God, the elderly couple was blessed with the child who was destined, because of her own personal goodness and holiness, to become the Mother of the Messiah-Christ.

Your nativity, O Virgin, has proclaimed joy to the whole universe. The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, has shone from you, O Theotokos. By annulling the curse he bestowed a blessing. By destroying death he has granted us eternal life. (Troparion)

By your nativity, O most pure virgin, Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness; Adam and Eve from the corruption of death. And we, your people, freed from the guilt of sin, celebrate and sing to you: The barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, the Nourisher of our Life. (Kontakion)

The fact that there is no Biblical verification of the facts of Mary's birth is incidental to the meaning of the feast. Even if the actual background of the event as celebrated in the Church is questionable from an historical point of view, the divine meaning of it "for us men and for our salvation" is obvious. There had to be one born of human flesh and blood who would be spiritually capable of being the Mother of Christ, and she herself had to be born into the world of persons who were spiritually capable of being her parents.

The feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos, therefore, is a glorification of Mary's birth, of Mary herself and of her righteous parents. It is a celebration as well of the very first preparation of the salvation of the world. For the "Vessel of Light," the "Book of the Word of Life," the "Door to the Orient," the "Throne of Wisdom" is being prepared on earth by God himself in the birth of the holy girl-child Mary.



The verses of the feast are filled with titles for Mary such as those in the quotations above. They are inspired by the message of the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments. The specific Biblical readings of the feast give indications of this.

At the Vespers the three Old Testament readings are "mariological" in their New Testament interpretation. Thus, Jacob's Ladder which unites heaven and earth and the place which is named "the house of God" and the "gate of heaven" (Genesis 28:10-17) are taken to indicate the union of God with men which is realized most fully and perfectly—both spiritually and physically—in Mary, the Theotokos, Bearer of God. So also the vision of the temple with the "door to the East" perpetually closed and filled with the "glory of the Lord" symbolizes Mary, called in the hymns of the feast "the living temple of God filled with the divine Glory." (Ezekiel 43:27 - 44:4) Mary is also identified with the "house" which the Divine Wisdom has built for himself according to the reading from Proverbs 9:1-11.

The Gospel reading of Matins is the one read at all feasts of the Theotokos, the famous Magnificat from St. Luke in which Mary says: "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden, for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. (Luke 1:47)

The epistle reading of the Divine Liturgy is the famous passage about the coming of the Son of God in "the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man" (Philippians 2:5-11) and the gospel reading is that which is always read for feasts of the Theotokos: The woman in the crowd glorifies the Mother of Jesus, and the Lord himself responds that the same blessedness which his mother receives is for all "who hear the word of God and keep it." (Luke 11:27-28)

Thus, on the feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos, as on all liturgical celebrations of Christ's Mother, we proclaim and celebrate that through God's graciousness to mankind every Christian receives what the Theotokos receives, the "great mercy" which is given to human persons because of Christ's birth from the Virgin.

Elevation of the Cross

The Elevation of the Cross, celebrated on the fourteenth of September, commemorates the finding of Christ's Cross by Saint Helen, the mother of the Emperor Constantine in the fourth century; and, after it was taken by the Persians, of its recovery by the Emperor Heraclius in the seventh century at which time it was "elevated" in the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem. From this latter event the "universal elevation" of the Cross was celebrated annually in all of the churches of the Christian Empire.

The day of the Elevation of the Cross became, as it were, the national holiday of the Eastern Christian Empire similar to the Fourth of July in the United States. The Cross, the official emblem of the Empire which was placed on all public buildings and uniforms, was officially elevated on this day by the bishops and priests. They blessed the four directions of the universe with the Cross, while the faithful repeated the chanting of "Lord have mercy." This ritual is still done in the churches today after the solemn presentation and elevation of the Cross at the end of the Vigil service of the holy day following the Great Doxology of Matins.

The troparion of the feast which was, one might say, the "national anthem" sung on all public occasions in the Christian Empires of Byzantium and Russia, originally petitioned God to save the people, to grant victory in war and to preserve the empire "by the virtue of the Cross." Today the troparion, and all the hymns of the day, are "spiritualized" as the "adversaries" become the spiritually wicked and sinful, including the devil and his armies, and "Orthodox Christians" replace the names of ruling officials of the Empire.

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance. Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries; and by the virtue of Thy Cross, preserve Thy habitation. (Troparion)

As Thou was mercifully crucified for our sake, grant mercy to those who are called by Thy name; make all Orthodox Christians glad by Thy power, granting them victories over their adversaries, by bestowing on them the invincible trophy, Thy weapon of peace. (Kontakion)

The holy day of the Elevation of the Cross, although it has an obviously "political" origin, has a place of great significance in the Church today. It remains with us as a day of fasting and prayer, a day when we recall that the Cross is the only sign worthy of our total allegiance, and that our salvation comes not by "victories" of any earthly sort but by the only true and lasting victory of the crucifixion of Christ and our co-crucifixion with him.

When we elevate the Cross and bow down before it in veneration and worship to God, we proclaim that we belong to the Kingdom "not of this world", and that our only true and enduring citizenship is with the saints in the "city of God." (Ephesians 2:19; Hebrews 11:10; Revelation 21-22)

The first Old Testament reading of the Vespers of the day tells of the "tree" which changes the bitter waters into sweetness—the symbol of the Tree of the Cross. (Exodus 15:22 - 16:1) The second reading reminds us that the Lord chastens and corrects those whom he loves and that Divine Wisdom is "a Tree of life to those who lay hold upon her and trust in her, as in the Lord." (Proverbs 3:11-18) Again the reference is to the Cross which is, as the epistle reading of the day proclaims, "to those who are called... the power of God and the wisdom of God." (I Corinthians 18-25)

The third Old Testament reading is from the Prophecy of Isaiah which tells of the "city of the Lord" where both Jews and Gentiles will live together and "shall bow themselves down" at the place of God's feet and "shall know that I the Lord am Thy Saviour and Thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Israel." (Isaiah 60:11-16) Here we have the direct reference to God's city where men shall worship at his feet; and together with the psalm line repeated constantly during the services which calls us to "bow before his footstool," we have once again the reference to the Holy Cross. (Psalm 99:5, 110:1, et. al.)

Before the Cross, we bow down in worship, O Master, and Thy holy resurrection, we glorify.
(Hymn of Veneration before the Cross)

This central hymn of the Elevation of the Cross which lasts for eight days in the Church is sung many times. It replaces the Thrice-Holy of the Divine Liturgy. The normal antiphons are also replaced by special verses from the psalms which have direct reference to Christ's crucifixion on the Cross. (Psalms 22, 74, 99) At the Matins, in the gospel reading from St. John, Christ says that when he is elevated on the Cross he will draw all men to himself. (John 12:28-36) The long gospel reading at the Divine Liturgy is the passion account from this same gospel.

Thus, at the Elevation of the Cross the Christians make their official rededication to the crucified Lord and pledge their undivided allegiance to him by the adoration of his holy feet nailed to the life-creating Cross. This is the meaning of this holy day of fasting and repentance in the Church today.

Journey to the Round Towered Church of Beeston St Lawrence. On arrival we will have a look round and note the significance of the church for Anglo-Saxon Christianity.

Mid-day Service 12 Noon.

Picnic – 12 to 12:30

Talk 1:30 to 2:30

Vespers 2:30 to 3pm. Disperse.

We are grateful to Fr Ben Bradshaw for allowing us to visit this church.

Every Blessing to our Readers

Father Stephen - Telephone No: 01692 581849.

THE BIRTH OF OUR MOST HOLY LADY

Aposticha:

TONE FOUR

(by Patriarch Germanos)

The Joy of all the world has shone forth upon us, the far-famed Virgin sprung from righteous Joachim and Ann. On account of her exceeding goodness she is become the living Temple of God, and is in truth acknowledged as the only Theotokos. At her prayers, O Christ our God, send down peace upon the world and on our souls great mercy.

ψ. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear (Psalm 44: 11).

As foretold by the angel, today hast thou come forth, O Virgin, the all-holy offspring of righteous Joachim and Ann. Thou art a heaven and the throne of God, and a vessel of purity, proclaiming joy to all the world, O Protector of our life. Thou dost destroy the curse and givest blessing in its place. Therefore on this feast of thy birth, O Maiden called by God, intercede that our souls be given peace and great mercy.

From a discourse by Saint Andrew of Crete, bishop (Oratio 1: PG 97, 806-810)

THE OLD HAS PASSED AWAY, ALL THINGS ARE MADE NEW

The fulfillment of the law is Christ himself, who does not so much lead us away from the letter as lift us up to its spirit. For the laws consummation was this, that the very lawgiver accomplished his work and changed letter into spirit, summing everything up in himself and, though subject to the law, living by grace. He subordinated the law, yet harmoniously united grace with it, not confusing the distinctive characteristics of the one with the other, but effecting the transition in a way most fitting for God. He changed whatever was burdensome, servile and oppressive into what is light and liberating, so that we should be enslaved no longer *under the elemental spirits of the world*, as the Apostle says, nor held fast as bondservants under the letter of the law.

This is the highest, all-embracing benefit that Christ has bestowed on us. This is the revelation of the mystery, this is the emptying out of the divine nature, the union of God and man, and the deification of the manhood that was assumed. This radiant and manifest coming of God to men most certainly needed a joyful prelude to introduce the great gift of salvation to us. The present festival, the birth of the Mother of God, is the prelude, while the final act is the foreordained union of the Word with flesh. Today the Virgin is born, tended and formed, and prepared for her role as Mother of God, who is the universal King of the ages.

Justly then do we celebrate this mystery since it signifies for us a double grace. We are led toward the truth, and we are led away from our condition of slavery to the letter of the law. How can this be? Darkness yields before the coming of light, and grace exchanges legalism for freedom. But midway between the two stands today's mystery, at the frontier where types and symbols give way to reality, and the old is replaced by the new.

Therefore, let all creation sing and dance and unite to make worthy contribution to the celebration of this day. Let there be one common festival for saints in heaven and men on earth. Let everything, mundane things and those above, join in festive celebration. Today this created world is raised to the dignity of a holy place for him who made all things. The creature is newly prepared to be a divine dwelling place for the Creator.