

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) (Ædilburh) (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 pun, 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 Wulfreda) 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-Thanet 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 for other houses were taken from it, while Lioba's advice was sought by magnates of both Church and State.

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, *Wifrid-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 *Bicinus of Wessex by *Agilbert, the conversion of Peada and the Middle Angles, and the arrival of the young *Wulfred 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.



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

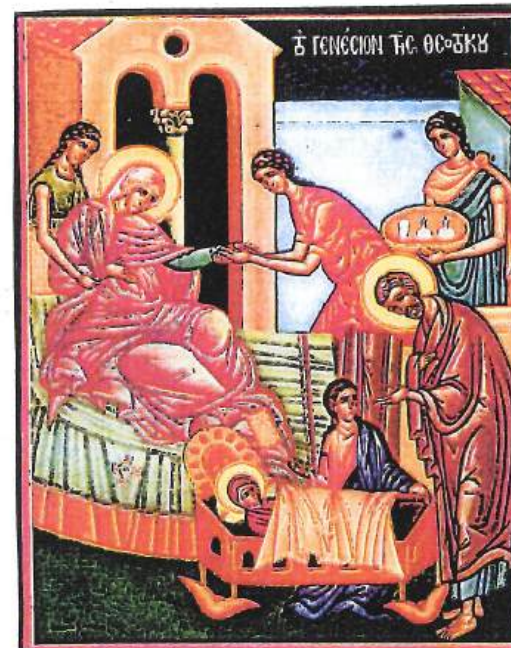
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Metropolitan Silouan Oner

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COMMUNITY PROGRAMME & NEWSLETTER

September 2026



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

THY 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
Hereswith 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 Friðestán, 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 Cisse of Crowland, Hermit
25 Ceolfrith (Geoffrey), Abbot of Wearmouth
Egelred of Crowland, Martyr
28 Lioba, Abbess and Missionary
Teita, Abbess of Wimborne
30 Honorius, Archbishop of Canterbury
Tancred, Toribred 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 Furse. / 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. //



St Furse's Antiochian Orthodox Church

SERVICES IN SEPTEMBER 2026

(In the Parish Church unless otherwise stated)

Tuesday Sept 1 st	Church New Year (Day of Prayer for the protection of the environment). 3 rd Hour Service 9am & Reading from the Fathers.
Saturday Sept 5 th	Prophet Zecharia & Righteous Elizabeth Parents of St John Baptist. Vespers 4pm.
Sunday Sept 6 th	14 th Sunday after Pentecost Miracle of the Archangel Michael at Colossae. Divine Liturgy 9:30am.
Monday Sept 7 th	Forefeast of the Nativity of the Mother of God. Vespers 4pm.
Tuesday Sept 8 th	Nativity of the Mother of God Divine Liturgy 10am.
Saturday Sept 12 th	Saturday before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross Vespers 4pm.
Sunday Sept 13 th	Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Anticipated) Divine Liturgy 9:30am. Dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Jerusalem (355)
Saturday Sept 19 th	St Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury and Patron of Archdiocese. Vespers 4pm.
Sunday Sept 20 th	16 th Sunday after Pentecost Afterfeast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Divine Liturgy 9:30am.
Saturday Sept 26 th	Holy Apostle Evangelist St John Vespers 4pm.
Sunday Sept 27 th	17 th Sunday after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 9:30am.

CONFESSIONS

Confessions before or after any service or by appointment.

Services at St Furse's Chapel in the garden of my home are: Mondays 3rd Hour 9am, Vespers 4pm on Mondays and Tuesdays.

COMMUNITY NEWS & NOTICES PILGRIMAGE REPORT

OPEN DAY AND COFFEE MORNING FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 4TH

We start at 10AM. Coffee or Tea with cake or biscuit. We hope to have some stalls on the lawn outside the church. There will be an Icon stall and book stall. Home made cake stall, raffle, and tombola and a stall with DVDs, and CDs. It is good to see old friends but we usually get some new visitors who are interested in Orthodoxy; it is good to spend time with them

INTRODUCTORY TALKS ON ORTHODOXY TUESDAY EVENINGS IN SEPTEMBER AT ST FURSEY'S HOUSE (LIBRARY)

1) Tuesday September 1st – 7pm

"Finding the New Testament Church."

We learn that the One Holy Catholic & Apostolic Church and the Orthodox Church are one and the same: founded at Pentecost as recorded in Acts of the Apostles.

2) Tuesday September 8th - 7pm

"Heaven upon Earth: Orthodox Worship."

The worship of the Orthodox Church has its origins in the Temple worship of the Old Testament as given to Moses by Our Lord in His pre-incarnate state: through the last supper and the Book of Revelation!

3) Tuesday September 15th – 7pm

"Deification" The Purpose of Our Humanity.

We consider St Peter's teaching in his second letter Chapter 1, verse 4 "and become partakers of the divine nature" once and learn that Our Lord as the second person of the Holy Trinity took upon Himself our human nature through Our Lady and the Holy Spirit in order to restore our fallen human nature.

4) Tuesday September 22nd – 7pm

"Windows into Heaven." The Holy Icons.

We will learn the Our Lord is truly man and the "Icon of the invisible God" Colossians 1. V15 and 1 Corinthians 1.15. And the 10 Commandments in Exodus 20. V4 reference to graven images do not forbid icons: (A graven image is a statue which is worshipped as a god!). St Basil the Great taught that the veneration, we pay to the icons passes to the 'prototype' i.e. the saint depicted in the icon.

These talks are designed to help non-orthodox understand some aspects of our faith and to remind ourselves of our Faith too; so, come along!

THANKS ARE DUE TO:

- 1) Tundi and her helpers who gave the church a good clean!
- 2) To Luke and Daniel for spreading the gravel on the car park at the back of the Church.

God Bless You All

Father Stephen

Telephone No: 01692 581849.

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.

THE BIRTH OF OUR MOST HOLY LADY THE THEOTOKOS

Small Vespers

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

TONE ONE

(to the special melody, O purest Virgin, thou joy of the heavenly hierarchies . . .)

✠. From the morning watch until the night, from the morning watch let Israel trust in the Lord (*Psalms* 129:6).

Joachim and Ann keep festival, having brought into the world the only Theotokos, first fruit of our salvation. With them we celebrate the feast today, blessing the pure Virgin from the root of Jesse.¹

✠. For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption: and He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities (*ibid.*, 7-8).

From Ann today has sprung forth a rod,² a branch given by God, even the Theotokos, salvation of men. From her, in manner past understanding, is born the Maker of all, who in His goodness purges all the indignity of Adam.

✠. O praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise Him, all ye people (*Psalms* 116:1).

The Maiden in whom God came to dwell, the pure Theotokos, glory of the prophets, the daughter of David, is born today of Joachim and Ann sober in spirit; and by her birthgiving she overthrows the curse of Adam that weighed upon us.

✠. For His merciful kindness is great towards us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever (*ibid.*, 2).

The soil which formerly was barren gives birth to fertile ground, and nourishes with milk the holy fruit sprung from her sterile womb. Dread wonder: she who sustains our life, who received within her body the Bread of Heaven, feeds at her mother's breast.

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

From a discourse by Saint Andrew of Crete, bishop (Oratio I: 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 law's 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.