

SELECTED LIVES OF THE SAINTS

OSITH (Osgyth, Osyth) (d. c.700) of Chich (Essex), was an obscure Anglo-Saxon princess. Her tribe was that of the Hwiccas; she was married to Sighere, king of the East Saxons (c.664-83), at the instigation of his overlord, Wulfhere, king of Mercia (656-75). One purpose of the marriage may have been to consolidate Christianity in Essex, whose state was precarious owing to Sighere's apostasy; *Bede has nothing to say of Osith, but does recount the reconversion of Sighere by bishop Jaruman. The son of Sighere and Osith, called *Offa, became king of the East Saxons but abdicated in 709. Osith meanwhile had founded a convent at Chich, died there, and was venerated as a saint.

Bede's silence and the lack of corroborative evidence to support these details from her late Legend make the story suspect. Its more picturesque details include the appearance of a large and aggressive white stag whenever Sighere tried to consummate the marriage (ignoring the fact that they had a son), Osith's flight to some East Anglian bishops who accepted her vow of chastity and persuaded her husband to give her land for her nunnery, her violent death at Chich at the hands of pirates because she refused to commit idolatry, and her carrying her severed head after death to a church three miles away, where she was buried.

ETHELBURGA (1) (Æðilburh) (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 *Totigith 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.

ETHELFLEDA (Elflæda) (fl. c.960), abbess of Romsey. Daughter of Ethelwold of Wessex who founded Romsey; Ethelfleda joined the community at an early age under *Merewenna and eventually became abbess.

Her Legend tells that she was brought to the notice of the king and queen and stayed at court, where her habit, for ascetical reasons, of bathing in the nude at night-time was the occasion of the queen's nervous illness, caused by her indiscreet curiosity when she followed her to see where she went. The queen was afterwards cured by the abbess's intercession. Ethelfleda died at an advanced age. Feast: 23 October.

TECLA (Thecla) **OF ENGLAND** (Thecla of Kitzingen) (d. c.790), Benedictine nun and abbess. English by birth and a relative of *Lioba. Tecla was a nun of Wimborne (Dorset) who was sent by the abbess Tetta to help *Boniface in his missionary work in Germany. For a time she was a nun under Lioba at Tauberbischofsheim until becoming abbess of Ochsenfurt and later Kitzingen. The year of her death is unknown, but her cult is testified by liturgical books which assign her feast, with the Roman Martyrology, to 15 October. Dates of 27 or 28 September are also found. Her shrine remained at Kitzingen until her relics and others were scattered during the Peasants' War of the 16th century.

BEGU (d. 660), Anglo-Saxon nun of Hackness (N. Yorkshire) who, according to *Bede, saw in a vision the death of *Hilda, the foundress of both Whitby and Hackness. In c.1125 the Whitby monks, short of relics of local saints owing to the translation of Hilda to Glastonbury and the lack of interest in *Caedmon, found at Hackness a sarcophagus, supposedly by revelation, which was inscribed *Hoc est sepulchrum Begu*. The relics in it were translated to Whitby, where miracles were reported, but another set of miracles was claimed by St. Bees, one of whose monks wrote this account of the Whitby translation. The two saints, the Irish Bega and the Yorkshire Begu, were thenceforth confidently identified. The lack of literary survivals of the Whitby cult is notable. Feast: 31 October.

Archdiocese of the
British Isles And
Ireland



Archbishop:
Metropolitan Silouan
(Oner)

St Fursey's
Antiochian
Christian Parish
Church

Yarmouth Road
Stalham
NR12 9PG

Parish Priest:
Father Stephen Weston

St Fursey's Antiochian Orthodox Church

COMMUNITY PROGRAMME & NEWSLETTER

October 2026



SERVICES IN OCTOBER 2026

(In the Parish Church unless otherwise stated)

Saturday Oct 3 rd	Hieromartyr Dionysius the Areopagite Bishop of Athens (c. 96). Vespers 4pm.
Sunday Oct 4 th	18 th Sunday after Pentecost Feast of Dedication Divine Liturgy 9:30am. Blessing of Catechumens).
Tuesday Oct 6 th	Holy Apostle Thomas (1 st) Divine Liturgy 10am.
Saturday Oct 10 th	Saint Paulinus Bishop of York (644) Vespers 4pm.
Sunday Oct 11 th	19 th Sunday after Pentecost Fathers of the Seventh Council (787). Divine Liturgy 9:30am.
Saturday Oct 17 th	Martyrs Ethelred & Ethelbert Princes of Kent (c 640). Vespers 4pm.
Sunday Oct 18 th	20 th Sunday after Pentecost St Luke Apostle & Evangelist (1 st) Divine Liturgy 9:30am.
Saturday Oct 24 th	St Demetrius Commemoration of the Dead Vespers 4pm.
Sunday Oct 25 th	21 st Sunday after Pentecost St Tabitha Widow (1 st c.). Divine Liturgy 9:30am.
Tuesday Oct 27 th	St Procla wife of Pontius Pilate 3 rd Hour 9am.

BRITISH ORTHODOX SAINTS COMMEMORATED IN OCTOBER

- 03 Ewald the Fair and Ewald the Dark, Martyrs
- 07 Osyth of Chich, Martyr
- 08 Iwi of Lindisfarne, Hermit
- 10 Paulinus, Bishop of York
- 11 Ethelburgh, Abbess of Barking
- 12 Edwin, King and Martyr
- Wilfrid, Bishop of York
- 14 Burchard, Bishop and Missionary*
- 15 Thecla of Wimborne, Abbess and Missionary
- 16 Lull, Archbishop and Missionary
- Vitalis, Hermit*
- 17 Ethelbert and Ailred, Martyrs
- Nothelm, Archbishop of Canterbury
- 19 Ednoth, Bishop of Dorchester-on-Thames, Martyr
- Frideswide of Oxford, Virgin
- 20 Acca, Bishop of Hexham
- 21 Conedus, Hermit*
- Tuda, Bishop of Northumbria
- 23 Elflada of Glastonbury, Virgin
- Ethelfleda, Abbess of Romsey
- 26 Albinus, Bishop and Missionary*
- Cedd, Apostle of Essex
- Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury
- Eata, Bishop of Hexham
- Edfrid, Abbot of Leominster, Confessor
- 28 Eadsige, Archbishop of Canterbury
- 30 Ethelnoth the Good, Archbishop of Canterbury
- 31 Begu, Nun
- Foillan, Missionary in East Anglia

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.



CONFESSIONS

Confessions before or after any service or by appointment.

SERVICES AT ST FURSEY'S

Services at St Furseys Chapel: There are normally 3rd Hour Monday with reading from the Fathers'. Vespers at 4pm. Tuesday Vespers 4pm and Compline 8:30pm after Bible Study. Please ring 01692 581849 to make sure it is on. Father Stephen has some off with Rosaline from Wednesday A.M. to Saturday.

COMMUNITY NEWS & NOTICES

OPEN DAY REPORT

Many thanks to those who helped out and supported this event. Due to the early rain, we had the stalls in the meeting room. We were glad to welcome our old friends and supporters and we had several new visitors too. £432 was raised which is the same as last year. Our next Open Day & Coffee morning will be on Friday 4th December. 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

TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY

This resumes on Tuesday October 6th at 7PM in the library at St Fursey's House, 111 Neville Road, Sutton. We will be studying the Parables using the Orthodox Study Bible, the little book by Bishop Dimitri and the larger study by St Theophylact of Ohrid.

THE BLESSING OF THE CATECHUMENS

Praise God we have several catechumens: Nicky, her brother Luke Lynne, Karl and maybe Suzanne! The blessing will take place before the Liturgy on Sunday October 4th, and the lessons will take place from 12 noon to 1PM after the Sunday Liturgy. Baptism and Chrismations' will be done on Sunday December 20th before the Liturgy.

God Bless You All!

Father Stephen

Telephone No: 01692 581849.

DEIFICATION

Deification is the ancient theological word used to describe the process by which a Christian becomes more like God. St. Peter speaks of this process when he writes, "As His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness . . . you may be partakers of the divine nature" (1:3, 4).

What does it mean to partake of the divine nature, and how do we experience this? To give an answer, let us first address what deification is not, and then describe what it is.

What deification is not. When the Church calls us to pursue godliness, to be more like God, this does not mean that human beings become divine. We do not become like God in His nature. That would not only be heresy, it would be impossible. For we are human, always have been human, and always will be human. We cannot take on the nature of God.

St. John of Damascus makes a remarkable observation. The word "God" in the Scriptures refers not to the divine nature or essence, for that is unknowable. "God" refers rather to the divine energies—the power and grace of God that we can perceive in this world. The Greek word for God, *theos*, comes from a verb meaning "run," "see," or "burn." These are energy words, so to speak, not essence words.

In John 10:34, Jesus, quoting Psalm 81:6, repeats the passage, "You are gods." The fact that He was speaking to a group of hypocritical religious leaders who were accusing Him of blasphemy makes the meaning doubly clear: Jesus is not using "god" to refer to divine nature. We are gods in that we bear His image, not His nature.

What deification is. Deification means we are to become more like God through His grace or divine energies. In creation, humans were made in the image and likeness of God (Gn 1:26) according to human nature. In other words, humanity by nature is an icon or image of deity. The divine image is in all humanity. Through sin, however, this image and likeness of God was marred, and we fell.

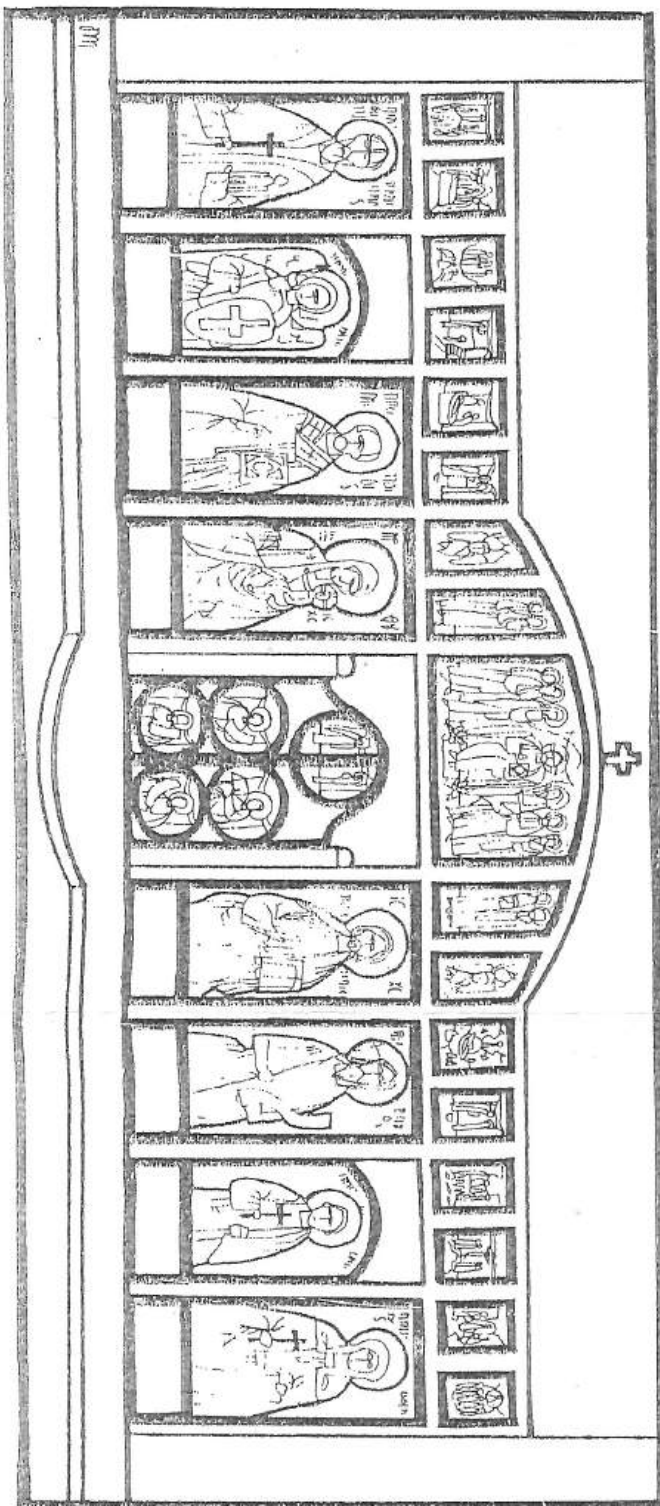
When the Son of God assumed our humanity in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, the process of our being renewed in God's image and likeness was begun. Thus, those who are joined to Christ, through faith, in Holy Baptism begin a process of re-creation, being renewed in God's image and likeness. We become, as St. Peter writes, "partakers of the divine nature" (1:4).

Because of the Incarnation of the Son of God, because the fullness of God has inhabited human flesh, being joined to Christ means that it is again possible to experience deification, the fulfillment of our human destiny. That is, through union with Christ, we become by grace what God is by nature—we "become children of God" (Jn 1:12). His deity interpenetrates our humanity.

Historically, deification has often been illustrated by the example of a sword in the fire. A steel sword is thrust into a hot fire until the sword takes on a red glow. The energy of the fire interpenetrates the sword. The sword never becomes fire, but it picks up the properties of fire.

By application, the divine energies interpenetrate the human nature of Christ. When we are joined to Christ, our humanity is interpenetrated with the energies of God through Christ's glorified flesh. Nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ, we partake of the grace of God—His strength, His righteousness, His love—and are enabled to serve Him and glorify Him. Thus we, being human, are being deified.

Vestments



In the Orthodox Church the clergy vest in special clothing for the liturgical services. There are two fundamental Christian vestments, the first of which is the baptismal robe. This robe, which is worn by bishops and priests at the service of holy communion and which should always be white, is the "robe of salvation"; the white garment in which every Christian is clothed on his day of baptism, symbolizing the new humanity of Jesus and life in the Kingdom of God. (Revelation 7:9ff)

The second fundamental vestment for Christian clergy is the stole or epitrachelion which goes around the neck and shoulders. It is the sign of the pastoral office and was originally made of wool to symbolize the sheep—that is, the members of the flock of Christ—for whom the pastors are responsible. Both bishops and priests wear this vestment when they are exercising their pastoral office, witnessing to the fact that the ministers of the Church live and act solely for the members of Christ's flock.

As the Church developed through history the vestments of the clergy grew more numerous. Special cuffs for deacons, priests, and bishops were added to keep the sleeves of the vestments out of the way of the celebrants during the divine services. When putting on their cuffs, the clergy read lines from the psalms reminding them that their hands belong to God.

A special belt was added as well to hold the vestments in place. When putting on the belt the clergy say psalms which remind them that it is God who "girds them with strength" to fulfill their service. Only the bishops and priests wear the liturgical belt.

All orders of the clergy wear a special outer garment. Deacons, sub-deacons, and readers wear a robe called a sticharion. It is probably the baptismal garment, decorated and made more elaborate. Deacons and sub-deacons also wear a stole called the orarion.

probably originally a piece of material upon which were inscribed the liturgical litanies and prayers (orare means to pray). The deacon still holds up the orarion in a position of prayer when he intones his parts of the divine services. The sub-deacon's orarion is placed around his back in the sign of the cross.

Priests wear their white baptismal robe over which they have their pastoral stole, cuffs and belt. They also wear a large garment called a phelonion which covers their entire body in the back and goes below their waist in front. This vestment was probably developed from the formal garments of the early Christian era and, under the inspiration of the Bible, came to be identified with the calling of the priestly life. When putting on his phelonion, the priest says the lines of Psalm 132:

Thy priests, O Lord, shall clothe themselves in righteousness, and the saints shall rejoice with joy always now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The bishops traditionally probably also wore the phelonion over which they placed the omoforion, the sign of their episcopal office as leading pastor of the local church. When the Christian empire was captured by the Turks in the fifteenth century, however, the Christian bishops of the East were given civil rule over all Christians under Turkish domination. At that time, since there was no longer a Christian empire, the bishops adopted the imperial insignia and began to dress as the Christian civil rulers used to dress. Thus, they began to wear the sakkos, the imperial robe, and the mitre, the imperial crown. They also began to stand upon the orlets (the eagle) during the divine services and to carry the staff which symbolized more their secular power than their pastoral office. At that time as well, the word despota (vladyko or master)—a title for temporal rather than spiritual



LITURGY PAGE

For the Dedication

(Tone 6)

6. The ancient Law commanded the celebration of the dedication, and it did well. But it is better to celebrate a dedication by a renewal; for, as Isaiah says, "the islands are renewed at the presence of God." These islands are the Churches of the Gentiles, which came to be founded and established in God. Thus, as we commemorate the dedication, let us celebrate a renewal!
5. Brethren: renew yourselves and begin a new life, putting aside your old nature. Let us control our passions which lead to death, re-dedicating all the faithful, so that they can hate the taste of evil. Let us no longer remember the former things, except to flee from them. In this way, man is renewed and the feast of the dedication may be celebrated.
4. O Christ, who are the eternal Word, establish Your Church as a tower of strength. Because You have founded it upon the Rock of Faith, it remains unshaken from age to age, since it contains You who became man for the Church in these latter days. We thank You, praising and singing: "You are from the beginning and eternal; O our King, glory to You!"

Troparion of the Dedication

(Tone 4)

As You had shown from on high the splendor of the firmament, so did You show on earth the splendor of the dwelling-place of Your holy glory: make it stand firm forever and ever, and accept the supplications which we offer there to You, unceasingly, through Your Mother, O You the Life and Resurrection of all!

HOMILY PAGE

From a sermon by Saint Augustine, bishop

(Sermon 336, 1.6: PL 38 [edit. 1861], 1471-1472, 1473)

THE BUILDING AND DEDICATION OF GOD'S HOUSE WITHIN US

We are gathered together to celebrate the dedication of a house of prayer. This is our house of prayer, but we too are a house of God. If we are a house of God, its construction goes on in time so that it may be dedicated at the end of time. The house, in its construction, involves hard work, while its dedication is an occasion for rejoicing.

What was done when this church was being built is similar to what is done when believers are built up into Christ. When they first come to believe they are like timber and stone taken from woods and mountains. In their instruction, baptism and formation they are, so to speak, shaped, leveled and smoothed by the hands of carpenters and craftsmen.

But Christians do not make a house of God until they are one in charity. The timber and stone must fit together in an orderly plan, must be joined in perfect harmony, must give each other the support as it were of love, or no one would enter the building. When you see the stones and beams of a building holding together securely, you enter the building with an easy mind; you are not afraid of its falling down in ruins.

Christ the Lord wants to come in to us and dwell in us. Like a good builder he says: *A new commandment I give you: love one another.* He says: *I give you a commandment.* He means: Before, you were not engaged in building a house for me, but you lay in ruins. Therefore, to be raised up from your former state of ruin you must love one another.

The work we see complete in this building is physical; it should find its spiritual counterpart in your hearts. We see here the finished product of stone and wood; so too your lives should reveal the handiwork of God's grace.

Let us then offer our thanksgiving above all to the Lord our God, from whom every best and perfect gift comes. Let us praise his goodness with our whole hearts. He it was who inspired in his faithful people the will to build this house of prayer; he stirred up their desire and gave them his help. He awakened enthusiasm among those who were at first unconvinced, and guided to a successful conclusion the efforts of men of good will.