

ORTHODOX PARISH OF ST AIDAN AND ST CHAD NOTTINGHAM



NEWSLETTER

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Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth

1926 - 2022

THE PARISH OF ST AIDAN AND ST CHAD, NOTTINGHAM

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Letter from Fr David

LOOKING FORWARD TO CHRISTMAS

Soon we shall begin to look forward to the second most important feast of the year, even the Nativity of Our Lord and Saviour.

We began the year on the first of September and soon we celebrated the Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God, the beginning of our Salvation. Then came the Feast of the Elevation of Holy Cross. Many wonder why the veneration of the Cross is so important. My thoughts are these.

We hold the Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ, with such high regard because she was vital for God's plan; one of us had to be in full harmony with Him, to co-operate with Him so that His plan could be brought into play. The incarnation is man and God in harmony with full co-operation. Only with the full assent of the Blessed Virgin could Christ come into the world. Our Lady is the forerunner of the Nativity of Our Lord.

In a similar way, the saving action of the Cross can only be brought about by there being a Cross which was made of three woods; three trees available to make the Cross on which Our Saviour could hang. As a woman was required for the Nativity, so, a tree was necessary for the Crucifixion; the Tree of Life which disappeared when Adam left Paradise in the Garden of Eden is now restored by the Tree of the Cross. A virgin,

pure and chaste became the Mother of Christ, a tree, also pure and chaste, became available for Christ's saving act.

Kenneth Graham sums up his view of creation: *“As for animals, I wrote about the most familiar in The Wind in the Willows because I felt a duty to them as a friend. Every animal, by instinct, lives according to his nature. Thereby he lives wisely, and betters the tradition of mankind. No animal is ever tempted to deny his nature. No animal knows how to tell a lie. Every animal is honest. Every animal is true—and is, therefore, according to his nature, both beautiful and good.”*

This applies to trees and flowers also. What a blessing that there were animals at our Lord's nativity and he was lain in a wooden crib.

So we look forward to the Nativity of Christ, where the Virgin Mary, on behalf of all of us is in full co-operation with God. She is surrounded by others also involved in God's plan. Mary is brought to Bethlehem by her spouse Joseph accompanied by his 12 year old son James. There is no room in the Inn (which might be no room in the guest room of the house of their relatives) but shelter is provided by a cave which was probably a part of the family house. Midwives were at the ready, family members were joyful in expectation, a donkey and goats were amazed by what was happening. Here was a family in readiness. Then there were angels preparing to appear and sing of glory and peace. Shepherds on the hills were alert and ready, whilst at a distance, Wise men. Magi, from the east, possibly Persia, representing gentiles, non jews, were attracted by a star and ready to respond to its call.

This is how God works, His plan always involves the whole of His creation with chosen individuals ready to respond. So, we go forward to the Feast of Nativity, at Christmas, full of joy that we are in Christ ready for such an inspiring feast. We worship Christ at the manger, invite him to our festal table, keep him in our hearts, resolve not to be distracted by any thing or anyone. Winterval is for others, Misrule was for the past. For us Christians, it is the Feast of Christ's birth on earth and we gather with

the Holy Family, the angels and the animals, indeed the whole creation and give thanks and rejoice at this wonderful Feast.

Fr David

She taught us more about grace than any other modern figure.

The Archbishop of Canterbury in his sermon on the Sunday following Queen Elizabeth's death, said, 'She was the most wonderful example of a Christian life and had the ability to see the value of people as God sees them.' He said the late Queen had. the capacity to make someone feel as if they were the only person in the room.

Archbishop Welby added, 'In her life and her example, God gave us - so graciously- the most wonderful example of a Christian life and a Christian death. Her late Majesty taught us as much, if not more, about God and grace than any other contemporary figure. We remember her not for what she had but for what she gave.'

He also described how, during a lunch, the late Queen had spent 20 minutes talking to a Rwandan woman whose entire family had been wiped out in the genocide. Reflecting on how she felt after the conversation, the woman said she had experienced healing.

Concluding his sermon, the Archbishop said, 'this is a moment of deep grief, indeed, as Her Majesty said herself, grief is the price we pay for love. But that love has in it the reality of hope that can lift heavy hearts, heal wearied spirits, for it is the love that originates in God.'

'All that is lost will be found again, as surely as Christ Jesus was raised from the dead and defeated death.' And he will gather us all together in heaven on the glorious day of resurrection, where in a different context, as Her late Majesty once said to us, in difficult times, 'We will, meet again.'

OUR LIFE

Eternal Remembrance

It was with deep sadness that, on 8th September, we received the news of the repose of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. Long she reigned over us within the bounds of Christian principles and not with the desire for personal power and authority; She had the wisdom and understanding that a true monarchical structure is a divine partnership in which God, the sovereign and the people all have an important role to play. Back in the mid 1980's, leading royal photographers were asked to sum up each member of the House of Windsor in just one word. The queen they said was 'awesome'

Following the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, 11th September, we were privileged to serve a Panikhida for our newly departed and gracious Queen.

St. Paul writing to Timothy, Bishop of Ephesus, instructs him: *First of all, then, I counsel that petitions, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for all human beings, including kings and all in positions of authority; so that we may lead quiet and peaceful lives, being godly and upright in everything. This is what God, our Deliverer, regards as good; this is what meets his approval* (1 Timothy 2:1).

We pray Lord, Grant Eternal Remembrance to Her Majesty Newly Departed Queen Elizabeth and Many Years for our Sovereign Lord, King Charles.

Many Years!

It was with great joy that Lucas, now known as John, was baptised, and received into the Holy Orthodox Church. Lucas John is a postgraduate student completing his doctoral thesis. He was baptised in full before Vespers on Saturday 10 September. He is named after St John the Theologian whose day is 26 September. May he be greatly blessed.

Academic Life

On Sunday 4th September, at the beginning of the Church's New Year, we prayed for our children beginning school and students returning to University.

Father Julian spent time on both the University Park and Jubilee campuses of the University of Nottingham during 'Fresher's week' helping to welcome and support new students.

Luke Spencer has now completed his University training and is seeking a post. David Spencer continues at Manchester University having changed his course to Economics.

In preparation for University, Anna Pote has begun to visit Universities as she tries to discern the right one for her. Daniil has now completed his year in Norway and is beginning his final year at Durham. As part of his studies, Danill has recently been participating in an archaeological dig on the Holy Island of Lindisfarne.

Fr Ephrem Berryman, Associate Chaplain at Leeds University, now priest, is able to add a new dimension to the life of the Chaplaincy. He plans to serve Liturgy in the Emanuel Centre on the other Sundays when Fr David is not there. This is warmly welcomed by other members of the Chaplaincy because they believe it good that the Chapel is used for worship every Sunday. It is hoped more students will become involved because of this fuller programme.

It has been a great joy that Ambrose (Luther), also from Leeds (and a server!), has been with us over recent months. His temporary job at the University of Nottingham has now become permanent. We congratulate him and hope that he will feel at home with us.

We offer prayers for all involved education whether in School or University, Student or Staff.

Ukraine.

Vladimir Solonina, now known by his baptismal name, Andriy, has obtained a fourth 4x4 for the Ukrainian forces. These have been driven to Poland, ready to cross the border into Ukraine. They have been packed with military and other supplies. We commend his dedication and continue to pray for peace in that troubled land.

Congratulations...

To Br Iain (MacLeod-Brudenell) Iain, dressed in pink, has been walking in aid of Breast Cancer support. His walk began from home and took him into Sherwood - quite a walk! Iain reports that there were several times when he felt like giving up but managed to keep going. Filling his three-wheeler with books, Iain gave these to the Sue Ryder charity shop as he passed.

I feel sure that Iain would gratefully receive any donations you might like to make.

Supporting our junior members. At our recent Parish Advisory Council meeting thought was given to working with and supporting the younger children within our community. To facilitate this ministry, we are looking to identify an appropriate person to co-ordinate and lead this work. Could this be you? Do you know of a parish member that you feel would be suited to this role? Please discuss any thoughts you may have with Fr Julian.

HOW A DAY OF SADNESS WAS TURNED INTO A DAY OF GREAT HOPE

The summer's gone – too quick! And our lives go, and our friends, and places that we love, our parents! We can't stop them, and we have to say goodbye. The days we have to say good-bye – those days we dread. We look forwards to those days when we will say 'Hello', but good-byes we do not want to say. How does one make a "Good-bye day" into a special day? With a special celebration; with special words, with sharing -

because then the person will stay with you, attracted and kept by your love and devotion.

When the 10 days mourning were announced, I realised that this country was given the chance to experience and articulate the love and devotion, which make good-byes not good-byes anymore and which make someone's presence eternal. Even if we could not articulate it, we all felt that something unusual and extraordinary, something grand and historically monumental, something ancient like the creation of the earth or the birth of a civilization was happening. Perhaps the seeds were planted in me when I was a child? Perhaps there, in my heart, came my dad, who with a cheeky smile would sing "Lovely Rita, meter maid" (how could anyone ever think of such a banal thing – a song about "a meter maid")... or when he would comment on the pictures of the royal family, the Queen, the Prince, Princess Diana, and the Queen-Mother – which were on display in front of the residency of the British Embassy, next to which we had the opportunity to live for nearly 30 years! This big fancy house behind the fence every day made our area feel special, unusual and safe. The Embassy always had a guard, and there was sunshine in the trees in front, so in a way I always lived next to a mini-Buckingham palace. Perhaps the juices of this ancient tradition have managed to seep into my heart even there, on a central Sofia Street. Perhaps in many ways the solemnity and order of mourning and rites of departure reminded me of our own church traditions? Or perhaps because after I came to the UK, I swore an oath of service to the Queen? Who knows? And although we were discouraged by many, including by Fr Julian, about taking a trip to London, and we thought we'd spend the day in front of the TV, could we really be a part of a community or of a society if we did not make the effort to BE THERE? The sense of vigil in the country was tangible; it was there. It was like the angels who never sleep – people queueing to venerate the body of the Queen in Westminster Hall, the royal guards who were keeping vigil by the body of the Queen; royal families and important guests from countries of the whole world were arriving (Macron and Biden themselves! And no Putin!) And crowds were gathering. Not for...

a football match or for the Goose fair, but for something quiet, and civilized and solemn, and full of love. There were smiles and tears. People had come and spent the night in waiting on behalf of the parents they loved. The sky over London was glorious. So, by 6:30 am on the Monday morning of the Royal funeral, I had decided that our family loves train journeys and that it was a day for one! On the train to London, I turned on my phone to the BBC. We could hear the bagpipes playing in preparation of the funeral service at Westminster Abbey but Nicholas was very conscious of playing loud music on the train: “There are other people here!” But those other people were all doing one thing – listening to the preparation for the procession and the funeral service at the Westminster Abbey!

We joined the crowds in the streets of London and made it to Hyde Park. There we joined many, many others to watch the end of the service on the big screens which were installed in many places. We heard the last horns blow, and we heard the bag-pipe playing from the balcony. Majestic and beautiful! Then the long and slow procession started. We followed it attentively, even the children, step by step, we watched when they marched along the Mall, when they squeezed through and under the Horse Guards Gate, when they reached the Palace and when they marched steadily along Constitution Hill; when they reached Wellington Arch. Until then, these names had not had much meaning for me. Now London was empty of cars and was only full of people, guards, trees, sun and skies and I was learning history in situ! And despite all this ceremonial, the people were calm, quiet, chatting, while the Queen and her family were travelling past Hyde Park towards Windsor; there was a sense of peace, and a great sense of hope, as if pouring with the rays of the September sun. People were grateful for being given the chance to say good-bye to their monarch... People were waiting for the Queen all along the road to Windsor; her own black pony was also waiting to say good-bye. Perhaps there are many who believe she’s not done much for them; and who owe her nothing, as she herself said in her coronation speech – yet there was a feeling of gratitude for being given the chance

to participate in this ceremony and tradition, which both have the capacity of stopping time and give the taste of being part of a long-century history and part of eternity. And when the organ of St George's Chapel started playing from the many screens in Hyde Park, it sounded as if someone sitting in the sky was playing it. The choir sang their favourite Orthodox Kontakion for the Departed: "Give rest, O Lord, to the souls of Thy servants, with Thy saints." (A few days earlier, when the Queen was carried to the Westminster Hall where she was to be laid in state for nearly five days, the choir sang a beautiful Psalm 139 (let's say the music of which was inspired by the Orthodox). Were we not all there, because secretly deep in our hearts the Queen represents every person on earth, and because everyone craves for such honour and love and integrity, embodied in a funeral like this one, in which every detail was thought of – even every flower and leaf in the funeral wreath. ("Rosemary – representing remembrance; myrtle – a symbol of happy marriage..." – the BBC said.). And yet, the bishop said – in death we are all equal, and the King is one – The Queen must have "known" about this mystery. She must have sensed it. She had the sense, the knowledge of something that was greater, something which could not be explained; a sense that we are bigger than history, but also that history is bigger than us. She knew when and how to hold the reins, and when to let go and not lose the pulse of time: because it is God Who is in charge of time. This wisdom which she had, made her to be admired by so many. And it was tangible, for all our senses, during these 10 days after her death and especially on this glorious day of her funeral. May her Majesty rest with all the saints and all those she loved and who loved her in the Kingdom, and keep praying for us and for this world!

Vera Pote

SOME THOUGHTS ON BAPTISM

Baptism is the means by which we become members of the Church and therefore of the mystical body of Christ. Water is, of course, one of the most ancient of religious symbols because water cleanses and purifies. In Christian baptism there is the additional symbolism of passing through the waters of death. In baptism these symbols are not just analogies but visual symbols of a real process, and they impart, spiritually, what they depict physically. This perhaps needs some explanation.

Purification by water. We are born into a ‘fallen’ world in which good and evil are inextricably mixed. We are conscious of this in ourselves, where ‘wanting our own way’, and the urge to offend and hate those we dislike, battles against our better impulses to understand, befriend and forgive. Baptism does not destroy our bad impulses, for if it did so it would reduce us to the status of helpless infants who have to have everything done for them. In such a world there would be no heroic endeavour and we would be deprived of our own part in the conquest of evil. What our washing through baptism signifies (apart from the washing away of actual sin) is not our beginning but our ending; not our present but our future state, which is indeed a new beginning. Through baptism we are enrolled as citizens of heaven, where we shall appear cleansed, purified and redeemed. As Christians we are always in process of becoming what, in eternal reality, we already are – children of God and brothers and sisters of Christ.

Passing through the waters of death. In baptism the candidate undergoes a symbolic death by immersion in order to be united to Christ’s sacrificial death on the Cross and thus to participate also in his resurrection. As St Paul remarks, ‘we are buried with him by baptism unto death that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life’ (Romans 6: 4). However, this is where a difficulty arises, for how realistic must that symbolism be? There is a school of thought (the rigorist position) which insists that, for baptism to be valid, the candidate must undergo triple *immersion*. But there is

another school of thought which maintains that ‘dying to this world’ is adequately symbolized by triple *affusion* – i.e. the pouring of water over the whole body from a position immediately above the head. In missionary situations, where there is no church close at hand, and where baptism sometimes takes place in a lake or a river, total immersion is usually possible; but in the case of an adult catechumen it is extremely difficult to practice total immersion in a church or baptistry. St John Chrysostom and St Gregory of Nyssa both talk of the triple immersion *of the head* (a significant phrase), and in some places it was presumably possible for candidates to kneel in the piscina (sunk font) and have their heads dipped under the water. In other cases, however, where the piscina had a small diameter (and many early piscinae were both small and shallow), the officiating priest or bishop must have simply poured water over the candidate’s bowed head. The unquestioning insistence by rigorists on total immersion is hard to understand since many early mosaics and frescoes of Christ’s baptism show Jesus standing in the River Jordan to a depth of two or three feet while St John baptizes him by affusion! I would just add that the total immersion of infants involves a degree of real danger, and a few years ago (I think it was in Greece) a child actually drowned while being thus baptized.

The baptism of infants became a live issue during the Reformation with some Protestant groups maintaining that baptism should be administered only to those who already believe and are of an age to understand what belief involves. However, this so-called ‘believer’s baptism’ seems to me mistaken on several grounds.

In the first place, I would argue, it betrays a misunderstanding of the nature of conversion. We are converted, not in order to undergo baptism but *because* we are baptized. It is not, as in former times, a case of men ‘feeling after God if haply they might find him.’ Through the Church, God takes us by the hand and receives us. The choice remains ours: to accept or decline that invitation according to how we live our lives; but we are not left simply to make what we can of our original ‘bad’ destiny.

In another way too, believer's baptism weakens the connection between the individual and the Church. If a person's salvation is made to depend on a conversion experience, those who do not have that experience tend to be relegated to a sort of social catechumenate. "Anna felt as she had often felt before that she existed only on the fringe of the Methodist Society. She had not been converted; technically she was a lost creature; the converted knew it, and in some subtle way their bearing towards her, and others in her case, always showed that they knew it" (*Anna of the Five Towns*, chapter 4). Christians are members of Christ's body and are upheld and supported not just by their own faith but by the faith of the whole Christian community. As theologians have sometimes remarked, 'we are saved all together or not at all.'

In this connection we do well to remember the story of the palsied man who was lowered through the roof into a crowded room where Jesus was preaching. *Seeing the faith of the man's friends*, Jesus said to the sick man, 'Be of good cheer. Thy sins are forgiven thee' (Mark 2: 5; Luke 5: 20). And then, how often, when pernicky clergymen refuse to baptize an infant because the parents are not regular churchgoers, do the parents reply, 'But Jesus said, Suffer the little children to come to me.' Personally I am not convinced that this text has anything directly to do with baptism, but as a general principle it cannot be simply ignored.

Finally, I feel the need to dispose of a wretched superstition which seems to be still prevalent in eastern Europe, namely that it is forbidden to pray for a child before he or she has been baptized. The idea that we are forbidden to pray for anyone, Christian or otherwise, is outrageously *unchristian*. On Trinity Sunday, Orthodox Christians even pray for the souls in hell. Specifically, as regards baptism however, there are two Orthodox services associated with the birth of a child: the prayers said on the first day after a woman has given birth; and the naming of the child on the eighth day. In both of these services prayers are said for the as yet unbaptized child.

Deacon Ian.

Gatton, Shrewsbury

Many of us have visited the Holy House at Gatton. Brother Aidan was the mastermind in its construction. He was brought up on an isolated farm and could turn his hand to building, plumbing, and wood working. Some railway sleepers are part of the ceiling near the chapel. His life took a different direction when he left this isolated lonely setting. He is now Aidan Hart the famous iconographer. The chapel and house will have visitors by arrangement but at present the situation is in a state of flux. Fr Philip Hall is moving out and a different priest is moving in. The Stiperstones Trust is a registered charity, which owns the property.

One of the recent visitors was Alexandra Simunic from Croatia. This was written before the things changed.

I walked down the street in west Ealing, as I was returning home from work and saw some people who just came out from the Solicitor's office. I stopped for a while; this scene returned me to my banking lawyers' days in Croatia. Life that is left so far away from me now. Here in big city where I live now, unbelievably it is peaceful and quiet. Anyway, last weekend we wished to go out of London, to Shropshire, to visit an Orthodox monastery which is part of Antiochian Church – with the monks who are mainly British. That was a very new experience for me. In some way similar, but at the same time different than Serbian monasteries which I visited earlier in my old country.

This is the Monastery of Saint Anthony and Saint Cuthbert, which is located close to the National Trust area of Stiperstones. Here, nature and plants are quite different from the world where I grew up. Here, there are long green meadows and a plant different but similar to the plant we call “smilje” in Serbo-Croat. Most amazingly there were stones left from the Ice Age period, from where you can enjoy the open vistas to Wales. Monks live in the 'old English' type of house with the big living room, fireplace and bookshelves

During the nights we heard sounds from nature - like the sound of cows, which wander around and graze. On the nearby hill we can see a lot of

sheep too. I love them so much! Church is very small, but inside of the church you can feel that here people pray a lot. Rooms are separated from the main house. They are made from wood and are either on the edge of the forest or deeper into the forest. If you want to stay in the small hut/cell in the forest, you must have a lot of courage...something that I'm still lacking.

This small monastery had a lot of relics and they made quite an impact on my soul. But time which I spent in the monastery was also disturbed with some temptations. One of the temptations happened just before I left for the monastery. Every time I went to monasteries in the past, I wanted to bring something which is coming from my heart. This time I wanted to take honeycakes. I put them into the oven and then relaxed on the sofa and completely forgot about them. Suddenly I remembered but arrived at the oven just in time to save them. I took them to the monastery with me. I met some new people there too - English people who became Orthodox, and who seem very serious in their faith. Also, I became more familiar English sense of humour and gentler attitudes to life.

On the returning from the monastery, local flocks of pheasants didn't let us pass. They stopped the traffic on the road. Maybe they wanted to tell us: 'please stay little bit longer in this beautiful place!'

Sandra Simunic Miljkovic

Childhood memories from the High Street -they go back a long way!

I loved looking in the *See More-See Better* optician's window display. There was a really good selection of glass eyes. They were a strange shape and bigger than I had expected. Moving on to the chemist, their window display was always a row of enormous strange shaped bottles full of different coloured liquid. All chemists displayed them as it showed they were qualified chemists. Poison bottles were made of ribbed glass so you could not confuse them with a bottle of cough medicine. Yes, you could buy poison over the counter but you had to sign the Poison Book and give your address. If the chemist did not like the look of you, he

would not allow you to buy the poison. Barbers' shops always displayed a pole with red and white stripes depicting blood and bandages. Barbers often did shaving as well as cutting hair and a 'cut-throat' razor was used. Butchers, particularly in the food market often had a side of beef hanging up with the back bone clearly visible. Meat was hung before it was cut into neat pieces. The shop always had sawdust on the floor and the assistants were forever sharpening knives or rubbing salt into a big wooden block and then scrubbing it vigorously. The cattle market and abattoir were nearby and it was exciting to watch the farmers and animals at the Monday auction. Often a pig, sheep or bullock escaped but its freedom was short-lived as hurdles were around to stop the escapee in its tracks.

One ironmonger's shop had an exciting payment system which involved putting payment into a canister and watching it zoom across some wires near the ceiling and giving off a hissing sound to rival a steam train. It ended up in the cashier's office and any change was zoomed back to the assistant who had sent it. I believe this overhead payment system is still in use at a local Builders' Merchants. No doubt generations of builders loved it and were well able to repair it if it malfunctioned.

John A. Jackson was a jeweller and watch repairer. There was a big clock hanging high above his shop. This was very useful for all the steelworkers as, if they were late for a shift, they would lose pay so knew they had to speed up on their bike to get there before the works buzzer sounded. This buzzer could be heard all over the town at the change of shifts. What was not generally known was that the works corrected the buzzer's timing by Jackson's clock and Jackson's corrected their clock by the buzzer!

A mention must be given to one shop that was known locally as Morgan's mucky book shop. I went in there wearing my school uniform and was aged about 12. At that time there was much talk about banning horror comics and I wanted to see one and discover what was so terrible about them. I asked the shopkeeper, 'Please, I'd like to buy a horror comic'. He looked at me reproachfully and said, 'Oh, I don't stock anything like that'.

I asked for one that was the nearest and one was provided. It contained an item about the decaying lips the rest was nothing much or else it went over my head. I explained to my parents that I had been on a fact-finding mission. They were not impressed.

Looking back, all these childhood experiences were genuine. Many children now are kept on a short rein but find great pleasure from TV, phones and other electrical devices. As well as our visits to the town, we were closer to nature and able to free-range in the fields, streams and woods. Who had the better deal?

Frances



The church ready for the after feast of the Exaltation of the Cross

Photo by Yelena



Iviron, Mt Athos. Fr Julian and Fr David sometimes stay here.

As I write this, Fr David should be enroute for Iviron