

**ORTHODOX PARISH OF ST AIDAN
AND ST CHAD NOTTINGHAM**



NEWSLETTER

Nov – Dec 2023 : Cost £1.00



St Cecilia – Patron Saint of Musicians

Nov 22nd

THE PARISH OF ST AIDAN AND ST CHAD, NOTTINGHAM

Worshipping in the Church of St Aidan,

Arnold Road, Basford, NG6 0DN

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Newsletter: Nov - Dec 2023

Fr Julian's Letter

I don't know about you but once we get to Goose Fair, the weeks just seem to fly by!

A Couple of weeks after the Fair, someone that I have known all my life, has a birthday. A couple of weeks after this we have Bonfire Night and then, before you know it, Christmas and the New Year arrive. It all seems so very hectic. And here lies an irony! What we tend to forget, is that these next few weeks are, in many ways, liminal, a time for waiting.

On the 15th we, as Orthodox Christians, begin our period of Advent. For many, Advent is a time for a frenetic rush to buy presents, decorate, plan parties and celebrations amidst the commercial world's reminders of the number of shopping days 'til Christmas. But it should not be like that!

The word *Advent* comes from the Latin *adventus*, or *arrival*. Advent is a special time for us to slow down and prepare our hearts to receive Christ. Advent is a time of waiting. But not all kinds of waiting are alike. In Advent, we wait in a special way.

Our Advent our waiting should be expectant. We should wait with an expectation of the beauty ahead of us. We wait expectantly for the Christ Child to come again; we wait with an anticipation that it will be something wonderful and maybe surprising. Will it be a gift in prayer?

An encounter with family or friends where we know Christ is present among us? Only God knows.

Our Advent waiting requires us to make space. Although the main action in Advent is God's, we have our part too. We should not be waiting passively for God to act. Rather, we should make room for God's action to be something that we can welcome, something that I can pay attention to when it happens. Here the images of the inn and cave/stable can be helpful. There was no room at the inn for Mary, Joseph, and Jesus, because it was too full. The cave/stable was poor and simple but had space for them to take shelter. Are our hearts open to God? What are the concerns and worries we should surrender, to make room for Jesus to come again this Nativity?

Our Advent waiting should be hopeful. As we move deeper into winter, the days grow shorter and the nights longer, The Apostle John's tells us, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5). God has already given us the one who loves, redeems, and heals the world. Indeed, for us, unlike for Mary and Joseph, Jesus has already come into the world. We have the experience of the entire Church community which has encountered the living Christ before us to give us hope. And, I hope we all have our own individual past experiences of where God has been present. God's light and love always shines through whatever kinds of darkness that we might encounter be it illness, grief, injustice, worries about work or relationships, spiritual aridity, or darkness. So, we wait with hope, and we wait together, and not alone.

Wait, be still and know!



OUR LIFE

On Sunday 24 September, Fr David attended the Chaplaincy Chapel in Leeds when Fr Ephrem, Associate Chaplain, was serving. He serves Liturgy according to Romanian tradition and the chapel is suitably arranged accordingly with elaborate carved mahogany icon stands and many icons. The Liturgy was beautifully served and the church well attended with a student leading the singing. Fr David remembered and explained the comment of Metropolitan Kallistos who said that the Orthodox Church is like a large house with many rooms. Each room is of a different style and with varying customs but all the rooms are interconnected - Orthodoxy is one, fully united despite some cultural differences. On this day, the Chapel was arranged in a very Romanian way whilst, when Fr David serves, there is a simpler arrangement following the Slavonic tradition as established by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, our founding bishop. It is good that both traditions are represented in a university (There is also a newly restored Orthodox Society which includes those of Coptic Tradition). Fr David visits on the second Sunday of each month whilst Fr Ephrem serves on most other Sundays. The Chaplaincy appreciates that the chapel is used every Sunday morning for Christian worship and we of Orthodoxy are pleased that we are the ones who facilitate this. We offer the Liturgy for all who attend and for the well-being of the life of the University.

Fr David visited Dundee on the weekend of 30 September for a reunion of fellow graduates of the year 1962. Although only few could be present, sixty one years on, it was a very enjoyable occasion.

On Sunday morning, Fr David attended St Paul's Episcopalian Cathedral which he used to attend as a student. The Eucharist was served well with a forceful choir but at the end the blessing was thus; "In the Name of the Creator, the Son and the Holy Spirit.....". When leaving the Church, he was greeted by the Dean celebrant and he noted

to her that "Father" was not mentioned. "Well, we use inclusive language" replied the Dean, "Such heresy", Fr David said and despaired that this was now in a Church formerly of catholic tradition. By using inclusive language, God is excluded and there is failure to understand the nature of the Holy Trinity. All three Persons of the Holy Trinity are involved in Creation, not only one. Furthermore, the Trinity is a relationship of Love, in whose image we are made. not primarily about creation. It is so sad that this fine Church community has now become one of the twenty-five thousand Christian sects throughout the world with loss of primary understanding of the core of the Christian Faith.

I despair!

OUR LIFE cont.

Education

As the new academic year begins, we pray for all who will be working or studying in our schools and Universities. Please remember, in your prayers, those within our own church family who will be beginning new schools/universities, returning to familiar schools/universities, or preparing to leave school/university.

Please pray for Fr Julian, Chaplain to Nottingham University and for Fr David in his role as Chaplain to Leeds University.

At Nottingham University: Fr Julian will be continuing to offer pastoral support to **all** who seek help or guidance and will continue to lead the 'Orthodox Prayer of the 6th Hour', each Tuesday, in the university chapel.

He is currently preparing to lead the much-valued Bereavement course which is scheduled to be delivered later this month (*October*). This six-week course, delivered by 'Teams', is offered to both staff and students and is always fully subscribed.

You may be interested to know that the Chaplaincy and Faith Support Team at the university was recently nominated for a Professional Services Award in the Category *Embedding Collaboration*. The

nomination process was open to all UoN sites, so this was an international event with several hundred teams participating. I'm pleased to say that we were shortlisted to win the award - four teams shortlisted out of more than thirty nominations in the category. However, while we did not, in the end, win the award, our team was highly commended for the collaborative work that we do.

Condolences

It was sadness that we learned of the 'falling asleep' of Vira Tsymbal, Grandmother of our dear sister Lena.

Vira was born July 14th, 1936, Rubizhne, Ukraine. She has seen the WWII as a child and *remembered* being evacuated by Germans (to Poltava) from her town of Rubizhne when Soviet army was advancing 1943. She vividly remembered several events during the war, in particular, being miraculously saved when a fragment of a shell flew into their home bomb shelter sadly killing another child. Tragically, Vira was again evacuated when the Russian army begin its 'Special Operations' in Ukraine.

During her life Vira worked for more than 50 years, as a veterinary scientist, in her research Institute in Kharkiv. She retired from the position of senior scientist, and a head of laboratory. She had a PhD, and several patents for vaccines bearing her name.

Vira is survived by her daughter Natalia and Natalia's children: Lena, Maria, and Konstantin; all of whom Fr Julian was privileged to meet as he conducted Vira's funeral and burial in All Saints Church, Kirk Hallam. Please remember Lena, Kirill, Max, Lev, Maria and Dimitri and their family at this time of 'bright sadness'. Eternal Remembrance, Vira.



Thank You!

There are many people who work hard and commit a great deal of their time and effort to ensure that our worship, fellowship, and hospitality are the best we can offer. Thank you all!

I, *Fr Julian*, am never comfortable identifying individuals or groups for praise. After all, as our St Paul tells us;

“... there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.”

However, I would, if I may like to offer thanks to all the members of our choir, on behalf of us all.

When our choir is at full strength, our worship is truly elevated beyond comprehension. When our choir numbers are low, who is not moved by the beauty of the words and voices we hear. The feasts that we have had the joy to celebrate are in no small measure enhanced by You all, Thank you. Thank you for your support, and for your willingness to share your gifts with us.

A New Guide to our Liturgy!

With a great deal of help and support from Steve Charters we have now produced “**A Guide To The Orthodox Liturgy**”. It is intended that these guides be given to our ‘visitors’ to help them navigate their way through the liturgy. For those who may desire to see a copy, they will shortly be available to view on our website, or a hard copy can be obtained from Tina or Fr Julian.

WINTER IS APPROACHING

The time has come when we put away sunhats and the garden furniture but few of us find it necessary to travel to the French Riviera to avoid the colder weather. Some birds have different ideas and have already organised themselves into enjoying sunnier climes but why some birds migrate and others do not, is the focus of a field of research. Finding food generally is believed to be the main driver.

Taking a journey that in some cases can stretch to a round-trip distance of several thousand miles is a dangerous and arduous undertaking. The physical stress of the trip, lack of adequate food supplies along the way, bad weather, and in recent decades, collisions with brightly lit tall buildings all add to the hazards of the journey

A question arises asking how birds know the way, particularly if they are flying to the southern hemisphere

Research on discovering the precise means by which birds find their way between their breeding and wintering grounds is still on-going. We do however know that most use a combination of aids.

One well tried method is *Follow the leader*

This is a very simple method of getting to where you need to go if you follow someone who knows the way. Young geese and swans tend to migrate with their parents on their first trip, which helps to correct any youthful navigational errors.

Some birds also make use of landmarks to guide them, hugging coastlines, following rivers and making for key landmarks, such as the Straits of Gibraltar, which offers them the shortest possible sea crossing. It is thought that sound and smell can even play a role in the last few miles.

Most birds are born with an internal satnav system which enables them to pinpoint their route by the position of the sun and the moon. They are also quite good as astronomers as research shows that they use the Pole Star and the constellation of Orion to aid navigation.

In recent decades, many long-distant migrants have been killed by collisions with tall buildings and the lights on them are starting to

outshine all but the brightest stars. It is not yet known if this will transform our night-time skies and confuse migrating birds.

Birds have a mineral called magnetite embedded in their skulls which picks up on the Earth's magnetic forces. They know instinctively which way is north and which is south which is more than can be said for some humans!

For some mammals, hibernation is another clever adaptation as this allows them to survive many of the perils of the winter season. They all need to fatten up for the long sleep and harvest time means that food is plentiful for all. Food is scarce in Winter and it can be unpleasantly cold so putting on weight and growing thick fur before going to sleep is 'a good idea'.



Very snug.

Please do not disturb.

The wonders of nature never cease to amaze me. The biggest danger to wild life now is loss of habitat and pest control. There are now far fewer birds and butterflies in our garden and urban foxes are unwelcome guests.

Frances



If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Ode to the West Wind

Percy Bysshe Shelley 1792 - 1822

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Many Christians seem genuinely puzzled by the Sermon on the Mount. On the one hand they will concede that as a statement of the Mosaic Law it has never been bettered. On the other hand, they tend to feel that it is too idealistic – impractical even. If, in response to every injury, we were to turn the other cheek, would not evil have long since overwhelmed the world? Must we turn the other cheek when one country invades another country or embarks on a policy of genocide? Surely it is necessary to meet naked aggression with exemplary force for the sake of the victims, and to show that crime doesn't pay? We cannot wait for the gracious regeneration of society in order to make life tolerable. Will prayer prevent thugs from beating up your next-door neighbour? These are real issues and they have to be faced. In this world, the choice is not always a straightforward one between good and evil. Sometimes we find ourselves trapped in a situation in which the only choice is between two forms of evil. I remember a television programme in which the late Metropolitan Anthony Bloom was questioned by a BBC interviewer. 'Were you not a member of the French Resistance?' he was asked. 'Yes,' he replied challengingly. 'And did you ever kill any Germans?' 'Yes,' he replied, equally emphatically. 'But you profess to be a disciple of Christ,' the interviewer persisted. 'How can you justify killing another human being? His response was memorable. 'Was I to stand by and let others do the dirty work,' he answered, 'and then, when France was liberated and peace was restored, come forward and say, "Look! my hands are clean!"'?"

So where does all this leave the Sermon on the Mount? And the answer is: precisely where it has always been – at the very pinnacle of ethical understanding. What we have to appreciate is the context of that Sermon.

Jesus was no puritan (he was even accused of being a wine-bibber). He laid no harsh ascetic demands on his disciples and was compassionate in his response to sins of the flesh ('publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before the righteous'). As for Sabbath observance, again and again he protested against its inhuman interpretation. 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.' People's needs came first.

What is often overlooked is the fact that the Sermon on the Mount was directed, not just at his would-be disciples but also at the Pharisees. They claimed to keep the Law and condemned everybody who didn't (cf. the parable of the Pharisee and the publican). In fact, they didn't keep the Law in anything like its purity, and the Sermon showed them how they failed. ('Ye have heard it said.... But I say unto you....'). Yes, Jesus enjoined his disciples to aim higher than the Pharisees ('Be ye perfect even as your Father is perfect' -Matt.5: 45), but he knew that they would sometimes fall short, either through human weakness or force of circumstances – else why do we need forgiveness? My other authority for saying this is the apostle Paul, who knew the Sermon on the Mount as well as anyone, and was at pains to point out that no-one ever managed to keep the Law in all its fulness. Hence, we are not to judge other people as the Pharisees did (*and as their modern equivalents still do!*) 'for with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged' (Matt.7: 1). Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.

The ultimate test of our allegiance to the Sermon on the Mount is to forgive someone who has committed a terrible crime against us, or against those we love. That is extraordinarily difficult and may take many years – even a lifetime. We can only forgive such things when we begin to understand and pity the human condition: I mean the fact that all evil is part of a vicious chain and owes something to the evil perpetrated by previous generations. But unless we forgive, how can the chain be broken? -
Deacon Ian.

St Cecilia (shown on front cover)

St Cecilia of the 3rd Century was a Roman martyr famed for her singing, but her popularity is due to the 5th century legend. She was betrothed to a pagan named Valerian but both became Christians. Both were arrested and martyred by the Romans soldiers. Three blows from an axe failed to kill Cecilia immediately but she did survive for three days. Six hundred years later her relics were found and these were incorrupt but disintegrated on exposure to air.

St Cecilia has been most renowned as the patron saint of all musicians. At the foundation of the Academy of Music in Rome she was chosen as its patron.

Quite often St Cecilia is depicted in church-stained glass windows, St Cecilia's church at Girton near Newark being an example. She is generally shown her with an organ or a lute.

We are very blessed with our own church choir here. They enhance every service by their talent and they are also very loyal.

To Our Choir – Thank you and you are much appreciated by all!





Above: Trent Bridge in Nottingham. The picture does not show the speed at which the water is flowing.





The Metropolis of Athens in 2016, after the end of the repair works of the damage caused by the 1999 Athens earthquake

We have had floods, but at least we suffered no earthquakes in the UK!

This is the last newsletter of 2023
We wish all our readers health and happiness
for
the Christmas Season and for 2024