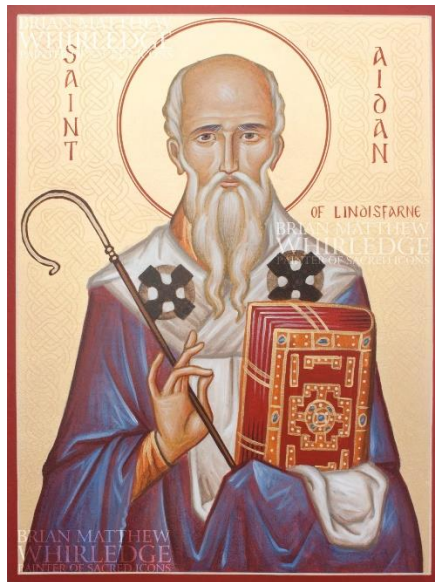


**ORTHODOX PARISH OF ST AIDAN
AND ST CHAD NOTTINGHAM**



NEWSLETTER

July– Aug 2024



Saint Aidan of Lindisfarne

August 31st

**Orthodox Parish of Saint Aidan & St Chad,
Nottingham.**

Archdiocese of Thyateira & Great Britain

Ecumenical Patriarchate

<http://www.nottinghamorthodox.org.uk/>

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The Advisory Council

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Tina Lowe (Church Warden)

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Continuing Bonds

I wonder if you are familiar with the concept of ‘Continuing bonds’?

Continuing Bonds (CB) is an idea that brings clarity, normalcy, and understanding to many who hear it. It's one of those concepts that makes so much sense that it feels like you already knew it, except you didn't know that you knew it until someone put it into words.

If you've never heard of CB, you're not alone. This concept emerged from grief literature which, let's be honest, most people haven't read

In 1996, Klass, Silverman, and Nickman shed light on an important bereavement concept. Their work questioned linear models of grief and observed many cases in which remaining connected to the deceased provided comfort and support in coping with loss and adjustment.

Not only does CB validate that grief is ongoing, but it also supports the idea that we, as bereaved people, remain connected with our loved ones, often for our entire lives. We don't detach from them or leave them behind, we carry them with us throughout our lives.

The concept underlying CB is obvious to many Orthodox Christians. We pray for the reposed, we ask the reposed to pray for us; we live and worship in a manner that honours and interacts with the reposed. We feel connected to special saints whose names we take or give to our loved ones.

We see these continuing bonds in Scripture – John 3:16, 1Thess 4:14 and how many times have we sung, “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and to those in the tombs he has given life”? Both Scripture and early Church history alike witness to the Church’s practice of asking the departed saints to pray for us. This was the universal practice of the Church in both the east and the west until the time of the Reformation. We pray to the saints not as ‘mediators’ i.e. one who reconciles estranged parties (as Christ reconciled us to God from whom our sins had estranged us); but as ‘intercessors’ i.e. one who prays for another, and this is what the Orthodox Church asserts, that the Mother of our Lord and the saints are interceding for us.

Each month we post a calendar of the saints remembered throughout that month; Let us use this calendar to remind us to honour and give thanks to our loved ones and our heavenly family who are praying for us.

Fr Julian

Our life

Bright Sadness

What beautify and joyous services we experienced together through Lent, Holy Week. and Pascha. I (Fr Julian) feel an immense sense of gratitude to all who prepared the church, sang in and with the choir, and prayerfully supported and participated in the services. And how wonderful were our Paschal Buffet and Vespers.

To each of you, thank you; and I sincerely hope that you experience that same sense of joy and blessedness.

Radonitsa

On the 14th May we were once again privileged to begin our celebration of Radonitsa (Day of Rejoicing) in the Wilford Hill Chapel. We are very grateful to Christine Duckworth (Crematorium Manager) and her team for their kindness and courtesy once again.

In ancient days, the Slavic people of Eastern Europe visited departed loved ones' graves as winter turned to spring. They would bring food and drink along with them to the gravesites to enjoy a feast with their buried family members. And so it was delightful to see, as we visited the local graves, that biscuits had been carefully placed on each orthodox grave in the Bulwell Cemetery.

The 'joyfulness' of this time stems from the glorious resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. By commemorating departed loved ones and celebrating Radonitsa we are sharing with them the joy and hope brought by Christ's resurrection.

New icon:

Fr David ordered the icon of the Mother of God of the Sign, which we use on the Sundays leading to Nativity. His friend, Dr George Andreadis, with whom he stays when in Thessaloniki, collected it when ready, paid for it and insisted it be his gift to our Parish. It is a beautiful icon and a very welcome gift. We are most grateful to George for his generosity. You will see the icon in due course. George was a post graduate student in Leeds University School of Dental Surgery, and with his wife Stella, a regular member of the Leeds Community and a supporter of our parish for many years.

Chaplaincy

Our Chaplaincy work continues both in Nottingham (UoN) and Leeds. At UoN June saw the launch of a new initiative. This is by way of continued bereavement support to those, Staff and Students, who have completed our 6-week course and who feel that they would benefit from further support.

Parish membership

We are currently updating our Parish membership list in accordance with the requirements of our Deanery Statute. Please ensure that you complete the 'Membership Form' (even if you have completed a for previously!) and return it, to Fr Julian or Tina, at your earliest convenience.

Completion of the form will ensure that you have a voice and voting rights at our parish meetings, AGM, etc. In addition, the statistics generated will allow us to demonstrate growth in the size of our community and ultimately, a justification for the continuation of, not only our parish, but also the Deanery. (Please request form from Fr Julian or Tina if you have not already received one)

AGM, Parish Advisory Council, etc

Our Parish Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on Sunday 7th of July following the Liturgy and refreshments. Please make every effort to attend as your opinions and votes are both needed and appreciated. Again, please ensure that you have completed our Parish Membership Form!

If there is a role or a responsibility within the Parish that you would like to help with, formally or informally, then please speak with Fr Julain.

Greetings from Greece.

My holy brethren in Nottingham, when our beloved Fr. Julian asked me to write something for our newsletter, the first thing that came to my mind is to say to all of you a sincere apology, my brethren in Nottingham Parish, where I was baptized by the hand of Fr. David 8 years ago. Please forgive me for my lack of love and ignorance. The second thing I would like to say is a silent but big ‘Thank you’, for your inner support by prayer, faith, and love. It has been long since last time I saw you, yet I am never far away.

2 years’ Covid ‘imprisonment’ time in my country cultivated in my heart an unspeakable thirst for the Holy House of God, Divine Liturgy, and church community life. As chanted daily: ‘How lovely is it for brethren to dwell together....!’ Having tried many ways to recover my travelling out of my country yet without success, I was praying to our Lord and His Mother to show me a way to enter His church again, day and night, waiting, looking, researching, until one day in 2022 when I by chance read a webpage of the Greek language Centre in the University of Athens announcing their Modern Greek language courses. I never had any thought of learning Greek in my whole life, however, at that moment, a sense of light and joy broke through my soul, and I lifted up my head shouting out: ‘My God, I will do it. Help me if this is your will.’

In order to make it happen, I must go through two big sets of documenting process. First, my Passport, which had already expired since no public services were open and finally took me months to get it. Secondly, a Greek student Visa, which finally took me another few months because this is the most complicated system I have ever encountered. In God's time, the year of 2022, December, within the strictest Covid control in my city, Beijing, and late for 2 months for my course. I found only one taxi on the road, I made my way to the airport and flew to Athens. What can I say? It is an adventure.

From December 2022 to May 2023, I had my beginner A level Greek course. Despite its extreme difficulty, I gradually fell in love in this beautiful and mysterious language which is tightly related to Orthodox faith, Scriptures, traditions etc. My intension has changed from being able to attend church regularly, to a desire to learn Greek truly and deeply. Needlessly to say the incredibly rich spiritual life here in Greece, uncountable churches, temples, monasteries, pious elders, priests, Christians, spiritual activities, feasts, homilies etc. Unworthy as I am, writing down these words now, I haven't been able to digest it all. I stand in the Holy House of God almost every day without rendering to God proper thanks!

For this reason, I started my second course Level B from last year 2023 October till now, aiming at National Greek language B2 level Exam. Escaping some details, in a word, I live in a completely Greek environment. I have 3 hour classes daily. I study most of the time. Around where I live, there are three lovely churches, 5 minutes on foot. On the weekend I try to visit holy places. After this exam, that is to say, when I have learnt basic modern Greek, with the help of God, I hope to be able to use Greek prayers, Scriptures, and books of Holy fathers, little by little. Difficulties arise daily, but our hope is greater!

Wherever I go here, there is always a candle lighted for our Parish and each of you. Please keep remembering me in your holy prayers, that my daily struggle can be consoled in our secret communion in Christ, who is our way, life, and resurrection. Amen.

He is risen indeed!

Eugenia, With love

09/06/2024 Athens

Deanery Conference & Festival 2024: ‘One in Jesus Christ: faithfulness in a world of conflicting identities’. A newcomer’s perspective.

A newcomer to the Deanery Conference & Festival, I was asked frequently throughout the conference, ‘how are you finding it?’, so it was suggested that I write a short review of the conference for the parish newsletter. I will discuss what I thought of the conference structure, the themes, and how I found the experience overall.

As someone who does not earn much money whilst studying for a PhD, I was delighted that I could receive financial aid to attend the conference from the conference organisers. I want to be transparent with this as I think it is important that as many people are aware that it is possible to receive help to attend the conference and that finances should not prevent attendance. I am very thankful to Fr Julian for supporting my application and the deanery conference for such an easy process.

I got a lift down to the High Leigh Conference Centre in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, with Tina driving, alongside my fellow passengers, Fr Julian and Barbara Bates. Fortified with snacks along the way, we were rather relieved to finally get to our destination and bask in the glorious weather in the conference centre garden with a cup of tea. I was immediately impressed with how pleasant the conference centre is- a beautiful building and location, with spacious gardens and a lake. I do not think we could ask for a better location. It certainly beats many of the conference locations I have been to before! I immediately felt like I was welcome; once I made it clear it was my first time attending the conference, I was given a short tour of the buildings to help me orientate myself and shown the major areas we would be using during our stay. We went for dinner, listened to the opening talk by Fr Christopher Knight which overviewed the themes of the conference, prayed Little Compline together as a community, and then had a few drinks from the bar.

What struck me first was the amount of free time that we had at the conference. The days were structured similarly throughout the conference- morning prayers, breakfast, talks, lunch, a free afternoon, a workshop, dinner, and then prayers. On Sunday there was a Divine Liturgy as well as an after-dinner party, which involved both children and adults showing their range of musical and poetic talents. I have never been to a conference or religious event with so much free time scheduled in. Daily, we had up to two hours of free time, with additional drink and snack breaks, as well as long breakfast, lunch and dinner times. A large amount of free time meant that there was plenty of opportunities to discuss the topics of the conference in a relaxed atmosphere, with time to reflect on the sometimes-difficult subject matter discussed in the talks, as well as relax in the grounds enjoying the glorious weather.

The theme of the conference was ‘One in Jesus Christ: faithfulness in a world of conflicting identities’ and was explored primarily through the talks given by Dr Christopher Knight, Bishop Raphael of Ilion, Fr Boniface Carroll, and Dr Romina Istratii, as well as the workshops and the final panel discussion. The themes discussed included identity, artificial intelligence, transhumanism, gender, and sexuality. As a newcomer, I found these themes rather provoking. Initially, I was hesitant to attend a conference with such themes because of their sensitive nature, especially concerning gender and sexuality. I have many LGBT+ friends, most of whom are Christians. To discuss ‘conflicting identities’ – to perhaps suggest that one cannot be a gay man, or a transgender person, and be Christian- made me uncomfortable, because I know many such cases, but I also knew that it was unlikely that those with these supposedly ‘conflicting identities’ would actually be at the conference. How can we talk about people without them being there? I was also concerned about people’s emotions when discussing these topics: many people have strong views on gender and sexuality, and sometimes it is difficult to have sensitive conversations and for people to listen to each other. I feared that discussions would be heated but pointless, possibly repeating hateful rhetoric that you often find in some Orthodox Christian circles online such as on Instagram and YouTube. Thankfully, my initial hesitations were unfounded- the talks, though almost all were very academic and orientated perhaps too academically for most of the audience of non-theologians, were all insightful and sensitive. Distinctly Orthodox and often pastoral in their approach to gender and sexuality, the speakers handled the topics well, though artificial intelligence and transhumanism were only covered by the first talk. In particular, Bishop Raphael’s talk on modern identity in the church was well received and I had the pleasure of talking with him after his talk about young adult converts in the Orthodox Church. I could say much more about the themes of

the conference, but what I will conclude about the themes is that there was an overriding message, summarised well by Fr Julian in the concluding panel: despite difficulties of conflicting world views and understandings of ourselves and others, we have a duty to be as Christ like as we can, and love one another.

So, how did I find the conference as a newcomer? I was pleasantly surprised by theme and enjoyed hearing a variety of opinions, as well as having time to think in the free time we had. The food and accommodation was good, especially being able to use the gardens. The worship was just as I expected- beautiful and reverent, as all Orthodox worship is. My main difficulty as a newcomer was... well, just that, being a newcomer! It seemed to me as though there were very few other newcomers at the conference, which made socialising a little challenging, since most people at the conference have known each other for a long time. In some cases, they had known each other longer than I have been alive! I am thankful that I knew many of our parish members before attending, since it was good to see friendly faces. However, I think it would be nice to have some kind of activity to allow for introductions for those of us that had not attended before. Nonetheless, I liked the friendly and relaxed atmosphere of the conference that is created by people knowing each other for a long time. Overall, I enjoyed the conference and would be very happy to attend again. God willing, many of us will enjoy our time at the conference again next year!

Maria.

Oddment

I am not sure what happened but think it was a bad flood at the care home next door to us which made the kitchen totally unusable. The amazing thing to me was that a temporary kitchen 'pod'/caravan was in situ 30 minutes after the kitchen crisis and

breakfast was served only ten minutes late. The care-home owner told me; ‘To do this, you’ve got to have good insurance.’ It took about a week to get the normal kitchen back into being fully functional as some new concrete flooring had to be laid and allowed to dry.

Frances

THE LATEST WAY TO LIGHT A CANDLE

I recently visited a Roman Catholic cathedral in Italy and was surprised to find that there were no votive candles to be had, nor even any tea-lights. If you wished to offer a ‘candle’ you had first to see the verger, and for a small sum of money he would graciously switch on an artificial candle for your benefit, powered by a small torch bulb. Real candles? Man, they’re messy, they drip wax all over the place, and more to the point they’re a serious fire-hazard!

Just how widespread is this new rule or fashion I have no means of knowing. But to me, in that church, it spoke volumes - of the utter failure of symbolism and poetry, the retreat into convenience and artificiality, and the dehumanization of worship. I detest any form of religious smugness, but I came away from that cathedral feeling devoutly thankful that Orthodoxy has not (at any rate so far) gone down that abysmal path!

For consider. First of all it disfranchises the worshipper. Instead of selecting a candle yourself and lighting it from another candle – an action which has its own good symbolism – the whole business is taken out of your hands. Nor does ‘your’ candle correspond with your own personal prayer. Tomorrow it will be switched on for somebody else – the law of increasing returns!

Worst of all it is not a candle at all, and the rich symbolism of fire is banished from worship.

If you still don't see the point, just reflect that at the first Pentecost, a tongue of fire settled on the head of each of the Apostles. But perhaps I'm wrong. Perhaps the Apostles had light-bulbs strapped to their foreheads, and when the Holy Spirit came among them, each light-bulb suddenly glowed! Well yes, I know that's an anachronism, but it's the ultimate implication of what we are considering here. There is no true worship without wonder, and no wonder where there is no awareness of what we call 'soul'. The earth is full of mystery and wonder, and from its many treasures we are free to offer what we will, in thanksgiving to the Maker of All. Yet all we can manage, seemingly, is a flashlight bulb!

I may seem to be making a fuss about something quite trivial; but there is nothing trivial about replacing a genuine religious symbol with a false one. The problem lies in getting people to see the difference. Incredible as it may seem I have met people – some of them teachers or otherwise involved in education – who cannot see the difference between fire and water on the one hand, and a manufactured, utilitarian object like a light bulb on the other. One of them confessed to me that he was puzzled by my concern. 'After all,' he remarked brightly, 'even water comes out of a tap, doesn't it?'

Deacon Ian.

PROCRUSTES

Do you know this Greek myth?

Theseus was a legendary Greek hero who is supposed to have slain the dreaded Minotaur. However, before he volunteered for this difficult job he had to travel to Athens, and the road on which he journeyed was stiff with bandits, murderers and petty tyrants. Fortunately Theseus was a very strong guy, an expert in the martial arts, and he disposed of them one by one. The last pest that he encountered before arriving in Athens was a particularly nasty specimen called Procrustes. He would waylay travellers and insist that they spend the night in his own bed. If they were too short to fill it he would rack them until they fitted; and if they were too tall, he would saw off as much of their legs or their head as projected beyond it. Theseus forced him down on his bed, and although he fitted it perfectly, he first racked him, and then cut off his head.

Now Greek myths are not just interesting or extravagant stories. Many of them depict psychological conditions, like the Oedipus complex, or the myth of Arachne, which stigmatizes pride and vanity. And it occurs to me that myth of Procrustes was devised to illustrate one of the saddest complexes of the lot. Procrustes hated everyone who was not exactly like himself!

What is especially sad about that myth is that, just at the moment, the world is full of people who are very like Procrustes. They too hate anyone who is different from themselves, and we see it demonstrated in fifty different ways: in cancel culture, trigger warnings, protest marches, sit-ins, hate mail, the demonizing of famous people, sit-downs on busy roads, and the vandalizing of statues and heritage sites. Their invariable message is: 'Think the same as I do – or else!' Have they never heard of the Golden Rule: 'Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you'?

As Procrustes discovered, things are not quite so jolly when the boot is on the other foot.

Deacon Ian.

Procrustian (dictionary definition): Violently making conformable to a single standard.

Reflections on Life

I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to reach my destination.

Jimmy Dean

Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.

Francis of Assisi

Always do your best. What you plant now, you will harvest later.

Og Mandino

Put your heart, mind, and soul into even your smallest actions. This is the secret of success.

Swami Sivananda

Failure will never overtake me if my determination to succeed is strong enough.

Og Mandino

In order to succeed, we must first believe that we can.

Nikos Kazantzakis

It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop.

Confucius

We know what we are, but know not what we may be.

William Shakespeare

LOVE

Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
 Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
 From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
 If I lack anything.

“A guest,” I answered, “worthy to be here,”
 Love said, “You shall be he.”
“I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
 I cannot look on Thee.”
Love took my hand, and smiling, did reply,
 “Who made the eyes but I?”

“Truth, Lord, but I have marred them; let my shame
 Go where it doth deserve.”
“And know you not,” says Love,
 “who bore the blame?”
 “My dear, then I will serve.”
“You must sit down,” says Love, “and taste my meat.”
 So I did sit and eat.

George Herbert (1593-1633)



Votive candles in 2024. Pot your money in the slot and a candle lights up automatically

Put your money in the slot and a candle lights up.



The wonderful Pote family together after the Liturgy