



“JOY OF ALL WHO SORROW”

No 9 August '09

BLESSING OF THE CHURCH

SERVICE: Despite having several weeks to prepare for Archbishop Mark's first visit and the first Liturgy in our new church, we still had a last minute scramble. From now on, 16 July will be a special day for us here. On Wednesday 15 July, Fr Philip Steer and Fr Dcn Andrew served Vespers, followed by Compline and Akathist. Vladika Mark arrived later and stayed overnight. On Thursday morning Fr Raphael Armour (from Cambridge) blessed Holy Water. We were also joined by Hieromonk Athanasius (from Ipswich) who heard confessions and by Archpriest Andrew Phillips who concelebrated with us. The whole church was blessed with Holy Water after the Little Entrance in the Liturgy. Although it was a weekday, we were delighted that so many friends were able to join us.

TELEVISION: After the Liturgy we adjourned to the house for lunch. At that point, the BBC telephoned to ask if we would give interviews for the *Look East* programme. Both Vladika Mark and Fr Dcn Andrew were interviewed and this formed the basis of a report on television that evening.

THANKS: Thanks are due to everyone who worked so hard, preparing the church and serving in the altar, arranging and singing the music, providing transport, arranging flowers, providing champagne, wine and food, baking prosfora, making a photographic record and so much more, to make this memorable day. We also must say a very special thank-you to Serafima Hopper for donating the ikon of St Walstan to the church. This unique ikon was produced by the St Seraphim's Studio in Little Walsingham some years ago for a pilgrimage to Bawburgh, near Norwich, the site of St Walstan's shrine until it was destroyed at the Reformation.

DONATION: Many of you will remember the massacre by Chechen terrorists at the school in Beslan. The convent there did so much work to help the survivors through the trauma that they suffered. North Ossetia is a very poor area and Archbishop Mark supported the nuns financially by setting up a special appeal fund in his diocese. The money left in the collection bowl in the narthex was given to Vladika as a donation to the appeal fund. The total was £175.00

CARDS: We are currently working of some ideas for cards using the church logo in different combinations of colours. The idea is that they should have a blank to make them suitable for a variety of greetings. More of this later. Also the local artist, our friend John Constable Reeve, is making a painting of our church which will be published as a Christmas card. Full details of this will be published in the September issue of this bulletin.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

RELICS: For details of the visit to our church of the relics of Saints Elizabeth and Barbara - see the enclosed leaflets.

HERMITAGE PATRONAL FESTIVAL: Hermitage of the Mother of God, Harkstead, Ipswich IP9 1DB - Sunday 30 August Vigil Service 5pm, Monday 31 August Hours and Liturgy 10am. For further details contact Hieromonk Athanasius on 01473 787804 or email kellion@stjohncassianpress.com

SUFFOLK HISTORIC CHURCHES CYCLE RIDE: this fundraising event will be on Saturday 12 September. The riders, who are sponsored by their friends, have to visit as many churches as possible during that day. The funds raised by those taking part are shared between the Historic Churches Trust and their own church. Our church will be open and will welcome cycling visitors in connection with this event although we were too late to be included in the printed list.

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY: the patronal festival of our own church is an easy date to remember; 6 November, the day after Bonfire Night.

JOY OF ALL WHO SORROW IKON

In our church we have a reproduction of an 18th Century copy of the Ikon of the Mother of God *Joy of All Who Sorrow*. We will eventually replace this with a painted ikon. In researching this, we have discovered that there are many versions of this ikon and the details vary very considerably. So what instruction should be given to the ikonographer when the time comes to commission an ikon of the Mother of God *Joy of All Who Sorrow*? Nobody knows the origin of this ikon for certain. The first reliable documentary evidence is the miraculous healing of the lady Euphemia, sister of Patriarch Joachim, in 1688. There have been turbulent times in the history of Russia during the past three hundred years and we wondered if that ikon had survived. Our research revealed that it does indeed still exist and is enshrined in the Transfiguration Church, Ordynka, in Moscow. In 1688 the church was a wooden structure but this was later replaced by a church built of brick. In the early 19th Century it was rebuilt again in the 'Empire' style. It is a circular building with classical columns and architectural features that look more Italian than Russian. The ikon is large, framed and covered with both an antique silver riza and glass. The hands and faces are quite dark with age and not easy to see. We have to thank Mother Nectaria for her efforts to find this ikon and for sending us photographs of both the ikon and the church.

THE VENERATION OF HOLY RELICS

More than any other religion or philosophy, Christianity affirms the Goodness of creation, the body, the material. For not only were our bodies and everything visible and invisible made by a Good God, who declared them Good, but, more than that, at the very heart of Christian Faith is the conviction that God became incarnate, united to human nature, human flesh in Jesus Christ. Furthermore, Christians don't merely look forward to a disembodied paradise, but await the resurrection, where the soul will unite with our transformed material bodies to participate in the beauty of God for all eternity.

Christian love for the body can also be seen powerfully in the Eucharist where we partake of the Body and Blood of Christ which joins us to Christ, our Head, so that we become in St Paul's phrase, 'the body of Christ'. In his First Epistle to the Corinthians, St Paul says the 'body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor. 6:19) and hence to be treated with great respect and care. We must not abuse or harm the body which God has given us. This is the case both during our lives and after our death.

From the very earliest times, therefore, Christians have given special respect to the bodies of the dead, particularly the remains of the saints and martyrs. This can be seen in the Acts of the Apostles where after the stoning of the First Martyr, the Holy Deacon Stephen, his body was lovingly taken by 'devout men' for burial (Acts 8:2). The love and veneration for the relics of the martyrs can be further seen in the Catacombs of Rome, where the very earliest Christian communities would meet to celebrate the Eucharist on top of the tombs of the martyrs.

Following the practice of the ancient church, therefore, the Orthodox church encourages the veneration of holy relics, as the expression of our love and respect for the saint or martyr. Although all human bodies are 'Temples of the Holy Spirit' in the bodies of the saints and martyrs, the Grace of God, the presence of the Holy Spirit, was and is very powerfully present in their grace-bearing lives of sacrifice, repentance and love. This can often be seen in the fact that the bodies of the saints do not rot and decay but often stay incorrupt for years after their death, such as in the case of St John Maximovitch who reposed in 1966, but whose perfectly intact body is still to be seen to this day in

the Cathedral of the *Joy of All Who Sorrow* in San Francisco. Just as during their lives the saints could often work great miracles through their Faith in Christ, so much more are they able to work miracles, and intercede for us now they are beside the Throne of Christ in Heaven. As St James says in his Epistle, ‘the prayer of a righteous man availeth much’ (James: 5:16).

INTERCESSION LIST

When the relics are here we will sing the Akathist to St Elizabeth and at the end of the akathist we will read the names of all who have asked to be commemorated. In this instance the people for whom you wish us to pray should be living (we can pray for the departed but not in this context) and we need only the Christian name (no surnames). Also please put down the formal names rather than the familiar form. In other words, Edward rather than Ted or Teddy even though that may be the way the person is normally addressed. Either use this form or type out your list on another piece of paper. People listed do not have to be sick or in some distress. It is a good thing to pray for the well-being and salvation of all our families, neighbours and friends. Indeed, it is also a Christian duty to pray for those who are not our friends.

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PUBLICATIONS

IKON CALENDAR 2010

These are designed to hang on the wall and have a different ikon for each month. They are printed on card, rather than paper, so that, as each month passes, the ikon card can be detached and used as a card.

£6.00

VITA PRIMA

The first Life of St John the Wonderworker written soon after his death by Hieromonk Seraphim of Platina. Booklet

£1.50

If you are ordering by post, please add 15% to cover postage and packing,

Orthodox Church of the Mother of God *Joy of All Who Sorrow*
The White House, Low Rd, Mettingham, Suffolk NR35 1TP
Telephone - 01986 89670

REGULAR SERVICES: Every Sunday 10.30am - Every Friday 6pm

Extra services for festivals and saints days will be announced in the bulletin.

e-mail churchmettingham@aol.com Website www.joyofallwhosorrow.org.uk

Cheques for the church fund should be made payable to “*Joy of All Who Sorrow*” Church.

The account is in HSBC Bank, 3 New Market, Beccles, Suffolk NR34 9HQ

Account No 71395912 Sort Code 40-09-24