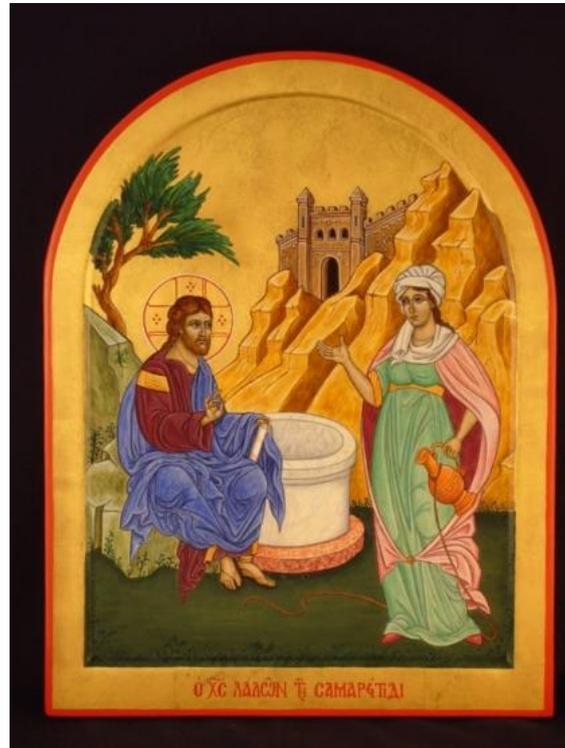




# *“Joy of All Who Sorrow”*

No. 89 April 2016



## The Woman at the Well

The Gospel tells us of how the Lord Jesus Christ once came to a city in Samaria called Sychar, where there was a well given by Jacob to his son Joseph and his descendants. Fatigued by His journey, the Lord providentially sat down to rest at this well, while His disciples went into town to buy some provisions. At that moment a woman from that town came to the well to draw water. The Lord asked her to give Him to drink. The woman was surprised by the request, since the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus said to her: if only you knew with Whom you are talking, you would ask Him to give you to drink, and He would give you living water. The woman of Samaria was even further bewildered, thinking of how Jesus could give her living water, not even having anything with which to draw the water.

The Lord then told her that those who drank water from the well would thirst again, while the water which He gave would become a source of everlasting life. By living water the Lord meant His life-giving teaching, which leads to eternal bliss in the Heavenly Kingdom. After that the Lord, knowing that the woman of Samaria, though secretly living in sin, nevertheless had an ardent faith in God and a firm expectation of the coming of the Messiah, gradually revealed to her that it was He, the One talking to her, Who was the long-awaited Christ. Then the woman of Samaria joyously threw down her pitcher and ran to the city to invite her fellow-citizens to come out to meet Christ, and by her testimony many Samaritans came to believe in Him.

This blessed woman of Samaria, who had the great fortune to talk with the Lord, was later martyred for Christ, together with her sons and her sisters, during the persecution of Christians by the Roman Emperor Nero. This persecution lasted from 65 to 68 A.D., and it was during those years that the holy apostles Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome, after which the persecutors began to search for their followers. At that time St. Photina was living in the city of Carthage (the modern Tunis), where, together with her younger

son Josiah, she fearlessly preached the Gospel, while her older son Victor was in the Roman army which was fighting against the barbarians. After the war Victor was appointed military commander of the city of Attalia, where he was instrumental in converting many people to Christianity, including the ruler of the city, Sebastian.

When Nero was informed that Victor and Sebastian were preaching the faith of Peter and Paul in Attalia and converting many to Christianity, and that the same was being done in Carthage by Photina and Josiah, who had been sent there by the holy apostles, the Emperor became greatly incensed and ordered everyone to come to Rome to be tried. Photina arrived in Rome accompanied by many Christians, including her five sisters – Anastasia, Phota, Photida, Paraskeva, and Kyriakia; they all awaited martyrdom, of which they had been told in advance by the Lord Jesus Christ, Who had appeared to them Himself. Nero ordered all of them to be brutally tortured, especially St. Photina, but by the grace of God they did not feel any pain and remained unharmed. Then the Emperor, not knowing what else to do with them, ordered Victor, Josiah, and Sebastian to be blinded and thrown into prison together with Photina and her sisters.

The holy martyrs spent three years in prison. At a certain moment Nero remembered them and sent his servants to check on them. Returning from the prison, the servants reported to the Emperor that the blinded Galileans were seeing again and were completely well, that the prison itself was full of light and a wondrous fragrance, that instead of a place of imprisonment it had become a holy place for the glorification of God, and that many people gathered to see the saints and be baptized by them. Hearing all this, Nero was filled with fear and wrath, and ordered the holy men to be crucified upside down and beaten with straps until their bodies fell apart, which was duly executed, and then left to hang for three days. On the fourth day the Emperor's servants came to check whether the martyrs were still alive, and finding them very much alive, the servants suddenly became blind. At that moment an angel of God came down from heaven, untied the martyrs, and made them completely well. Then the saints prayed over the blinded servants and the latter saw again, and immediately believed in Christ. They were then baptized and become followers of the holy martyrs.

When Nero found out about this, he was filled with great rage and called Photina to the tribunal, where he ordered her to be skinned and thrown into a deep and slimy well. Then the Emperor ordered her five sisters to be brought before him and also skinned, after which he ordered all the martyrs to be beheaded. St. Photina was brought out of the well and tortured again at great length, and urged to make a sacrifice to the idols, but Photina spat in the Emperor's face and laughed at him, for which she was again thrown into the well, where she finally gave up her soul to God.



## The Archangel Gabriel

The name Gabriel comes from the Hebrew meaning "Man of God." It has alternatively been translated "God is mighty" or "the strength/power of God." The Archangel Gabriel is associated with numerous happenings in Holy Scripture, particularly his revelation to the Theotokos that she would bear Christ. Thus his primary role has been called one of announcing the salvation of mankind.

Gabriel announced the Incarnation of the Logos to those recorded in the Old Testament. By Tradition he inspired the Prophet Moses to write the book of Genesis. He foretold coming tribulations to the Prophet Daniel and the time of the Messiah's appearance (Dan 8:16; 9:21-25) He explained to Daniel the vision of the horned ram, as portending the destruction of the Persian Empire by the Macedonian Alexander the Great, whose kingdom would be divided up among generals, from one of which would spring Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan 8). Then, after Daniel had prayed for Israel, Gabriel flying swiftly touched Daniel and communicated to him the mysterious prophecy of the "seventy weeks" of years which would elapse before the coming of Christ (Dan 9).

He appeared to the Virgin Mary's mother Anna and announced the conception of a daughter when Anna was praying in the garden.

He is the one who is believed to have visited the young Mary regularly when she lived in the temple at Jerusalem and continued to watch over her during her earthly life.

Gabriel also appeared to Zachariah, the father of St John the Baptist. Zachariah initially refused to believe that his barren wife, Elizabeth, and he would have a child in their old age. This is the moment in which Gabriel says, "I am Gabriel. I stand before God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news" (Luke 1:19)<sup>1</sup>. He then strikes Zachariah mute until St John is born.

Of course we know that He visited Mary to announce that she was to bear the Son of God. His Salutation to her was "'Rejoice thou who has been shown grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.'" (Lk 1:28) It has become a form of praise and thanksgiving in the Church. He came to Joseph the Betrothed in a dream, telling him that Mary's pregnancy was indeed miraculous and that he should protect and care for her. (Matt 1:20,21) He then appeared to the shepherds near Bethlehem, telling them of the Nativity. He also appeared to Joseph to take the child and His Mother into Egypt (Mt. 2:13) While Joseph was in Egypt he appeared to him again, telling him to return to Israel (Mt 2:19,20). He is also believed to be the angel who rolled away the stone (Mt 28:2) and announced the Resurrection to the Myrrh-bearers (Mt 28:7).

The Church celebrates the Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel on March 26, the day following the Feast of the Annunciation, and again on July 13; he is also commemorated together with all the archangels on their Synaxis date, November 8. Since archangels receive commands from the Most High, in ikons there are bands of ribbons winding or coiling from their ears as a sign that they are under authority. Their clothing is similar to that of a military officer and high-ranking officials at a Byzantine court. Because the angels are incorporeal beings, though they nevertheless take on human form when appearing to mankind, it can be difficult to differentiate one from another in ikons. However, Gabriel is usually portrayed with certain distinguishing characteristics. He typically wears blue or white garments; he holds either a lily (representing the Theotokos), a trumpet, a shining lantern, a branch from Paradise presented to him by the Theotokos, or a spear in his right hand and often a mirror—made of jasper and with a X (the first letter of Christ (Χριστος) in Greek)—in his left hand. He should not be confused with the Archangel Michael, who carries a sword, shield, date-tree branch, and in the other hand a spear and white banner (possibly with scarlet cross) and tends to wear red. Michael's specific mission is to suppress enemies of the true Church (hence the military theme), while Gabriel's is to announce mankind's salvation.



## **Orthodox Patriarch: Church must combat unprecedented 'global heresy' that claims a right to sin**

The leader of Russia's 200 million Orthodox Christians says the modern world is steeped in heresy as never before. The "heresy" he speaks against is "worshipping the human" and enshrining laws that give the "right" to sin, which the Patriarch calls "the new idolatry that removes God from human life."

And he warns that the consequences of this modern heresy "can become apocalyptic."

Speaking from the pulpit of Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Moscow, Patriarch Kirill said, "Today we are [seeing] a global heresy of bowing down to man, the new idolatry that removes God from human life... Nothing like that has ever happened on a global scale before."

Preaching on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, the Primate lamented that society's criterion of truth has become individual "rights," and such a mind-set "has begun a revolutionary exile of God from man's life and that of society." His All-Holiness said the heresy began in Western Europe and America, but is now worldwide, infesting even his own country. "The idea of a life without God is developing on a large scale around the world," he warned.

He criticized the elevation of human rights to a level above morality, decency, the Bible, and even God Himself. "We are seeing how concerted efforts are being made in many prosperous countries to establish by law the person's right to any choice, including the most sinful ones, those that contradict God's Word, the concept of holiness, the concept of God," he said. The Patriarch then dedicated his Church to fighting this modern heresy. "It is specifically at overcoming this present day heresy, the consequences of which can become apocalyptic, that the Church must aim the force of its strength, its word, its thought."

"We must defend Orthodoxy," Kirill said.

# OBITUARY

## Priest Elias Jones

Saturday 26 March was the 40<sup>th</sup> day since the repose of Presbytera Barbara. That evening Fr Elias retired to bed. In the morning it was found that he had died peacefully in his sleep. He was 72 and had served in the priesthood for more than a quarter of a century.

Fr Elias (Trefor Jones in the world) was essentially more an academic, with numerous qualifications, than a practical man. Having grown up in Wales, he was a Welsh speaker. As a historian he was skilled in Medieval Latin, which was invaluable for understanding hagiographical texts. He studied at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge and London University and had degrees in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic History and in Economic History. Archaeology was another interest which he shared with his wife, Barbara.

His research into early ecclesiastical history led to the publication of *The English Saints – East Anglia* in 1999 and church services in honour of various local saints such as St Walstan of Taverham and St Guthlac of Croyland. Fr Elias had a liturgical mind and this gave him a firm grasp of the structure of Orthodox Church services.

With such interests, it seems difficult to imagine that, in his earlier years, he spent some time in the police force but, as a career, this didn't really suit him and so he took up teaching. Sadly his later years were badly affected by increasingly poor health. This resulted in various research projects, including translating the Latin life of St Botolph, being put on hold.

Fr Elias was very much a family man. He and Barbara adopted two boys, Christopher and Antony. Principally our dear friend and colleague will be remembered as a kind and gentle soul, made patient by his acquaintance with human frailty. In the mercy of God, may the priest Elias rest in peace and may he be granted Eternal Memory.

## NAMEDAYS

To all who are celebrating a nameday at this time we send congratulations and wish them:

**MANY YEARS!**

1 April – **Martyrs Chrysanthus & Daria** - Daria Pearson

2 April - **Martyr Photina (Svetlana) the Samaritan Woman** – Svetlana Noakes

20 April – **St Daniel, Abbot of Pereyaslavl-Zaleski** - Daniel Dembri



**COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF THE MOTHER OF GOD  
JOY OF ALL WHO SORROW**

**APRIL 2016**

**Saturday 2 April**

*7.30pm ~ Vigil*

**Sunday 3 April**

**10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (Adoration of the Holy Cross)**

**Wednesday 6 April**

*7.30pm ~ Vigil*

**Thursday 7 April**

**10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (The Annunciation of Our Most Holy the  
Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary)**

**Saturday 9 April**

*7.30pm ~ Vigil*

**Sunday 10 April**

**10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (St John of the Ladder)**

**Wednesday 13 April**

*7.30pm ~ The Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete with the Life of St Mary of Egypt*

**Saturday 16 April**

*7.30pm ~ Vigil*

**Sunday 17 April**

**10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (St Mary of Egypt)**

**Please Note:**

**HOLY WEEK service times will be sent out separately.**



What did I tell you about the nightingale? It sings without anyone seeing. Be like that – selfless. Give yourself over to the worship of God in secret.

St Porphyrios

*Collegiate Church of the Ikon of the Mother of God: Joy of All Who Sorrow*

*The White House, Low Road, Mettingham, Suffolk, NR35 1TP*

*Tel: (01986) 895176*

*[www.mettingham.org.uk](http://www.mettingham.org.uk)*