



# *“Joy of All Who Sorrow”*

No. 103 June 2017



## St Bede's Ecclesiastical History

On 25 May/7 June, the Holy Orthodox Church celebrates the memory of St Bede, who is most famous for his work on the history of the English Church and its people. This is a seminal work, and the primary source for our knowledge of many of the saints of our land as well as much of the history of the period, which is otherwise shrouded in darkness.

The Venerable Bede, as he is often called, was born in 673AD on the land of the monastery of Saints Peter and Paul in Wearmouth. At the age of seven, he was entrusted to the care of Benedict Biscop, the founder of the monastery, and then to Ceolfrith, who in 681AD was appointed Abbot of the monastery's new foundation in Jarrow. Bede spent the rest of his life in the monastery. He was ordained deacon at the age of 19 and priest at 30.

In addition to his commitments as a monk and priest, he worked as a scholar and teacher. The range of Bede's astonishing scholarship went far beyond history. Bishop Boniface wrote that Bede 'shone forth as a beacon of the Church by his scriptural commentary'; his biblical exegeses were widely sought and circulated. He wrote also of nature. He knew that the earth was a sphere. He knew that the moon influenced the cycle of the tides. He wrote on calculating time, and his exposition of the Great Cycle of 532 years was of fundamental value to the Church in the task of calculating the date of Easter. He also wrote a textbook for his students on poetic metres.

Bede died in his cell at the monastery in the year 735AD, just after he finished dictating the last words of his commentary on the Gospel of John.

The Ecclesiastical History begins with a charming description of the British Isles, describing their rich resources and fertile climate. Bede describes their vineyards and fisheries, and their shellfish yielding pearls of various colours, and purple dye. He also speaks of their hot springs in which people bathed, heated by many different types of molten metals, including 'black jet of fine quality, which sparkles in firelight.'

It then describes the four peoples of the islands, the Scots (originally from Ireland), the Picts in Scotland who intermarried with the Scots, the British, who had come over from Brittany, and the English, of whom he will have more to say later. Bede describes the arrival in Britain of Julius Caesar, and then the later full Roman invasion under Claudius, completed in 46AD, which year Bede relates to a famine in Syria, prophesied in Acts 11:28 to occur in the reign of that emperor.

Bede describes the conversion of the British people in 156AD, long before the English arrived in the country, when the British king Lucius wrote to Pope Eleutherius, asking to be made a Christian. This request was granted and the British became a Christian people. He then describes the Diocletian persecution in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> Century, during which Britain gained her first martyr, St Alban. Then we learn of how St Constantine was proclaimed emperor in Britain on the death of his father, and how the Arian heresy reached even as far as these islands. Britain then produced its very own heretic, Pelagius, the following lines about whom Bede quotes: 'Against the great Augustine see him crawl/ This wretched scribbler with his pen of gall!/ In what black caverns was this serpent bred?/ That from the dirt presumes to rear its head?/ Either the coasts of Britain saw his birth/ Or else his heart pours its own venom forth.' The heresy held, it will be remembered, that mankind can obtain salvation through his own efforts without the grace of God, and was rebutted by St Augustine of Hippo.

Next, we hear of the end of Roman rule in Britain, when Rome itself fell to the Goths in 410AD. The Britons' loss of Roman protection resulted in their invitation into the country of the Germanic tribes to defend them from the Picts and Scots. The Angles, Saxons and Jutes instead took the land for themselves, driving out the Britons, who fought campaigns against the intruders, sometimes successfully (possibly led by the legendary 'King Arthur', whom Bede does not mention.)

At the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> Century, Bede details how Pope Gregory sent St Augustine to convert the Germanic settlers, known as the 'English', and in time all the peoples of the islands became Christianised. The rest of the work deals with the history of the English people after their conversion to Christianity, and includes the lives of many saints, not only English, but also those of the other peoples of Britain. Thanks to St Bede, we can read of such saints as St Aidan, St Oswald, St Sigebert, St Fursey, St Chad, St Colman, St Etheldreda, St Hilda, and St Cuthbert.

# *Notes & Jottings*

## **DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO ST ALBANS**

On Saturday 13 May, some members of our community went on the Diocesan pilgrimage to St Albans. There, we were doubly blessed by the Hawaiian myrrh-streaming ikon and the relics of St Alban. There were many clergy and laity present. Some members of our choir joined with church singers from the parish of St Elizabeth the New Martyr in Wallasey, to provide the music. Vladika Irenei preached an inspiring sermon about how we should, like St Alban, stand up and proclaim fearlessly that we are Christians, even if times are coming when this could be detrimental to us.

## **VISIT OF THE HAWAIIAN MYRRH-STREAMING IKON**

On Monday 15 May, we were blessed with a visit from this wonder-working ikon. Even before the ikon arrived, people had come from near and far to venerate her, and there was not enough room in the carpark for all the cars, so some people had to park on the grass. Happily, the weather had been dry for some days so there was no damage to the lawn! There were guests from the Antiochian, Romanian, Russian, and Greek Churches. The ikon arrived with her guardian Subdeacon Nectarius, Bishop Irenei, Schema-hiero-subdeacon Anthony, and Protodeacon Denis, and filled the church with her heavenly fragrance. We sang the akathist to the Iveron ikon, of which the ikon is a copy, and Vladika Irenei preached a beautiful sermon about how, when the Mother of God tells us to rejoice, she really knows the suffering of this world to the deepest extent from personal experience. Thus, there is nothing in this world that can take away our ultimate joy. After the service, the ikon and clergy stayed the night at the White House. After the visit, several members of our congregation reported smelling the ikon's fragrance very strongly even when the ikon was no longer present. It was truly a great blessing for our little church, which is, as Subdeacon Nectarius said, like his own home of Hawaii, 'in the middle of nowhere'!

## **MARCH FOR LIFE 2017**

On 20 May, a small delegation from our church joined the annual 'March for Life' in Birmingham. This event has been growing steadily year on year, and this year it was attended by some two thousand people. It was rather an eventful occasion, as 'pro-choice' protestors had arrived to try to prevent the march. They let off smoke bombs, shouted, and even spat on one marcher. We were at the front, facing the protestors with just the police between us. At this point, the heavens opened and we were drenched. However, in spite of the rain and the abuse, we continued singing 'Christ is Risen', 'Most Holy Mother of God save us', and the Trisagion Hymn until we were able to move on. In spite of the adversities, it didn't feel difficult. Even the children didn't complain once. We felt that we were given help from above, and when we got back, the clouds parted and the sun shone to warm us.

## **NEW ABORTION CLINICS**

Until recently, there was a Marie Stopes clinic in Norwich, but it was closed down by CQC after investigations into its practices. We had hoped that this would mean no abortion facility in Norwich, but we have discovered that a new BPAS clinic will open there very soon to replace the old one. A new clinic is also due to open in Thetford.

## ABRAHAM'S OAK

Abraham's Oak (the Oak of Mamre) is in the grounds of the Monastery of the Holy Trinity Monastery in Hebron. The present writer saw it in the early 1970's. At the time, Fr Ignaty was the Igumen, and he carefully tended the tree which is estimated to be around 5,000 years old. It was alive then, but only just. Now it is reported to be dead. A pilgrim, Alla Steel, has brought back two acorns for us. These are not from the original tree but from one that was grown from an acorn from the original tree. We have planted the acorns in the hope that, at least one, will germinate. It would be wonderful to have an *Abraham's Oak* in the grounds of the college, albeit a second generation one.

## AKATHISTS

We have the following booklets in stock at £2.50 per copy:

Akathist to Sts Peter & Fevronia, Protectors of Orthodox Marriage

Akathist to St Luke, the Blessed Surgeon, Archbishop of Simferopol, the Compassionate Healer

We also have copies of the 2017 Directory of Orthodox Parishes and Clergy in Britain and Ireland at £4 each.

## NAMEDAYS

3 June – **Sts Constantine & Helen** – Matushka Helen Bardsley, Elena Levine, Subdeacon  
Constantine Bell

27 June – **Prophet Elisha** – Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh

30 June – **St Botolph of Iken** – Botolph Beavis

We send congratulations to everyone who is celebrating a nameday at this time and wish them

**MANY YEARS!**





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

**JUNE 2017**

**Saturday 3 June**

*7.30pm ~ Vigil*

**Sunday 4 June**

**10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (Pentecost)**

**Approx. 2pm ~ Kneeling Vespers**

**Saturday 10 June**

*7.30pm ~ Vigil*

**Sunday 11 June**

**10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (All Saints)**

**Saturday 17 June**

*7.30pm ~ Vigil*

**Sunday 18 June**

**10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (Sts Mary and Martha, sisters of Lazarus)**

**Saturday 24 June**

*7.30pm ~ Vigil*

**Sunday 25 June**

**10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (All Saints of Britain and Ireland)**



“Ask whatever thou desirest, I will do thy will, so that the world would know  
Whom thou hast as a Son, and whom I have as a Mother.”

Blessed Bishop Elias of Kerigniki in Kavriton, Greece 18th century

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