

PARISH OF THE HOLY TRINITY



COMMUNITY BULLETIN

19 FEBRUARY 2022

No. 54

*Weekly Worship, Events & Announcements —
Submissions Welcome!*

Upcoming Week

- ❖ Please pray for the newly departed *Rachel* and [Reader James](#), and the sick *Monica* and *Peter*.
 - ❖ Saints' days in [Greek](#) and [English](#)
 - ❖ Bilingual texts and music for [all services by date](#)
 - ❖ Archdiocesan Sunday [Bulletin](#) and [Services](#) (Holy Wisdom Cathedral, London)
-

Events & Announcements

The schedule of services will continue normally and can be found on the parish [website](#). Saturday vespers is again being held weekly.

Please remember to dress warmly for services!

Sunday February 20, Fr Ian is away and liturgy **only** will be served by Fr Isidoros. (There will be the usual Vespers service Saturday evening.)

Many thanks to [members of the parish](#) who attended the 30 January online EGM. We were successful in adding a clause that allows the community to replace parish councillors who are unable to complete the stipulated two-year term. The change is now with the Archdiocese for approval.

Banquet with The Ecumenical Patriarch!

Sunday 23 October, we have been invited to reserve a parish table at a banquet celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Archdiocese of Thyateira and the visit of His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholemew, who will be the guest of honour. Five seats are still available on a table of 10 — email community@holytrinityoxford.org.uk if you would like to join this outing with fellow parishioners to celebrate Orthodoxy in the UK, and to enjoy the Patriarch's visit. (Full details in letter below.)

Sunday of the Prodigal Son

In a land that is sinless and living, You trusted me. I scattered my sins like seed, and when I put in the sickle, I harvested the fruits of my carelessness; and I bundled the sheaves of my actions, which I threshed not on the floor of repentance. So I entreat You, our pre-eternal God and husbandman, remove the chaff from my works with the wind of Your loving compassion, and as a Landowner, provide forgiveness to my soul, and store me in Your heavenly granary, and save me.

The first *sticheron* of the Vespers hymn on the eve of the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, with its familiar imagery drawn from agriculture, introduces us to the mystery of repentance. The young man of the parable, heir to a wealthy father, succumbs to the Devil's promptings to abandon his former way of life, and sets off to revel in the pleasure of the seductive 'dream' or fallacy of sensual desire and titillation. He sows the seeds of sin in every possible way, heedlessly squandering his material goods, and wasting the gifts of the spirit with shameless and extreme impiety. The outcome was that he reaped, with the scythe of spiritual death, the harvest-sheaves of his recklessness, piling them up in heaps, until he fell into catastrophe and desperation. The Lord's teaching reflects the reality of our lives. Our delusive egotism leads us to 'liberate' ourselves by renouncing the inheritance of our true freedom, through the adoption of subversive changes which we imagine will illuminate our darkness, risking perdition and belated regret. Only when we reach the point of collapse and the misery of degradation do we take account of the darkness that is devouring us, and call upon the eternal farmer that is God to winnow away the chaff of our sinful deeds, setting us in the direction of forgiveness, and enclosing us in his Paradise-like storehouses of repentance, the only place where authentic happiness is to be found.

It is not by focusing on the pernicious impulsiveness of the debauched son, nor on the callousness of his legalistically severe elder brother, that we stay close to the Father. He overlooks the transgression with the mystical power of love. He approves the return, even though he senses that the thought behind it was self-serving. He invests in and promotes repentance, which ignites the warm breeze of his loving mercy; and he rewards a decision to shake off the yoke of sin with the grace of pardon in abundance. That is God; unprejudiced, compassionate, 'possessed of overflowing mercy.' He restrains his awareness of our guilt, embracing instead the devout sincerity of our tears, for only their cleansing shower can wash away the dark grime of wickedness and unclean dissipation from our divine likeness.

Every one of us, to a greater or lesser degree, carries a bag on our shoulders heavy with the weight of the bad deeds we have perpetrated. Let us not view everything with a lax conscience, passing it off as everyday imperfection and carelessness – a device of the Devil! – with the result that we can never find the path of truth and forgiveness. Instead, there exists the road of purification, the confessor's priestly stole, the soul-shaking cry of 'O Lord, forgive me the sinful one, and save me!' That is the way to succeed in our struggle for salvation. Its training school is the Lenten period we are about to travel. Let us study diligently, drawing instruction from the wealth of God's love, so that we may be deemed worthy, as guests and fellow-heirs, bathed in light, to enjoy the feast of the redeeming and saving Pascha of Christ!

Preparing Children for Lent

As Lent draws closer, weekly themes of worship and a gentle ramping up of fasting restrictions are designed to help us arrive at the Great Fast with some degree of readiness! Children can of course participate based on their ages and individual circumstances or charisms — here are some ideas to help them with this shift into a blessed Lenten spring.

Forgiveness Vespers (6 March this year) holds a strong lesson for children as many important adults in their lives prostrate themselves and ask forgiveness for any wrong they have done, and children in their turn have a chance to ask for the same. Doing this within our family group may be helpful for any children who will miss having this opportunity in Church.



To mark time passing during Lent, children can also take part in the widespread tradition of Kyria Sarakosti, or 'Mrs. Forty Days.' She has a cross on her head and folds her hands in prayer to indicate her concentration on holy things, and she is drawn without a mouth to indicate that she is fasting. For Clean Monday, [draw the figure](#) on paper or cardboard and cut it out and colour, or [bake one](#) made of dough. Each of her seven legs represents a Sunday before Pascha, so one leg is removed each Saturday to help children visualise the approach to the feast of feasts.

Simplified Prayer of St Ephraim

*O Lord, help me not to want
to have my own way all the time.
Help me to love others.
Keep me from being jealous, and
help me to know when I am wrong.*

The prayer of St Ephraim is in every Lenten service and can be added to family prayers to clearly mark Lent. A prostration follows each petition. From *Guardian Angel Children's Prayer Book: An Introduction to the Divine Liturgy and Prayers for the Young Child*, Fr T. Lozynsky.

[Reprint from Bulletin 18]



Registered Charity no. 1011772

Greek Orthodox Parish of the Holy Trinity,
1 Canterbury Road, OXFORD, OX2 6LU
Website: www.holytrinityoxford.org.uk
Fr Ian: frian@holytrinityoxford.org.uk

Please remember Holy Trinity Parish in your prayers...

Subscribe: maillist1@holytrinityoxford.org.uk
Editor: community@holytrinityoxford.org.uk
Council: president1@holytrinityoxford.org.uk
Donation: treasurer1@holytrinityoxford.org.uk



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF THYATEIRA AND GREAT BRITAIN

1st February, 2022

The Reverend Priests-in-Charge
The Esteemed Presidents of the Parish Councils
the Ladies Auxiliary Associations and
School Committees of the Archdiocese of
Thyateira and Great Britain

Beloved in the Lord,

As we have entered the centennial year of our Holy Archdiocese, we would like to inform you of our plans for the 100th Anniversary Grand Banquet on Sunday, 23rd October 2022, at the Royal Lancaster Hotel (W2 3PF). This banquet will be the crown of our Archdiocesan Celebrations and His All-Holiness our Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew will attend as our guest of honour.

Due to limited seating, each community/parish is encouraged to reserve a table (10 seats) at the Grand Banquet. The evening will begin at 19:00. Each ticket costs: 100 pounds. Tables will be assigned in accordance to the date of their purchase, on a “first come first serve basis”.

Sales for parishes will begin, today, 1st February 2022, and tables will only be reserved once payment is received through bank transfer to: Metro Bank: Account Name: Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira & Great Britain, One Southampton Row, London WC1B 5HA, Sort Code: 23-05-80, Account Number: 43198369, IBAN: GB 61MYMB23058043198369, SWIFT: MYMBGB2L. Transfer Memo: Grand Banquet and the Church/Community Number as per the Archdiocesan Calendar). After 1st April 2022, the available remaining seats will be offered to the community at large, individuals, as well as to community organizations.

For further questions, enquiries, and to confirm your reservation/payment please contact the V. Rev. Nephon Tsimalis at: archdiocesanprivateoffice@gmail.com.

With prayerful wishes and archpastoral blessings, I remain

Paternally yours in Christ,

✠ Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain