

PARISH OF THE HOLY TRINITY



COMMUNITY BULLETIN

23 SEPTEMBER 2023

No. 76

Monthly News & Announcements

Prayers & Services

- ❖ Please pray for the newly departed *Ioanna, Elizabeth and John*, and the sick *Theodoros, Anna, Paul and Mark*.
 - ❖ Saints' days in [Greek](#) and [English](#)
 - ❖ Bilingual texts and music for [all services by date](#)
 - ❖ Archdiocesan Sunday [Bulletins](#) and [Services](#) (Holy Wisdom Cathedral, London)
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Events & Announcements

Please see our parish [website](#) for a full community calendar

Sunday 1 October the Auxiliary Association of St Andrew will hold a meeting for anyone who would like to help offer hospitality or volunteer in other ways within the community. This first meeting of the church year is our chance to plan events in honour of the upcoming feasts of the church, and find other ways to be of service to others. We'll meet in the Library after liturgy, events2@holytrinityoxford.org.uk.

Please save the date of **Saturday 14 October** to help with the annual Greek Food Fair (poster below, please share online)! Roula T (roula1@hotmail.co.uk) is kindly coordinating this fundraiser again for us, so please contact her if you would like to bring something or donate toward costs for renting the hall, printing posters, etc.

Sunday 29 October we will welcome newcomers with a bring-and-share lunch after the Liturgy. In general, please pay attention during this season when new people often appear among us — look for opportunities to actively welcome those you do not recognise into the community! Oxford probably attracts more than its share of introverts, and some thoughtful hospitality is important to people who may be homesick or just a bit apprehensive about living and worshipping in unfamiliar surroundings.

Happy New Year!

The new Church Year on 1 September is a reminder of the traditional Christian structuring of time, with its liturgical seasons and feastdays for events in the history of salvation, and for specific saints. These markers give us a framework for daily readings, for prayer and meditation which we hope will move us closer to Christ. Yet even with the overwhelming wealth of materials available, many of us still struggle to hold onto Christ as we spend large swathes of time outside our worshipping community, and sometimes without much conscious awareness of what our true purpose is and where our need lies. A recent book by Sr Vassa Larin (*Praying in Time: The Hours and Days in Step with Orthodox Christian Tradition*) describes a profound change to how time passes in modern society, and explores historic aspects of worship that may help us to address our current disorientation, which has only increased with the move to 24/7 life online.

Sr Vassa Larin will be familiar to some in our community as a liturgical scholar, and to others through her popular online ministry '[Coffee with Sister Vassa](#).' She joined a monastic community at 19, then received a blessing to pursue an academic path leading to a full-time post at the University of Vienna. Once she began to recognise that her fledgling online ministry reached a far wider audience, she worked to develop her website and related content until it was self-supporting and then left her academic post. She continues with her research, re-purposing her theological knowledge into podcasts and video offerings, along with practical writing and speaking projects with a presentation that is somehow challenging and whimsical at the same time.

In [Praying in Time](#), Sr Vassa describes the change to her own perception as she moved from the rhythm of a traditional monastic life to offering an online ministry out of her apartment, a working life that is similar to that of many lay-people. She has found that older prayer patterns helped her to counteract the chaotic nature of time online — each period of the day ('Hour') has a holy theme that repeats, and each day of the week also carries associations in the life of the church, associations anyone can call to mind without a prayer book in hand. In this short and practical book she suggests an intuitive and encouraging way to 'redeem the time,' contemplating Christ's life in a purposeful way at any time of day, simply as it occurs to us.




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**

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Organised by the Greek Orthodox Community of the
Holy Trinity, Oxford (Registered Charity No. 1011772)

GREEK FOOD FAIR



Saturday 14 October
11am to 3pm

*Come and enjoy authentic
Greek Food to eat in
or take away!*

Wesley Memorial Hall
New Inn Hall Street, Oxford OX1 2DH



The Cross

In today's Epistle reading (Galatians 2: 16-20), we hear the Apostle Paul utter a disquieting pronouncement: 'I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.' This leaves us effectively dumbfounded. Our initial reaction is perturbation: 'Can I really be crucified with Christ? . . . I'm afraid of death!' We all feel deep within us an aversion to the certainty of death. That proves, indirectly, that Man was formed by God for eternal life, and that death is an interruptive event within Creation – the consequence of Man's self-distancing from God.

And yet, as Christians we are called to the Cross! In what sense are we to understand this? It is obvious that the Apostle Paul is not referring to physical crucifixion or bodily death, even though that was how his life was destined to end. He is referring here to the crucifixion of the 'old Adam', the former self mystically apparent at the hour of our baptism, when whatever transgresses the will of God is mortified and suppressed. According to St Symeon the New Theologian, the patient endurance of life's trials, temptations and tribulations constitutes a form of crucifixion for the believer who strives to remain in communion with God throughout his life.

In fact, every one of us knows how the refusal of sin, when it is interwoven with some deep desire, seems to lead us towards a kind of death. At such moments we ask ourselves, 'How can the Lord want me to deny my very being?' Of course God is not making any such demand of us. But the process of stripping off our old selves is a little death. And at times it may be that the Resurrection, the true life which awaits us at the turn of the road, becomes harder to envisage. The life to which the Apostle is referring, the true life which is not subject to corruption, is the life of Christ within us. If we mortify our besetting sins and empty ourselves of our passions, we are showered with the abundance of God's grace. Hence, the Cross conceals within it the mystery of life, of immortality.

The Christian, then, begins his journey through this corruptible world with baptism, divesting himself of the 'old man', and walks the path of the Cross and Resurrection with daily struggles, while sharing in the Holy Eucharist. The Church is the mystical meeting-place of Man with God, the lost Paradise, where Man can exist in continual communion with Christ. The Kingdom of God can thereby become a daily reality, where Man can transcend the limits of this material world, and experience eternity in the present day.

And thus, stage by stage, perhaps without our conscious knowledge, our ordeal is transformed into joy, the joy conferred by the Holy Spirit. A joy that wells up from Eternity, not the corrupt present. A joy full and complete, which changes the acrid, bitter taste of pain in our mouths to ineffable sweetness. A joy which has no logical basis in the conditions of life in this world. A Resurrection-like joy, which recalls the words of our saints: 'Christ is Risen, my joy!' was the greeting of St Seraphim of Sarov.

Let us therefore make a new beginning, enduring the trials of this world, fixing our hopes on the Lord's Cross, setting our sights on the horizon of immortality, so as to experience from this day forward the true Life, the unfathomable beauty, the never-ending delight, the companionship of Christ along the way to the Kingdom of God.

By Protopresbyter Ioannes Pantelides

[Translation of the Archdiocesan bulletin offered by Rosemary B-M, [Source](#)]