

The Orthodox Parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross, Lancaster

Meeting at the Chaplaincy Centre of Lancaster University

Newsletter



*The Parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,
belongs to the Antiochian Orthodox Deanery of the United Kingdom and Ireland,
which is part of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of Western and Central Europe.*

*Our Metropolitan is His Eminence Archbishop John.
The Patriarchate of Antioch is third senior of the Orthodox Churches.
The Patriarch is His Beatitude Ignatius IV.*

*The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch
(Acts 11:26)*

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX BELL RINGING

The ringing of bells is one of the most essential elements of an Orthodox church. Church bells are rung to:

- * Summon the faithful to services.
- * Express the triumphal joy of the Christian Church.
- * Announce important moments during the services both to those in church and to those who are not able to be physically present in the church, so that all may be united in prayer.
- * Strengthen Christians in piety and faith by its sound, which Orthodox Christians believe is “alloyed with divine grace to disperse and destroy the forces of cruelty and of demonic suggestion”.
- * Proclaim important events, such as the death of a member of the church; the arrival of an important person, such as the bishop or civil ruler; an emergency such as fire or flood; or victory in battle (as dramatically recreated in the triumphant conclusion of the 1812 Overture).



The use of bells is not only practical, but is also considered to be spiritual. Bells are sometimes referred to as “singing icons”, because they establish the acou-

stic space of an Orthodox temple just as painted icons and hymnography define its visual and noetic space, respectively.

There are several liturgical services which point out the importance of bells in the Russian Orthodox Church: Blessing the Foundation of a New Bell Tower, Blessing a New Bell Tower (after construction is completed), Blessing, Naming, and Chrismating a Bell. There is also a service for the blessing of a bell ringer.

Bells are blessed with a ritual containing many of the elements of the Rite of Baptism. The new bell is blessed with holy water and censed, both outside and inside, and the priest lays hands on the bell to bless it. During the rite, the bell is “named” (that is, consecrated in honour of a saint, whose icon has often been molded into the side of the bell when it was cast at the foundry-but though a bell may be called the “Gabriel” bell, it would never be called the “St. Gabriel” bell, because a bell is not a saint).



The bell is also anointed with chrisam, just as an Orthodox Christian is at chrismation. The theological understanding of bells as “weapons” in spiritual warfare, and their role in the Christian life is emphasized during the rite by the scripture lesson from Numbers 10:1-10: “*And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Make*

for yourself two silver trumpets ... And they shall be for you for the calling of the assembly ... When you sound an alarm ... And if you shall go forth to war ... And in the days of your rejoicing ..."

The use of bells is symbolic of the proclamation of the Gospel. Sometimes Orthodox churches and monasteries will combine the use of bells with the striking of a wooden or metal semantron, with the semantron being sounded first, then the bells being rung later. The quieter and simpler sound of the semantron is understood to symbolize the Old Testament prophets, for it is the symbol only of a coming event, whereas the ringing of the bells is spread far into the air symbolizing the annunciation of the Gospel throughout the world.

Numerous bells were destroyed and during certain periods the production of church bells all but stopped. After the fall of the Iron Curtain the production of bells resumed, and has experienced a surge of activity as many of the churches that were destroyed are being rebuilt.

Source:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Orthodox_bell_ringing



MARTYRDOM

The witness of the Christian martyrs goes beyond the heroism of self-denial for the sake of certain ideals which a person believes to be higher in value even than his individual survival. History has seen many forms of such idealistic heroism and extreme self-denial, and all merit absolute respect; but they bear no direct relation to the witness of Christian martyrs. The martyrs of the Church embody the truth of the Church, the truth of the true life which is communion and relationship with God- which is the ultimate self-transcendence of natural individuality, and love for Christ who alone gives a hypostasis of eternal life to man's personal distinctiveness. It is not a question of ideological fanaticism, or of faith in ideas which aim to improve our common life; what we have seen is the concrete realization of a mode of existence which is the complete antithesis of individual survival, and has its historical prototype in the cross of Christ.

Taken from The "Freedom of Morality" by Christos Yannaras

You could find more on the next link:

<http://www.russianbells.com/trad/yannaras-art-1.html>

AXION ESTIN

Axion Estin is the name given to the icon of the Theotokos before which, according to tradition, the hymn was revealed. It stands in the high place of the altar of the katholikon (main church) of Karyes on Mount Athos.

According to tradition, an Elder and his disciple lived in a cell on Mount

Athos. One Saturday night the Elder left to attend the All-Night Vigil in Karyes. He told his disciple to chant the service alone. That evening an unknown monk who called himself Gabriel, came to the cell, and they began the Vigil together. During the Ninth Ode of the Canon, when they began to sing the Magnificat, the disciple sang the original hymn "More honorable than the Cherubim..." and afterwards the visiting monk chanted it again, but with "It is truly meet..." preceding the original Irmos. As he sang, the icon began to radiate with Uncreated Light. When the disciple asked the visiting monk to write the words of the new hymn down, he took a roof tile and wrote on it with his finger, as though the tile were made of wax. The disciple knew then that this was no ordinary monk, but the Archangel Gabriel. At that moment the Archangel disappeared, but the icon of the Mother of God continued to radiate light for some time afterward.

The *Eleousa* ("merciful") Icon of the Mother of God, before which the hymn "It Is Truly Meet" was first chanted, was transferred to the katholikon at Karyes, known as the Protaton. The tile, with the hymn written on it, was taken to Constantinople when St. Nicholas II Chrysoberges was Patriarch (984-996). The hymn became integrated in the Eastern Orthodox worship books and since then it plays an important role in everyday worship, being chanted in the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom and recited at the Compline.

Since that time the icon has been considered the protector of the Holy Mountain and its holiest object.



THE DORMITION OF OUR MOST-HOLY LADY THE THEOTOKOS AND EVER VIRGIN MARY

Concerning the Dormition of the Theotokos, this is what the Church has received from ancient times from the tradition of the Fathers. When the time drew nigh that our Savior was well-pleased to take His Mother to Himself, He declared unto her through an Angel that three days hence, He would translate her from this temporal life to eternity and bliss. On hearing this, she went up with haste to the Mount of Olives, where she prayed continuously. Giving thanks to God, she returned to her house and prepared whatever was necessary for her burial. While these things were taking place, clouds caught up the Apostles from the ends of the earth, where each one happened to be preaching, and brought them at once to the house of the Mother of God, who informed them of the cause of their sudden gathering. As a mother, she consoled them in their affliction as was meet, and then raised her hands to Heaven and prayed for the peace of the world. She blessed the Apostles, and, reclining upon her bed with seemliness, gave up her all-holy spirit into the hands of her Son and God.

With reverence and many lights, and chanting burial hymns, the Apostles took up that God-receiving body and brought it to the sepulcher, while the Angels from Heaven chanted with them, and sent forth her who is higher than the Cherubim. But one Jew, moved by malice, audaciously stretched forth his hand upon the bed and immediately received from divine judgment the wages of his audacity. Those daring hands were severed by an invisible blow. But when he

repented and asked forgiveness, his hands were restored. When they had reached the place called Gethsemane, they buried there with honor the all-immaculate body of the Theotokos, which was the source of Life. But on the third day after the burial, when they were eating together, and raised up the *artos* (bread) in Jesus' Name, as was their custom, the Theotokos appeared in the air, saying "Rejoice" to them. From this they learned concerning the bodily translation of the Theotokos into the Heavens.

These things has the Church received from the traditions of the Fathers, who have composed many hymns out of reverence, to the glory of the Mother of our God.

Source:

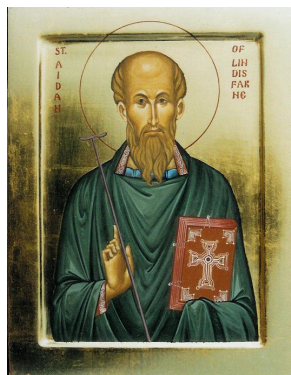
http://www.goarch.org/chapel/saints_view?contentid=165

ST. AIDAN (†651) BISHOP OF LINDISFARNE

St. Aidan was born in Ireland (then called Scotland) in the seventh century. As a monk of the monastery founded by St Columba on the island of Iona, he was known for his strict asceticism. When the holy King Oswald of Northumbria wanted to convert his people to Christianity, he turned to the Celtic monks of Iona, rather than the Roman clergy at Canterbury. St Aidan was consecrated bishop and sent to Northumbria to take charge of the mission. King Oswald gave him the island of Lindisfarne near the royal residence of Bamburgh for his episcopal See. St. Aidan founded the famous monastery on Lindisfarne in 635.

As bishop, St. Aidan was renowned for his humility and piety, a model for

other bishops and priests to follow. He was not attached to the things of this world, nor did he seek earthly treasures. Whenever he received gifts from the king or from rich men, he distributed them to the poor. On Wednesdays and Fridays he would fast from all food until the ninth hour, except during the paschal season. From Lindisfarne, St Aidan travelled all over Northumbria, visiting his flock and establishing missions. Oswald, who knew Gaelic from the time he and his family were exiled to Iona, acted as an interpreter for Bishop Aidan, who did not speak English. Thus, the king played an active role in the conversion of his people.



One year, after attending the services of Pascha, King Oswald sat down to a meal with Bishop Aidan. Just as the bishop was about to bless the food, a servant came in and informed the king that a great number of needy folk were outside begging for alms. The king ordered that his own food be served to the poor on silver platters, and that the silver serving dishes be broken up and distributed to them.

Taken from:

http://www.sourozh.org/web/British_Orthodox_Saints&useskin=russian



MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

6th Aug: The Holy Transfiguration of our
Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

13th Aug: St. Tikhon, Bishop of Voronezh

15th Aug: The Dormition of our Most-
Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-
Virgin Mary

16th Aug: St. Gerasimus, Wonderworker
of Cephalonia

20th Aug: St. Oswin, King and Martyr

22nd Aug: St. Sigfrid, Abbot of
Wearmouth

24th Aug: St. Kosmas of Aetolia, equal-to-
the-Apostles

29th Aug: The Beheading of the Holy,
Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and
Baptist John

31st Aug: St. Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne

For the lives of Saints please visit the
Calendar of the Greek Orthodox Archdi-
ocese of America: www.calendar.goarch.org

“We have been called to become unknown heroes,
visible only to the unsleeping eye of God”
- Elder Ephraim -



For further information please contact:

Father Jonathan Hemmings
67 Sibsey Str., Fairfield, Lancaster, LA1 5DQ
Tel: +44 1524 840759, +44 1524 580600

Email: frjah@yahoo.co.uk
www.antiochian-orthodox.co.uk

