



# BASILDON ORTHODOX COMMUNITY BULLETIN

No. 9 ~ APOSTLES' FAST 2015

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## ALL SAINTS ORTHODOX CHURCH

North Benfleet Hall Road

Basildon,

Essex SS12 9JR

**DIVINE LITURGY**, preceded by **ORTHROS** : every **SUNDAY**.

**ESPERINOS** : on the last **SATURDAY** of the month.

### Dear brothers & sisters in the Lord. . .

*'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.'*

We have just started the Fast of the Holy Apostles. This Fast, a preparation for the Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul (29<sup>th</sup> June), started yesterday, on the second Monday after Holy Pentecost. The duration of the Fast varies from year to year depending on the date of Holy Pascha.

Fasting periods are essential (Mt. 6:16) and always joyous times for Christians (Mt. 6:5, 16) because they provide us with opportunities to re-order our priorities, to drive out the enemy (Mt. 17:19-21; Lk. 9:17-29), and in so doing be changed so that we may draw closer to Christ. Saint John Cassian offers much good advice on fasting. For example, he says:

-- *'Perfection of mind depends upon the abstinence of the belly.'*

-- *'A clear rule for self-control handed down by the Fathers is this: stop eating while still hungry.'*

Unfortunately, there sometimes is a lack of balance. Detailed instructions are given to the faithful regarding the types of food to be avoided but little or no advice is given on other aspects, or types, of fasting. It is not always made clear that as our bloated bellies are emptied so our prayer life should be deepened and expanded; and we ought to do our best to escape the hold (Isaiah 58:6) that our obsessions and self-indulgences (Mt. 6:21) have on us. Cassian goes on to say: *'One cannot reach the goal of*

*perfection and purity except through true humility.’ We do well to remember that ‘the duty of fasting is rendered acceptable to God when it is made perfect by the fruits of charity.’*

Fasting without prayer and without charity is simple dieting. Fasting from food whilst still arguing, lusting, criticising others, swearing, taking drugs, etc., is, as the Prophet Isaiah warns us (Isaiah 58:1-12), a waste of time. It is not true fasting. It is merely pretence. The Fathers warn us that, no matter how hard we fast, if we take offence at anyone for their faults then we can have no knowledge of God or of things divine. The Fathers say that if we scrupulously avoid meat and eggs and dairy but do not abstain from noise, anger, greed, envy, hatred and lust then our so-called “fasting” as, at best, little more than hollow phariseeism and, at worst, an insult to God.

During a fast we are blessed to refrain from cruelty to our fellow creatures and from bloodletting. We attempt to reform the ceaseless demands of the body, to place God above our belly; but we must also redouble our efforts to wage war against pride, and to place prayer above our passions, humility above pride, neighbour above myself (Mt. 5:44-45), and ultimately eternal life above eternal death.

It is only through Faith, the Holy Mysteries, Scripture, prayer, discipline and asceticism that we can negotiate the narrow Way (Mt. 7:13-14). A blessed and successful fast is one nourished by prayer and the liturgical life, it is one in which we have devoted more time and effort to prayer and charity than to food and relaxation, and have given to God and man more than we have taken.

For a good fast: Let us beseech the Lord.

Father Jakob

**SAINT ISAAC THE SYRIAN on FASTING** ~ *"... since fasting is a weapon established by God ...the human race knew no victory before fasting, and the devil was never defeated by our nature as it is: but this weapon has indeed deprived the devil of strength from the outset.. As soon as the devil sees someone possessed of this weapon (fasting), fear straightway falls on this adversary and tormentor of ours, who remembers and thinks of his defeat by the Saviour in the wilderness; his strength is at once destroyed and the sight of the weapon given us by our Supreme Leader burns him up. A man armed with the weapon of fasting is always afire with zeal. He who remains therein, keeps his mind steadfast and ready to meet and repel all violent passions."*

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**WATER SUPPLY** – Our community is especially grateful to our benefactor, **Mr. Robert Lyon**, for providing us with a connection to fresh water.

**TOWER** – We have been given initial approval for the tower to be demolished. This will still require a whole series of negotiations before this can be effected. Please pray for the success of our endeavours. The tower (built in 1903) is unstable and is seriously damaging the mediaeval fabric of our Holy Temple.

**CHARITY STATUS** – Our application is (finally!) nearing completion. Being awarded charity status will enable us to work more efficiently and effectively for our people, for the wider community and to the Glory of God.

**BISHOP** – The Holy Synod of Antioch, with His Beatitude Patriarch John X presiding, will be meeting at Balamand Monastery later this month. Their agenda includes the election of our new Bishop. Please pray that God's will be done.

### **SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY, GLORIOUS AND ALL-PRAISED APOSTLES**

( commemorated 30<sup>th</sup> June )

Each of the Holy Apostles has his own Feast day, but on this day we commemorate them all together. Of them, only St. John the Theologian reposed in peace; the rest met a blessed martyric death in the flesh. Their details are as follows:

**Peter:** (29<sup>th</sup> June 29, 16<sup>th</sup> January) Crucified upside down.

**Andrew:** (30<sup>th</sup> November) Crucified.

**James the Son of Zebedee:** (30<sup>th</sup> April) Beheaded.

**John the Theologian:** (26<sup>th</sup> September, 8<sup>th</sup> May) Reposed in peace in a wondrous way.

**Philip:** (14<sup>th</sup> November) Crucified.

**Bartholomew:** (11<sup>th</sup> June, 25<sup>th</sup> August) Crucified, then flayed and beheaded.

**Thomas:** (6<sup>th</sup> October) Pierced with five spears.

**Matthew the Evangelist:** (16<sup>th</sup> November) Burned to death.

**James the Son of Alphaeus:** (9<sup>th</sup> October) Crucified.

**Thaddeus (or Jude the brother of James):** (19<sup>th</sup> June) Crucified.

**Simon the Zealot:** (10<sup>th</sup> May) Crucified.

**Matthias:** (9<sup>th</sup> August) Stoned, then beheaded with an axe.

**Paul:** (29<sup>th</sup> June) Beheaded.

## THE HOLY FATHERS on MARTYRDOM:

*'Having eagerly and with great patience suffered, they are now magnified unto the ages. For we all must laud with songs of praise the struggles of the saints, because with a courageous spirit they have striven to implore God's mercy shedding their blood to cleanse us all. As mild, forgiving, chaste, pure lambs offering themselves up as a burnt offering for us..., and offering their souls as a pleasing, fragrant sacrifice to God.'* ~ **Venerable St. Ephraim of Syria**

*'The death of martyrs is encouragement to the faithful, daring of the Church, confirmation of Christianity, destruction of death, proof of the Resurrection, mocking at demons, condemnation of the devil, teaching of true wisdom and a pious way of life, instillation of disdain for present material benefits and path of striving for the good to come, comfort in the face of the misfortunes which befall us, and inducements to patience, instruction in courage, the root and fount and mother of all blessings... The blood of martyrs nourishes the Church much more than the moisture of dew brings gardens into bloom.'* ~ **Holy Hierarch St. John Chrysostomos**

*'Ought not the Christian, who looks for eternal peace and joy in heaven, to bear courageously and joyfully all sorrows, labour, sickness, injustice, everything unpleasant, here? Indeed he ought. Otherwise, what would be the meaning of future rest and peace? What peace and rest shall there be for him who has already had his peace and rest here, without enduring anything? Were would God's justice be? We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.'* ~ **St. John of Kronstadt (from My Life In Christ.)**

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**THANK YOU** – We are grateful to **Subdeacon Ioannis**, and the people of Saint Botolf's (London), for the gift of two gold (server's) *stikharia*; and to the newly-illuminated **Susannah & Ceolfrith** for wicks and bottles of *Mavrodaphne* (Communion wine).

**IKONS** – Please always feel free to bring in ikons for the Holy Temple. We have quite a good number but it would be a blessing to have some more “personal” items (ikons of your name-saints, *slavas*, etc.). Note that metal or wooden ikons are *preferable* as dampness in the Holy Temple remains an issue. We are able to mount good-quality reproductions.

**We always need. . .**

**Sweet red wine** (for the Holy Communion) *Commandaria* or *Mavrodaphne* are ideal. The latter is available at Sainsbury @ £5.50 per bottle.

**Wax tapers** (for the faithful) Available at a reasonable price from SGOIS.

**Olive oil** (for the lamps)

**Wicks & floats** (for the lamps) Available at the Monastery shop.

**Incense** Small bags are available at the Monastery shop for around £2.50 each.

If you are able to obtain any, or all of these items, online or at the above, we should be especially grateful.

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**NEW-MARTYRS of SERBIA**

( commemorated on 15<sup>th</sup> June )

Troparion (Tone 8 )

*For your faith in God and His Righteousness, you suffered in the flesh.  
The earth sorrows, but your souls have been saved and heaven rejoices!  
And your ancestors sang aloud within Heaven greeting you at the gate  
of paradise with this song: your names are in the Book of Eternity.  
Enter into Paradise O children of immortality! We, your posterity  
on earth, cry out in unison: O New-martyrs, pray to God for us!*

**Hieromartyr Metropolitan Joanikije [Lipovac] of Montenegro**

**Hieromartyr Metropolitan Petar [Zimonjić] of Dabar-Bosna**

**Hieromartyr Bishop Platon of Banja Luka**

**Hieromartyr Bishop Sava of Gorno-Karlovats**

**Hieromartyr Rafailo [Momcilović]**

**Hieromartyr Branko [Dobrosavlević]**

**Hieromartyr George [Bogić]**

**Martyr Vukašin of Klepci**

**Pray to God for us!**

**Holy New Martyrs of Serbia,**

**Pray to God for us!**

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**+ GLORY TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS +**