



The Orthodox Church of St. Dunstan  
Parkstone, Dorset  
The Antiochian Orthodox Deanery of  
The United Kingdom and Ireland  
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East

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**April-May**

### Getting closer

In its heart Orthodox Christianity is not just a set of right beliefs or even, merely, the correct way to worship or even, simply, a system of ethics: it is, in the final analysis, an experience of the mystery of salvation.

Just as the first apostles came to faith through an encounter with Christ himself, God incarnate, so with us: it is an encounter with Christ through his body, the Church, that we know him. Naturally, the right beliefs, right behaviour, right worship mentioned above are all essential. After all, how else can we be sure that we meet the authentic Christ who has but one body on earth, which is the one holy catholic and apostolic Eastern Orthodox Church.

[Knowing this: that we have found the true Christ and his one Church, we do not, however, cast aspersions on other Christians not recognisably part of the Orthodox Church. We might certainly know where the Church is; we cannot say definitely where it is not.]

With this in mind, Orthodox Christians have for generations encountered Christ especially by his presence in the liturgy. This is especially true in the mysteries that we celebrate during Holy and Great week. The services that are celebrated from Palm Sunday to Pascha have their

own complex history, developing largely from the historical fascination of pilgrims visiting the Holy Land from the fourth century onward. Influenced also by the services and rites originating in our own Patriarchate of Antioch, we have inherited a liturgical tradition varied, rich and very demanding. They have also two very clear purposes: firstly, and quite naturally, the worship of Almighty God in grateful response to his saving compassion for mankind; secondly, they bring us into direct contact with the very paschal mystery that lies at the centre of the Christian faith.

In other words, the services themselves, as each one unfolds, carries us through the experience of the passion and resurrection. The rites are dramatic but not just a drama; they are moving but not merely emotional; they are ritualised but far from empty ritual – for they are the bearers of the holy tradition not as simple repetition but as the means of conveying to each one of us what these mysteries mean for our eternal destiny and salvation. In other words: in Holy Week we can get up close to Christ, we can be alongside him, in him and with him, sharing in what he has done for us.

For us, this means that it does not matter in the slightest that we did not meet the historical Jesus as did the

apostles themselves. Descending death by means of the cross and rising into in glory, Christ recreated what it means to be human. We have already been made partakers in this paschal mystery through the sacrament of Baptism. Year by year, however, we renew and reaffirm our faith in what we have become in Christ. No other experience on earth can bring us so close. As far as possible, all the faithful should endeavour to be present at as many of the Holy Week services as they can. This is, of course, our first Holy week at the new church and it is important that we establish a pattern of worship with as much support as possible from our Orthodox people. Not only is this to bring us closer to Christ but is also part of our mission to those who have yet to encounter him.

Fr. Chrysostom

## SERVICES

### April

Sun 2 Lent IV Orthros 9.00am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 10.30am  
 Wed 5 6<sup>th</sup> Hour 11.00am Great Canon of St. Andrew 6.00pm  
 Fri 7 Akathist Hymn 6.00pm  
 Sat 8 Vespers 6.00pm  
 Sun 9 Lent V Orthros 9.00am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 10.30am  
 Wed 12 6<sup>th</sup> Hour 11.00am  
 Sat 15 Vespers 6.00pm  
 Sun 16 Palm Sunday Orthros 9.00am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 10.30am

### Holy & Great week

Mon 17 Bridegroom Service 6.00pm

Wed 19 Anointing Service 7.00pm

Thurs 20 Vesperal Liturgy of the Mystical Supper 10.30am Service of the Twelve Gospels 7.00pm

Fri 21 Vespers of the Shroud 5.00pm  
 Lamentations service 7.00pm  
 Sat 22 Vesperal Liturgy 10.30am  
 Paschal Vigil and Feast 11.00pm  
 Sun 23 Holy Pascha  
 Paschal Vespers 2.30pm

Wed 26 Vespers 6.00pm  
 Sat 29 Vespers 6.00pm  
 Sun 30 Thomas Sunday  
 Orthros 9.00am Divine Liturgy 10.30am

### May

Wed 3 Paraklesis 6.00pm

Sat 6 Vespers 6.00pm  
 Sun 7 The Holy Myrrh-bearers Orthros 9.00am  
 Divine Liturgy 10.30am

Wed 10 Paraklesis 6.00pm

Sat 13 Vespers 6.00pm  
 Sun 14 The paralysed Man Orthros 9.00am  
 Divine Liturgy 10.30am

Tues 16 Vespers of the Mid-Feast 6.00pm

*Fri 19 Feast of St. Dunstan. Services and events to be announced*

Sat 20 Vespers 6.00pm  
 Sun 21 The Samaritan Woman Orthros 9.00pm  
 Divine Liturgy 10.30am

Wed 24 Paraklesis 6.00pm  
 Sat 27 Vespers 6.00pm  
 Sun 28 The Blind Man  
 Orthros 9.00am  
 Divine Liturgy 10.30am

Wed 31 Eve of Acension - Services to be announced

