

THE NARTHEX

*The believers were first called
Christians at Antioch*
ACTS. 9:26
**October-November
2008**

The Orthodox Church of St. Dunstan Poole-Bournemouth

The Antiochian Orthodox Deanery of The United Kingdom and Ireland
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East

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Our Current Position

We are, as ever, extremely grateful to Fr. Marcus and his congregation for allowing us to use their hall as a place of worship. Without his immediate kindness last year, we would have found ourselves homeless. Meanwhile, you will be relieved to learn, that the operations of the Brewer brothers in the UK have now virtually collapsed. This has been desperately sad for the former employees of the old SPCK bookshops: they are bringing their own case (through their union USDAW) against the Texans. But, at least, the bad publicity that the two brothers had given to the holy name of Orthodox Christianity has now been blocked. A report in the *Anglican Church Times* on the 12th September stated that Mr. Brewer's attempt to file for bankruptcy protection in the United States was thrown out of court, accusing him of 'bad faith' and of 'hiding behind' a charity not even registered in the USA. Meanwhile, his organisation is left, I believe, with a handful of commercial premises and two church buildings. What will become of those premises after the creditors have pounced, we can but wait and see.

This is not written with any feelings of grim satisfaction but it is with a sense of vindication: we were right to sever all links with the Texans and their organisation. In the end, I never could fathom what Mark Brewer was really up to. It might well have been that he genuinely wished to support the

the mission of the Orthodox Church in Britain. But his attitude and his *modus operandi* revealed that he had no understanding of, nor sensitivity towards the social and religious background of this country. If, for example, he had been able to work with the strategy being developed in our own Deanery Missions Committee, (as was suggested to him at very the beginning) he might have done mighty works. This, though, he could not do and, seeking to further his own peculiar version of Orthodoxy outside the canonical structures of the Church, he came to grief and has only himself to blame. This is a lesson for us all: to do nothing without the blessing of the bishop - an idea that goes back to St. Ignatius of Antioch. This is indeed a salutary point as, at this time, we welcome our new Archbishop John.

We, however, have to look to the future, trusting in God. We have still, of course, to find our own building in due time. Fr. Marcus and his people have said that we are welcome to stay as long as we need and we are eternally grateful. (May God remember them in his kingdom!) It will be obvious, however, that living in a wilderness without a *pied a terre* of our own has its own difficulties: we are less obvious; we are more anonymous unless we advertise or unless people find us on the Internet. It seems to make us a 'Sunday Church' only, for the most part, making our communal life episodic and disjointed. How wonderful it

would be just to visit our church any day of the week to light a candle and pray.

On the other hand, I have to ask are we ready to take on the responsibility of such a place if we could find one? Current finances and levels of regular giving would prohibit buying a property or taking out a mortgage on one. We could though, manage a modest rent. Alongside this, we would also have to consider such matters as insurance, maintenance, utilities and all the regulations regarding public buildings.

This all requires clear soul-searching as many of our people come to the Liturgy quite irregularly (for reasons I do not always understand). But if we want an Orthodox Church congregation established at the heart of the Poole-Bournemouth conurbation, no one is going to plant it but we, ourselves.

I am all too well aware of my own short-comings, having to earn my own living in a full time teaching job. I am not able to build up the congregation in the way a full-time priest might. I am, though, quite happy to continue ministering as I can, serving Divine Liturgy on Sundays. If we want more than this, however, then each household and, indeed, every individual who identifies with our parish must ask themselves how committed they are to sharing as fully as possible in the liturgical life of the Church?

Are they contributing regularly, proportionately and according to their means, to the financial operation of the parish? As they used to say on the old fashioned examination papers - *Discuss!*

Fr. Chrysostom

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*To fall and be injured is human- since even if a man's life lasted for only one day - his mind is inclined to evil from his youth. [Gen.8:21] But to fall and remain fallen is not human. Repentance recreates man; it was given to us to cure the soul after baptism. If it did not exist, rarely would a person be saved. That is why the virtue of repentance is unending as long as man is alive, for only the perfect do not err. My children, every time you see your thoughts reproaching you for some sin, immediately take the medicine: repent, weep, go to confession and behold, you return to your former and better state.*

Counsels from the Holy Mountain'

The Elder Ephraim

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The Church by her very existence is evangelistic - she exists to pass on the mystery of Christ to others. How this is done, however, is another question altogether.

Some naive sects imagine this is to be done calling from door to door. The arrant silliness of this as a method is beyond comment, save for the result that one might delude the gullible and ill-educated or attract the desperate and unsophisticated. They are purporting, of course, to be thoroughly biblical, following the command of Christ to his own Apostles. They are, though, neglecting the context of Scripture, forgetting that we do not live in a commonly shared religious culture, generally speaking, nor are we first century Jews, longing for the coming of the Messiah, albeit that there was no accepted consensus on what that meant at the time. The point we must grasp is that our evangelisation is to a secular culture now, where religion, as a practice, has been largely forgotten and few understand the concept of salvation let alone their need for it. 'Cold calling', to use the current

term, is of no use, so how do we bring the gospel to others? We might not live in the days of the Apostles but we share two things with them very specifically: their faith and tradition on the one hand and secondly, the gift of the Holy Spirit as at Pentecost. In other words, the best way for you and me to evangelise our neighbour is not by preaching at them about things they do not understand ["Do not cast your pearls before swine..."] but, in the first place, by revealing Christ to them: in the way we live a holy life; in our charity; in our hope, our faith, our peace, our virtues and morality, through the spiritual nature of our lives. In as much as we have acquired the Holy Spirit and have truly become *Pentecostal* Christians - in the real meaning of that word - we will, in the words of St. Seraphim of Sarov, 'save thousands around us.' In the gospel of the miraculous catch of fish (Luke 5) Peter, witnessing the superabundant grace of Christ, falls at his feet in repentance. Remembering that true repentance is a longing for what we might become, it is we, ourselves, having recovered the image of Christ and striving for the likeness of God who will draw in those whom the Lord has called to inherit eternal life.

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**Practical Tips:** *In order to create a prayerful atmosphere in the hall, try to avoid unnecessary chatter before the service begins, especially after the Kairon and Sixth Hour have begun. If you are able-bodied and can be there by 10.00am, help is always needed in setting up for the Liturgy. Try to be on time for the start: some say you should not receive the Holy gifts if you have not been present for the initial blessing. Under normal circumstances, at least you should be present to hear the gospel of the day if you intend to receive Holy Communion.*

Met.  
Arch  
of  
Western  
Central



John  
bishop  
and  
Europe

*MANY YEARS!*

**SERVICES**

*N.B. Services might have to times altered or be cancelled during August to take account of holidays. Announcements will follow.*

**OCTOBER**

5<sup>TH</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 10.45am

12<sup>TH</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost To be announced [Met. John in London]

19<sup>th</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 10.45am

25<sup>th</sup> N.B. BST ends; clocks go back one hour.

26<sup>th</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost Glorious Gt. Martyr Demetrius Divine Liturgy 10.45am

31<sup>ST</sup> Parish Committee 7.00pm

**NOVEMBER**

2<sup>nd</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 10.45am

9<sup>th</sup> 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 10.45am

15<sup>th</sup> November **Beginning of the Nativity Fast**

16<sup>th</sup> 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost Holy Ap. & Ev. Matthew Divine Liturgy 10.45am

23<sup>rd</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost Afterfeast of the Entry Divine Liturgy 10.45am

30<sup>th</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost St. Andrew Ap. Divine Liturgy 10.45am