

IMPORTANT, PLEASE NOTE:

As was previously announced, this month we are at St. Andrews on the fourth rather than the third Sunday — December 23rd instead of 16th.

Timetable of Services: December 31, 2007-January 20, 2008

Monday, December 31st 2007 @ 7:00 p.m.: Evening Service

Saturday, January 5th 2008 @ 5:30 p.m.: Vigil

Sunday, January 6th 2008 @ 10:30 a.m.: The Holy Liturgy

Sunday, January 6th 2008 @ 6:00 p.m.: Vigil

**Monday, January 7th 2008 @ 10:30 a.m.: The Holy Liturgy
Nativity of Christ**

Friday, January 18th 2008 @ 6:30 p.m.: Vigil (Theophany)

Saturday, January 19th 2008 @ 10:30 a.m.: The Holy Liturgy

Saturday, January 19th 2008 @ 5:30 p.m.: Vigil

Sunday, January 20th, 2008 @ 10:30 a.m.: The Holy Liturgy

Parish Clergy

Fr. John Lee: 3 Brookwood Avenue, Barnes, London SW13 0LR
020 88767993

Fr. Stephan Maikovsky: 237 Luton Road, Harpenden AL5 3DE
01582623939 s.maikovsky@ntlworld.com

Deacon Constantine Litvinenko: 1 Wealdon Court, Guildford, Surrey GU2 8EQ
01483 450 749 c_litvinenko@tiscali.co.uk

The parish is under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Exarchate of Orthodox Parishes of Russian Tradition in Western Europe, the Right Reverend Basil, Bishop of Amphipolis.

Vicariate Office — 94a Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 6TJ. 01865 512701

The Dormition of the Mother of God



SERVICES THIS WEEK

**SAT 1st December
5:30 p.m. VIGIL**

**SUN 2nd December
10:30 a.m. The Holy Liturgy**

**Orthodox Parish Worshipping
at St. Andrew Holborn**

All services are celebrated in Church Slavonic and in English.

Sermon by Fr. John Lee

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost

Jesus and the lawyer

Today's gospel reading is about a question posed to Jesus by a young lawyer. By the time Our Lord returned to Capernaum, his home region, His works and His doctrine had become very well known and the people who came to hear Him now were not only the common crowd but also leaders of the people. Many of them were dissatisfied and disappointed in their religious life, in their rabbis and teachers and in many minds and hearts were the thoughts "I think like this young prophet from Galilee" - and they listened to Him seriously.

One of these was a lawyer - versed in the law of Moses and its' application - lawyers in Israel occupied one of the hardest positions in society. They were posed between their people and religious law and the Roman authority. They could not afford mistakes. This lawyer knew very well what Moses required for salvation. He wanted to know what Jesus would say and Christ honoured his sincerity, his desire for evidence.

Jesus always responded to people where they were, what state they were in. To simple people He never posed debates or arguments - He said simply "Come" with arms open wide. To the Pharisees He responded in like terms - religious law which He knew well. From sinners He asked only proof of their sorrow and contrition; from people sick and suffering He asked only faith - He suited Himself instantly to the type and state of the person with whom He was speaking.

In this instance Jesus did the same - the man was a serious lawyer and Christ said "What is written in the law? How do you read it?"

It was an easy question - requiring only a catechism-type answer. Every Jew knew the prayer of the phylacteries: on the right hand:

"Hear O Israel, The lord our God is One,
Thou shalt love Him with thy whole
Heart, and mind and strength"

The words taken from Deuteronomy - and on the left hand from Leviticus:

"Thou shalt love other men as Thyself."

Jesus gave him no argument - He said "You are right - do this and you'll be alright"

It was a perfect answer - more than sufficient - but the gospel tells us that the lawyer pressed Him further and said "But who is my neighbour?"

Christ must have paused and perhaps even seeing the outline of the distant hills of Samaria He told him the story of the Good Samaritan - of the poor man who was set upon by thieves and beaten and left for dead - how a priest and a temple official passed his wounded body and gave no help and then how a hated person, a Samaritan saved the poor man's life.

When Jesus finished the story He looked at the lawyer and said "Which one of them was the neighbour?"

The lawyer didn't hesitate "The one who showed mercy" he replied.

We are told many times in the New Testament that Christ will be our judge - not God the Father - and this brings great comfort - for although we see some instances in which Jesus condemned on the whole He showed mercy.

As Christ responded to this man being a lawyer so will he also respond to us. He will ask us: were you a good husband, father, brother, son? Were you a good wife, mother, sister daughter? And more than this: what kind of teacher were you - what kind of doctor - what kind of nurse - did people get what they deserved from you? Love, knowledge, wisdom and often time — And for those in business or trade - were you honest? And what about the Clergy - they will be judged the most strictly of all - what kind of Bishop priest or deacon were you? You whom I allowed to come so close to the mysteries?

Our Christian Life is not just about what we do; or fail to do; it is about who we are.

Let us be as honest as this young lawyer.

Amen.

The Vicariate Annual Conference:

will take place on the late May Bank Holiday, 23rd to 26th May 2008, at All Saints Pastoral Centre, near St Albans, Herts. This former Anglican convent, now owned by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster, has a direct association with St Alban, Protomartyr of Britain. [The beautiful grounds contain the site of the Chapel which was the dwelling of the priest for whom St Alban gave his life.] The buildings form a quadrangle around a central cloister garden, making it a compact, intimate site which draws people together]

We hope that those people who attended the last conference, and many others, will be able to come and experience the spirit of the Vicariate gathered around Bishop Basil, with the opportunity to meet fellow members of the Exarchate from Western Europe, and fellow Orthodox from further afield.

Families were much missed at this year's conference, so we are happy to be able to re-instate a Children's Programme and to offer reduced conference fees for children and youth.

As an early booking commitment is required by All Saints, with a booking deadline of February 15, we will be sending out application forms at the beginning of December. [We think this early commitment will be a positive feature in terms of giving people time to plan ahead, save money, and book travel in advance at cheaper rates. We encourage everyone to apply early, and to spread the word.

Any questions please contact Kelsey Cheshire on: (0207) 243-0801.