

“As many as have been Baptised into Christ have put on Christ: Alleluia!”

ORTHODOX FAMILIES' NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the newsletter for families of the
Louth and Grimsby parishes. Issue No. 5: March 2013



We've started this newsletter to help us keep in touch with all our families,
and give support when bringing up children in the warmth of the Orthodox Church family.

We welcome your ideas and questions, either in person or by email to orthodox@btinternet.com

Axios! On February 10th the new Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, His Beatitude John X was enthroned at a ceremony in Damascus. This all sounds very far away from us here in Lincolnshire, but we have the great blessing of having welcomed this kind and loving man of God here to Lincolnshire several times. He first visited St Aethelheard's Church in September 2003 when he was a Bishop: then in November 1997 and April 2012 he visited and met us again, having in the meantime been enthroned as Metropolitan of Central Europe. May he have 'Many Years' as our shepherd. Please remember him in your prayers.



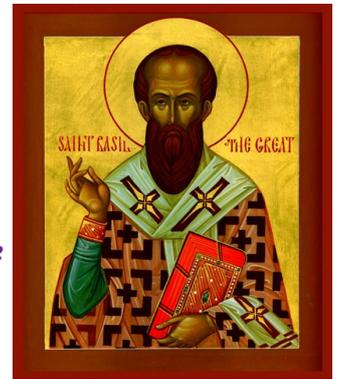
THE LENTEN FAST In the Orthodox Churches, we begin Lent, and our lenten fast, on March 18th. Why do we fast? Fr Michael says, “The Orthodox icon of a human being is a unity of soul and body; so the body must be trained and disciplined as well as the soul.” But he goes on to explain that fasting should never be seen as a punishment for sin; should never be done with the purpose of impressing others; and should not be the ticking in boxes to gain reward. Instead, it is intended to make us conscious of the gifts that come from God.

Putting food into our mouths unthinkingly can lead to gluttony, a word that conjures up a picture of someone greedily gobbling their way through food without a thought to the value of the food, or the good fortune they have in having plenty to eat. So one sin that we try to kill off in our lives at this time is gluttony, by not eating everything we fancy, and being conscious of God's gift of food in our lives. Ideally we try to follow the fasting rules during Lent, which mostly means not eating animal products and not drinking alcohol. This is not possible for everyone, and especially not in some families where not everyone is Orthodox.

But this doesn't mean giving up the idea of fasting altogether. In some families, for example, everyone decides what favourite treats they will go without during Lent, and then gives the money that would have been spent, to those who don't have enough to eat day after day. There are many charities that welcome donations, however small, and if the children can actually take the donations themselves they will have a real sense of what they have achieved. They have 'killed off' one of the sins, and, most importantly, shown love for their neighbour. So have a 'Happy Fast' by making it really mean something in your family.

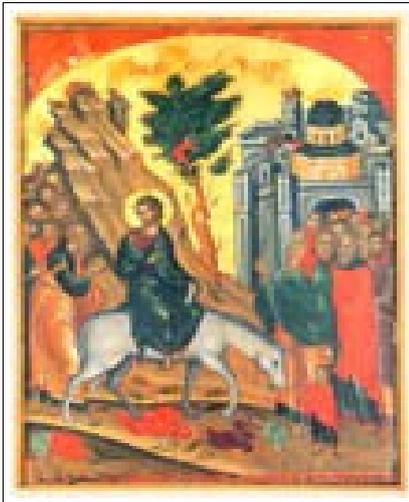
During Lent, we celebrate the Sunday Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great. Here are some of his wise words.

"The bread you do not use belongs to the hungry; the garment hanging in your wardrobe and not worn is the clothing of the naked; the shoes you do not wear are the shoes of someone who is barefoot; the money you keep locked away is the money of the poor."



PALM SUNDAY

This year, on April 28th which is the Sunday before Pascha, we celebrate the Entry of Our Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem. It is also known as Palm Sunday, because as we read in the Gospels, Christ rides into the city on a donkey or ass, and the crowds of people who come to greet Him throw small branches from the palm trees into the road before Him as a sign of welcome and reverence.



In the icons of the Feast, children are often depicted up in the trees, where they are gathering branches. For this reason, at the Divine Liturgy on this day, we stand holding bunches of leaves, which often include a cross made of palm leaves. Palm trees do not grow too well in our climate, so over the centuries it has been the custom to also hold branches of willow and some evergreen trees like box, yew and olive. At the end of the Liturgy we take these special, and blessed, bunches home with us to put into our icon corners where they stay until Palm Sunday next year.

On this Feast when we think about greenery, you will see that the priest wears green vestments. So come and join the 'crowds' as we give Christ Our Saviour this special welcome. And feel free to bring your own 'branches' too!

HOLY AND GREAT PASCHA IS ON MAY 5TH

All details of the services for Holy Week will be in the Louth and Grimsby Newsletters as usual, but it is worth drawing your attention to the celebrations for Pascha itself.

At 8 o'clock on Saturday evening, May 4th, at St Aethelheard's Church, Louth there is the The Rush Service and Paschal Matins. This is a very exciting service because we all gather together in the church as light falls, and wait for the wonderful news that 'Christ is Risen'. The priest calls out 'Come take the light' and we all light our candles and lanterns and go in procession round the church, ringing bells and singing the triumphal hymn 'Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death and upon those in the tombs bestowing life'. It is a wonderfully noisy and happy occasion. Last year several families came and the children thought it was great to be up late and being allowed to do a lot of shouting and singing and bell-ringing. Don't miss out: come and celebrate with us.

AND FINALLY.... We have been given the web link to a very useful publication called Digital Parenting. It's all about helping your children to safely use smartphones, Facebook, Google searches and so on. It's very good. Do have a look at it.

<http://asp-gb.secure-zone.net/v2/index.jsp?id=1134/2660/5747&lng=en>