

IMPORTANT NOTE: St. Andrew's Management require us to vacate the church by 3 p.m. every Sunday. There is no negotiation on this.

Fr. John

Church Security

After all Services, and any meetings and refreshments have finished, the church is locked and so is the main entrance gate - please be careful that you are not locked in! In an emergency telephone 07733227767.

The Parish of the Dormition of the Mother of God (Ecumenical Patriarchate)

Registered Charity Number: 1125574

Parish Clergy

Parish Priest

Father John Lee: 3 Brookwood Avenue, Barnes, London SW13 0LR

020 88767993

Assistant Priest

Father Stephan 237 Luton Road, Harpenden AL5 3DE

Maikovsky: 01582623939 s.maikovsky@ntlworld.com

Hierodeacon

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Churchwarden

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The parish is part of the Archdiocese of Orthodox Parishes of Russian Tradition in Western Europe, Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The head of the Archdiocese is His Eminence Archbishop Gabriel of Comana.

The Dormition of the Mother of God (EP)



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

Issue: 51; October 2009

Saturday: October 17th at 5:30 p.m.:

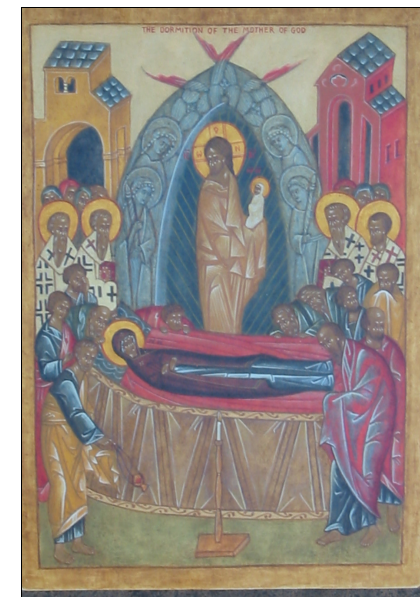
Vigil

Sunday: October 18th at 10:30 a.m.

The Holy Liturgy

All services are celebrated in Church Slavonic and in English.

SECOND ISSUE IN OCTOBER



Troparion

“In giving birth, O Mother of God, Thou hast kept Thy virginity, and in falling asleep Thou hast not forsaken the world. Thou, O Mother of life, hast passed over into life and by Thy prayers dost deliver our souls from death.”

Sermon – 4 October 2009

Matthew 15:21-28

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

In today's Gospel reading a Canaanite woman approaches Jesus and asks for her daughter to be healed. "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed" she says. But she gets no response to her plea. Worse, the disciples say "Send her away, for she cries out after us". Jesus then says "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel". The woman persists, worships Him and says "Lord, help me!" Jesus responds "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs" to which the woman replies "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table". The reading ends with Christ's words "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire" and the daughter was healed at that very hour.

This is an extraordinary passage and I remember being taken aback by Christ's seemingly harsh words when I read this for the first time as a young man. Is He provoking us to test our faith?

So what can we learn from this story? The first point is the importance of steadfast faith in the face of adversity. The woman's reward, "Let it be to you as you desire" is the result of her faith "O woman, great is your faith". Her faith is unassailable.

When she addresses Jesus for the first time He does not answer. How many of us would have given up in her place? There are times in our lives when our faith is tested. Events can distract us, we are not at peace and as a result we can find it difficult to pray.

Our prayers are met with a silence that has no presence. We can lose that special feeling when we walk into a church. This Canaanite woman shows us how we should react when we are faced with deafening silence. Our faith should be strong. We may not always get an answer from our prayers but like the Canaanite woman we should carry on trying. Her faith did not waiver and neither should ours in the face of adversity. Our faith should be strong whatever happens in our lives.

After the silence of Jesus she is tested again. She is told to go away by the Disciples. But does she look downbeaten and defeated? No. She perseveres because she knows, in fact she is certain, that Jesus is the Way.

We should also note that a feature of her triumph is her humility. We all have a tendency for rivalry and envy as is well explained in Bishop Basil's recent book "The Healing Word". Consciously or unconsciously we desire what others have and it distracts us from our faith. Humility brings us closer to Christ and strengthens our faith.

The Canaanite woman's triumph is a triumph for the non-Jews and it opens the way for all the Gentiles to be saved.

Let us therefore learn from the Canaanite woman by cherishing our faith, nourishing it through humility, even in the face of adversity, in the hope that Christ may one day say to us too "Let it be to you as you desire".

Amen

Fr. Stephan

The Holy Liturgy will be celebrated at Harpenden (St. George's School, Sun Lane, Harpenden AL5 TD) on November 7th beginning at 10:30 a.m. Fr. Stephan will be the celebrant. All are welcome.