



**Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
of the British Isles and Ireland
St George's Antiochian Orthodox Society**

Sundays 03- 10 February 2019

**Archbishop: Metropolitan Silouan Oner
Archpriest Samir Gholam
Priest Michael Touma**

**Newsletter Issue:
02/19**

Regular Services:

Saturdays: Vespers 16:30
Sundays: Matins 10:00
Liturgy 11:00

Orthodox Calendar:

28 January – St Ephraim the Syrian	02 February – the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple
29 January – Removal of the relics of Egnatius	03 February – 16 th Sunday of Matthew
30 January – The Three Hierarchs: Basil, Gregory and John Chrysostom	06 February – Photius the Great
01 February – Trypho the Martyr	08 February – Theodore the Great Martyr
	10 February – Sunday of the Canaanite

The Presentation of the Lord in the Temple

On February 2nd the Church celebrates the great feast of The Meeting of our Lord in the Temple. The Gospel lesson for that day relates how the mother of God brought Him to the temple, as was the custom and requirement under the God-given Law of Moses, of Israel (Exodus 13:2, 12; Leviticus 12:2-8). When the righteous Simeon, who received Christ in his arms at the temple, saw the child, he knew immediately that this was the Redeemer promised by all of Israel's prophecies, for the elder was inspired by the Holy Spirit (Luke 2:26-27). Being inspired, he himself uttered prophetic words which form the hymn sung or chanted at the end of every Vespers service: "*Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation which Thou hast prepared before the face of Thy people, a light to lighten the gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel*" (Luke 2:29-32).



God entered the world, into time and history. He was physically present in the midst of His people, His creatures whom He loves. Our Lord took on human nature in order to reconcile unto Himself, man who had strayed far from the Source of his life. In taking on the "form of a servant" God, at the same time, in the Person of Christ, fulfilled every requirement of the Law that He Himself had given to His people through Moses. He demonstrated, thereby, that everything that had happened in Israel's history could not be described merely as a succession of unrelated events. Rather this was a history with a definite goal: the salvation of mankind. He identified Himself as the Director of that history and fulfilled its expectation.

Through Simeon's eyes we too have seen the salvation of God which he prepared for all the nations and revealed as the glory of the new Israel, which is ourselves. As Simeon was released from the bonds of this life when he had seen Christ, so we too were at once freed from our old state of sinfulness. By faith we too embraced Christ, the salvation of God the Father, as he came to us from Bethlehem. Gentiles before, we have now become the people of God. Our eyes have seen God incarnate, and because we have seen him present among us and have mentally received him into our arms, we are called the new Israel. Never shall we forget this presence; every year we keep a feast in his honor. All of the Church's celebrations, no matter what the event commemorated may be, whether in the life of Christ, of the Theotokos, or of the saints, all are celebrations of Christ and the establishment on earth of the Kingdom of His presence. He initiated this Kingdom and promised its ultimate realization. And now, just as the Old Israel had awaited the beginning of God's Kingdom, the New Israel (the Church) awaits the Second and Glorious Coming of Christ and the fullness of His Kingdom, revealed.

Let all of us, be enlightened and made radiant by this light. Let all of us share in its splendour, and be so filled with it that no one remains in the darkness. Rejoicing with Simeon, let us sing a hymn of thanksgiving to God, the Father of the light, who sent the true light to dispel the darkness and to give us all a share in his splendour, Amen.



Saint Ephraim the Syrian

Saint Ephraim the Syrian, was born at the beginning of the fourth century in the city of Nisibis (Mesopotamia) into the family of impoverished toilers of the soil. His parents raised him in piety, but from his childhood he was known for his quick temper and impetuous character. He often had fights, acted thoughtlessly, and even doubted God's Providence. He finally recovered his senses by the grace of God, and embarked on the path of repentance and salvation.

Once, he was unjustly accused of stealing a sheep and was thrown into prison. He heard a voice in a dream calling him to repent and correct his life.

After this, he was acquitted of the charges and set free. The young man ran off to the mountains to join the hermits. Saint James of Nisibis (January 13) was a noted ascetic, a preacher of Christianity and denouncer of the Arians, he transformed the wayward youth into a humble and contrite monk. Realizing the great worth of his disciple, he made use of his talents. He trusted him to preach sermons, to instruct children in school, and he took Ephraim with him to the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea (in the year 325). Saint Ephraim was in obedience to Saint James for fourteen years, until the bishop's death in 338.

After the capture of Nisibis by the Persians in 363, Saint Ephraim went to a monastery near the city of Edessa. There he combined asceticism with a ceaseless study of the Word of God, taking from it both solace and wisdom for his soul. The Lord gave him a gift of teaching, and people began to come to him, wanting to hear his counsel, which produced compunction in the soul, since he began with self-accusation. Both verbally and in writing, Saint Ephraim instructed everyone in repentance, faith and piety, and he denounced the Arian heresy, which at that time was causing great turmoil. He also wrote the first Syriac commentary on the Pentateuch (i.e. "Five Books") of Moses. He wrote many prayers and hymns, thereby enriching the Church's liturgical services. Famous prayers of Saint Ephraim are to the Most Holy Trinity, to the Son of God, and to the Most Holy Theotokos. He composed hymns for the Twelve Great Feasts of the Lord (the Nativity of Christ, the Baptism, the Resurrection), and funeral hymns. Saint Ephraim's Prayer of Repentance, "O Lord and Master of my life...", is recited during Great Lent, and it summons Christians to spiritual renewal.

His works were read publicly in certain churches after the Holy Scripture, as Saint Jerome tells us. At present, the Church Typikon prescribes certain of his instructions to be read on the days of Lent. Among the prophets, Saint David is the preeminent psalmist; among the Fathers of the Church, Saint Ephraim the Syrian is the preeminent man of prayer. His spiritual experience made him a guide for monastics and a help to the pastors of Edessa. Saint Ephraim wrote in Syriac, but his works were very early translated into Greek and Armenian. In many of Saint Ephraim's works we catch glimpses of the life of the Syrian ascetics, which was centered on prayer and working in various obediences for the common good of the brethren, he was a great teacher of repentance.

Saint Ephraim hoped to spend the rest of his life in solitude, but divine Providence again summoned him to serve his neighbor. The inhabitants of Edessa were suffering from a devastating famine. By the influence of his word, the saint persuaded the wealthy to render aid to those in need. From the offerings of believers, he built a poor-house for the poor and sick. Saint Ephraim then withdrew to a cave near Edessa, where he remained to the end of his days.

Story and Lessons:

Fellow man

A very rich young man went to see an Elder in order to ask his advice about what he should do with his life.

The Elder led him over to the window and asked him:

'What can you see through the glass?'

'I can see men coming and going and a blind man begging for alms in the street.'

Then the Elder showed him a large mirror and said to him:

'Look in this mirror and tell me what you see.'

'I can see myself.'

'And you can't see the others. Notice that the window and the mirror are both made of the same basic material, glass.'

'You should compare yourself to these two kinds of glass. Poor, you saw other people and felt compassion for them.'

'Rich – covered in silver – you see yourself.'

'You will only be worth anything when you have the courage to tear away the coating of silver covering your eyes in order to be able to see again and love your fellow man.'

Fathers quotes:

“Do not say, “This happened by chance, while this came to be of itself”. In all that exists there is nothing disorderly, nothing indefinite, nothing without purpose, nothing by chance.... How many hairs are on your head? God will not forget one of them. Do you see how nothing, even the smallest thing, escapes the gaze of God?”

St Basil the Great

“We however, who extend the accuracy of the Spirit to the merest stroke and tittle, will never admit the impious assertion that even the smallest matters were dealt with haphazard by those who have recorded them, and have thus been borne in mind down to the present day: on the contrary, their purpose has been to supply memorials and instructions for our consideration under similar circumstances, should such befall us, and that the examples of the past might serve as rules and models, for our warning and imitation”

St Gregory the Theologian

“Discouragement does not allow the one who falls to get back up, and laziness throws down the one who is upright. The latter deprives us constantly of the goods that we gain; it does not allow us to escape from the evils that are to come. Laziness throws us down even from heaven, while discouragement hurls us down even to the very abyss of wickedness. Indeed, we can quickly return from there if we do not become discouraged”

St John Chrysostom

Announcements:

A Holy liturgy, will be celebrated for **the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple**, on Sunday 03 February 10:00 Am.

ببركة صاحب السيادة الميتروبوليت سلوان أونر ومجلس جمعية كنيسة القديس جارجيوس افتتح الفصل الثاني من مدرسة تعليم اللغة العربية لأولادنا الأحباء من عمر أربع سنوات حتى عمر اثنتي عشرة سنة، للراغبين الانضمام مراجعة السيدة ماكي مخول مديرة المدرسة (07949187944).

Death:

The **Kassir family** need to announce with great sadness the loss of their beloved mum, **Samira Kassir**, aged 90 on January 20th 2019. Her **funeral** will be held on Monday 11th February, at 12:00 noon at The Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, Bury New Rd, Salford M7 4EY.

1:00 at Agecroft Cemetery and Crematorium, Langley Road, Pendlebury, Salford, M27 8SS

Sayedna Silouan Diary:

Here is Sayedna Siouan’s Diary for February:

3rd February: Cathedral of St Georges.

10th February: St Fursey, Sutton.

17th February: Cathedral of St Georges.

24th February: St Constantine the Great, York.

برعاية الميتروبوليت سلوان أونر تدعوكم مطرانية الجزر البريطانية و ايرلندا الانطاكية للروم الأرثوذكس الى **مؤتمر العام 2019** بعنوان : **العمل في كرم الرب، رعاية الأطفال وتربيتهم على الإيمان**، وذلك من نهار الاثنين 27 لغاية 29 أيار 2019، الدعوة عامة، للاستفسار الرجاء مراجعة الأب ميخائيل.