

the Eastern part of the Roman Empire (with Diocletian as the Augustus, or senior emperor). Despite this position in the still pagan empire, he remained fervent in faith and works for Christ, encouraging many Christians to endure persecution and even bringing many pagans to the faith.

When Maximian returned from one of his campaigns to Thessaloniki, which he had made his capital, he had pagan games and sacrifices celebrated for his triumph. Demetrios was denounced by pagans who were envious of his success, and he was thrown into prison. While in prison he was visited by a young Christian named Nestor, who asked him for a blessing to engage in single combat with the giant Lyaios (or Lyaeus), who was posing as the champion of paganism. Demetrios gave his blessing and Nestor, against all odds, slew his opponent in the arena, as David had once defeated Goliath.

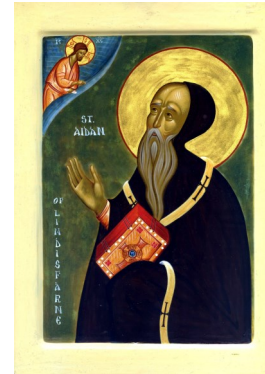
The enraged emperor, learning that this had occurred with Demetrios's aid, first had Nestor beheaded outside the city and then had Demetrios impaled in prison. Later Demetrios's servant Lupus was beheaded after using his master's blood-stained tunic and signet ring to work many miracles. The Christians buried Demetrios and Nestor next together in the bath where Demetrios had been imprisoned. During the seventh century a miraculous flow of fragrant myrrh was found emanating from his tomb, giving rise to the appellation Mirovlitis, the Myrrh-Gusher to his name. His tomb containing his relics is now in the crypt of the Church of St. Demetrios in Thessaloniki.

St. Demetrios is revered as the patron saint of Thessaloniki and is believed by the people as having intervened to save the city over the years from invading foreigners, from the Slavic nations, Bulgarians, Arabs, Saracens, and others. While well remembered in the Hellenic world, the memory of the Great Martyr Demetrios of Thessaloniki found an attachment in the Slavic, particularly the Russian, world from the times of the Russian Primary Chronicle.

*from OrthodoxWiki*

# The Apostle

The Monthly Magazine of St Aidan's Orthodox Church, Henderson Street,  
Levenshulme, Manchester M19 2JX **Issue 4: October 2023**



St Aidan of Lindisfarne



## Sermon Feedback?

It's good that a preacher gets feedback from the congregation on the effectiveness of the sermon.

Fr Emmanuel, Fr Daniel and myself will always welcome this; indeed we encourage it! So, will you have a conversation with us after the sermon? We are not fishing for praise, far from it. God forbid! No, we need to know where our preaching emphasis should be. We always preach from the gospel, the apostle or about a saint, a fast or a feast; usually more than one of these. However, how that content is applied to our lives is a big and open question. So, do give us that feedback after the Liturgy. That way we can be sure that our sermons are both informative and spiritually nourishing.

*Fr Gregory*

### In this issue:

Pg 1: Sermon Feedback

Pg 2: What's on and Pilgrimages

Pgs 3 to 5: Family Journey to Orthodoxy by Maximos Scrymgeour

Pgs 6 to 8: Sunday School and Followers—can you help?

Pgs 8 to 9: Searching the Scriptures

Pg 10: Children's Corner

Pgs 11 to 12: Saint of the Month: Great Martyr Demetrios, the Myrrh-Gusher of Thessaloniki

## What's On at St Aidan's and Elsewhere ...

### Services and Events

**Sunday 1st October: 12 noon: Parish Council** after the Liturgy. We shall be meeting with **Deacon Dmitry Ismagilov**, the newly appointed Archdiocesan Finance Officer (as from January 2024). Dmitry is conducting research across the Archdiocese on how parishes handle their finances. This is for a personal academic project but it clearly has greatly relevance for his new role in the Church. He wants to listen to our parish and learn how we have been blessed. Please, therefore, be ready to enlighten him!

**Saturday 14th October at 11am:** Wedding of Paul and Christina (now living in Malta but returning to celebrate with us).

**Pray for our Catechumens:** Julie, Andie, Beth, Kermane, Kane and maybe two more!



St Winifred of Holywell

### **Pilgrimages—for more information see Fr Gregory**

#### **Holywell, St Winifred: Saturday 7th October**

This pilgrimage is organised by St Barbara's Greek Orthodox Church in Chester. St Winifred was a Welsh Virgin-Martyr of the 7th century who paid with her life for resisting the advances of a local Welsh young noble, Caradog. If you are attending, bring a packed lunch, a stool if you have to sit and warm clothing.

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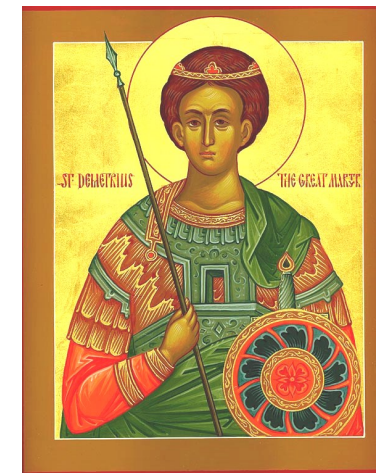
(See Genesis 6-8)

07-24-2015

WELL BOYS, I HAVE TO SAY IT'S BEEN NICE HAVING THREE DOGS THESE PAST YEARS ... BUT NOT SO MUCH TODAY

### Saint of the Month

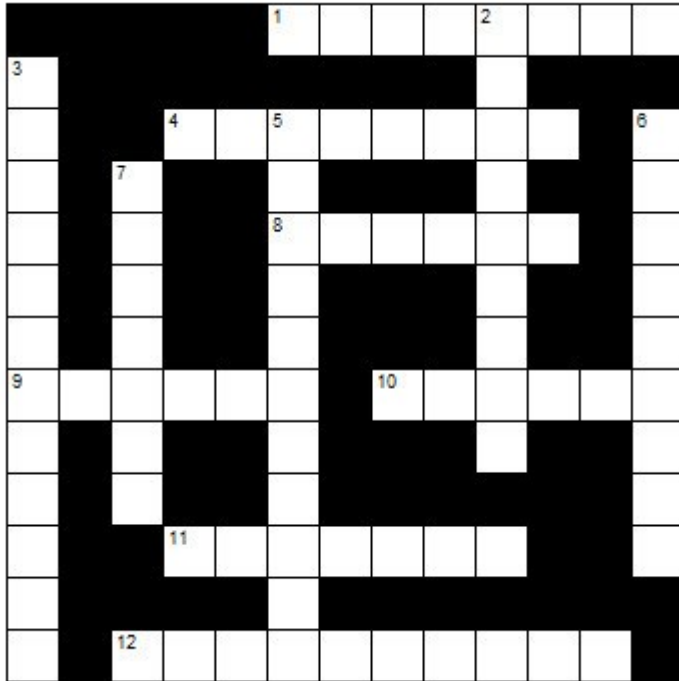
#### Great Martyr Demetrios the Myrrh-Gusher of Thessaloniki (26th October)



Demetrios came from a noble family of the Roman province of Macedonia. Through this noble ancestry and through his own ability and virtue he rose to a high military position under Galerius Maximian, Caesar of

## Children's Corner

All the words here may be found in this month's magazine.



### ACROSS

- 1: Welsh nun martyr  
 4: 1 Across place  
 9: Pagan defender  
 10: Witness by sacrifice  
 11: He killed 1 across  
 12: A learner in faith and life

### DOWN

- 1: We are all \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ  
 3: Greek city for the Martyr  
 5: Where St Aidan had his monastery  
 6: The Myrrh-Gushing Great Martyr  
 7: Ancient Faith broadcasts  
 8: Fighter for Orthodoxy

## Family Journey to Orthodoxy: Maximos, Emilia, Basil and Olive Scrymgeour



Our journey to Orthodoxy was a long one, and one none of us expected. Both Emilia and I were raised in atheistic households, although she did attend a Church of England school and I had Christians in the family. My grandmother is a Roman Catholic who attended Mass, but she never speaks about her faith outside of the church and it wasn't passed on to her children. My grandfather was a cultural Christian under the Church of England, but he wasn't a regular church attender himself and wasn't outwardly religious in any real sense.

My own father was not religious or spiritual in any sense. As a man who worked in engineering, his only realm of truth was the world of science and materialism. His worldview was far closer to that of the new atheist movement led by people like Richard Dawkins. If anything, he was an anti-theist and had no time for discussions of philosophy or theology.

For a long time, due to this being the worldview not only given to me in my family home but also by the education system, I fell into this line of thinking also. However, as I reached my late teens and early 20s, I had a

bit of a crisis and my intuition was telling me that the purely materialistic view of scientism was missing something.

From my early 20's up until this year, I was on a search for truth and meaning. Like many people in the west, I was not interested in the Christianity that was presented to me as a child. I thought of it as nothing more than ancient childish stories created to control people and this presupposition led me to looking to more 'exotic' teachings and philosophies. It would take too long to mention every rabbit hole I found myself traversing in detail, but from psychedelics and Terrence McKenna, to occult teachings of Phil Hine and Peter Carroll, all the way to Greek philosophy and hermeticism, I tried almost everything.

However, it became clear to me that all of these had a problem. There was no practicality or grounding in anything useful. It seemed to me that what all these things had in common was that they were purely elitist intellectual exercises and didn't lead to anything substantial or meaningful in any real sense. The search continued ...

Fast forward to 2020 and by chance I came across the biblical lectures of psychologist Jordan Peterson which opened my eyes to just how deep and meaningful Scripture is, even for a non-religious person. Whilst he came at it from a secular perspective, he made it obviously clear to me that western society had thrown out the baby with the bathwater in its move away from Christianity.

Through Dr Peterson, I was then exposed to Orthodox icon carver Jonathan Pageau of the symbolic world. I had never heard Christianity spoke about in the way he was speaking and I absolutely loved it. Intellectual but not elitist, symbolic but not denying the historical, mystical but not delusional. I needed to learn more.

This then led me to reading the writings of St Maximos the Confessor and other Church Fathers and for me this was the tipping point. In those writings I found everything I had previously been looking for and more.

Kouri. Every day, Fr Alexis reads from the Orthodox Study Bible reading plan, with extracts from the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Psalms, and the Proverbs. Over the course of a year, you will be able to listen to the whole canon of Scripture. Fr Alexis provides a short introduction to the contexts of the books, and some thoughts on the passages and how they relate to our lives. It's about 20 minutes a day, so perfect to listen to during your commute or over lunch.

The second is a podcast called "Bad" Books of the Bible from Jamey Bennett and Joel Miller, a Bible teacher and writer respectively. Before entering the Church, I had been unfamiliar with books like Judith, Tobit, and Sirach, the so-called "deuterocanonical" books excluded from most Protestant Bibles. It felt a little like enjoying watching the Lord of the Rings for years, before coming across the Extended Edition! This podcast focuses on these books specifically. So far, they have discussed Tobit, 1 Maccabees, and Wisdom of Solomon. Sometimes they invite special guests to discuss tricky aspects of the books. These are a bit longer, about 40 minutes per episode.

The third resource I have found helpful is our very own parish Bible study! Every Tuesday evening, Fr Gregory guides us through a portion of the Gospel of St Mark. We look at the passage in light of its historical context, the teachings of the Fathers, and contemporary issues. Usually there is some lively debate, too! If you can't access these live, Fr Gregory also posts them to his YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/c/GregoryHallam>

Let's take St John of Damascus' exhortation to heart, by watering our soul with sacred Scripture, and hopefully we will bear much fruit.

### **Links:**

<https://dailyorthodoxscriptures.com/> [Daily Orthodox Scriptures]

<https://linktr.ee/badbooks> ['Bad' Books of the Bible] <https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/badbooks>

to get it finished. If you have some experience in teaching the young, either in a parish, at home or elsewhere, I would like to hear from you.

The lesson plan template and the syllabus are all in place. We just need Christians with creative minds, spiritually focussed and with an understanding of how children with differing abilities learn, to complete this task.

If you think that you might be able to help, with support from me and the leaders, please do get in touch. The web site for followers may be found here:

<https://www.followers-orthodox.com/>

*Thankyou, Fr Gregory*

## Searching the Scriptures by Edward Bennigsen



*To search the sacred Scripture is very good and profitable for the soul. For "like a tree which is planted by the running waters", so does the soul watered by sacred Scripture also grow hearty and bear fruit in due season. This is the Orthodox Faith. It is adorned with its evergreen leaves, with actions pleasing to God.*

*[St. John of Damascus]*

I was raised with a love of the Scriptures, and since entering the Orthodox Church, I have sought to baptise this love and knowledge in the waters of Tradition. Here are three resources I have found helpful in the past few years: hopefully you will too. All of them rely on the teachings of the Church Fathers and the Tradition of the Church, and are by Orthodox Christians, so you can be sure you are hearing an Orthodox perspective on Scripture.

The first is a podcast called Daily Orthodox Scriptures by Fr Alexis

I made the decision around this time that I needed to attend a church but I was slightly nervous about mentioning this to Emilia and the children as I didn't know what their reaction would be. To my surprise, my entire family expressed interest instantly (to me this is proof of our instinct/intuition to seek out God and how people are crying out for meaning and truth) and wanted to come too.

After attending Liturgy a few times, we were all of the same view ... that this was home. It spoke to all of us deep in our souls, including the children who didn't even slightly question it and instantly joined in with daily prayer and reading of scripture as a family.

Since becoming catechumens and being baptised, we have all gotten deeper into the faith and are constantly learning. Orthodoxy is now what binds our family together, and as our son is getting older, this is also one of the main shared experiences we still have together. It didn't just bring us closer to God, but also closer to each other in a deep way. It's also given structure and purpose to our lives in a way that nothing previously has.

As I look at our modern culture which is visibly sick and suffering and crying out for spiritual meaning, I see the perfect medicine in the Eastern Orthodox church. I truly believe that if the Church could be more vocal in its own 'promotion', then we could see a real return to traditional Christianity among a sizeable percentage of our population. As society continues to splinter into smaller and smaller groups and traditional morals are being turned completely upside down, things are constantly changing and many people are looking for something that can stand firm against the ever changing tides of the modern world whilst also giving them a real path to the divine. Something that can keep hold of what is true and beautiful and meaningful. I believe the Orthodox Church can and should fill that role.

As a family we can only thank God for leading us to his Church and we pray that the same can happen for many more.

*Maximos, Emilia, Basil and Olive*

## Sunday School Soon!



After a long period of absence from before the pandemic we are preparing to restart our Sunday School for all children and teens. This will be held for 30 minutes after the Sunday Liturgy in the Parish Room behind the altar (for the two younger groups) and in the bell chamber library upstairs for the teens. Emilia will be the teacher for the younger children (3 to 6 years), Oana (7 to 11 years) and Hani (12's and teens). We may have to rethink the age ranges, times and use of space in church if these groups grow in size.

We already have the resources and teaching syllabus to begin work, but before we start these sessions, the three leaders will need at least three assistants. We would ask you prayerfully to consider whether you have both the desire and time commitment (when available) to help in this important work of strengthening our children's active faith and discipleship. These will be your tasks:-

1. To help the leader in the practical organisation of the sessions.
2. To help, where necessary, the children and young people complete the tasks set by the leader.

3. To share in the execution of the lessons as directed by the leader.
4. To cover for the leader (with extra help) when the leader is away.

If you love young people and would dearly like to help them grow in Christ, then please consider which group you would feel most comfortable working in, and then contact either Oana, Emilia or Hani to discuss this further. All three leaders have their DBS police check certification, which applies to all those serving in relevant ministries in our parish. Additionally, therefore, please have a word with Helen, our parish Safeguarding Officer who will help you complete the necessary formalities.

We hope to be fully equipped to restart the Sunday School in October so please don't delay coming forward if you would like more information prior to making a decision.

*Fr Gregory*

## Followers — Let's finish it!



Some years ago our bishop asked me to put together a team to assemble resources for Sunday Schools. It was named "Followers" and the team of writers (not all educationalists), mainly from our parish, designed an excellent resource. However, it is not quite complete so we would like