

# The Orthodox Parish of St Martin & St Helen Colchester

Newsletter | October 2023



*The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the British Isles & Ireland | Metropolitan HE Silouan Oner*



**On October 1**, in the year 911, during the reign of Emperor Leo the Wise, an all-night vigil was being held at the Blachernae Church of the Mother of God in Constantinople, with many of the faithful thronging the church. St Andrew the Fool for Christ (whom we commemorate on October 2) was standing near the back of the church with his disciple Epiphanius. At about four in the morning, the most holy Theotokos appeared above the people along with a host of saints and clothed in resplendent garments, surrounded by indescribable radiance, and holding a veil in her outstretched hands, as though to protect all the people. The Most Holy Virgin prayed for a long while, imploring Our Lord Jesus Christ to hearken speedily to her intercessions and to accept the prayers of all those who cry out to Him and who call on her name for help. and St Andrew said to Epiphanius 'Do you see how the Queen and Lady of all is praying for the whole world?' Epiphanius replied 'Yes, Father, I see it and stand in dread.' This feast is particularly well-loved in the Slavic churches. In 1960, the Greek church transferred its observance to October 28, in memory of the Mother of God's protection of the Greek forces holding the Albanian front against Italy in 1940. As we look back in history at the various invasion and natural disaster threats to Constantinople and wider Orthodox lands for which the help of the Most Holy Mother of God has been eagerly sought, we must not lose sight of her indispensable help in the sometimes humdrum trials and tribulations of our own lives. We can ask for her prayers about all our cares and worries; about our

children and families, our jobs, our relationships or our health. As we strive to carry our cross, to rightly order our lives and struggle against our passions; let us not forget to call out for help to our greatest ally in the great work of our salvation!

*On the Feast of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos we implore the defense and assistance of the Queen of Heaven, "Remember us in your prayers, O Lady Virgin Mother of God, that we not perish by the increase of our sins. Protect us from every evil and from grievous woes, for in you do we hope, and venerating the Feast of your Protection, we magnify you."*

*Father Mark*

## + News + + News + + News +

### + Iconostasis +

We are looking forward to the installation of our new iconostasis over the next few weeks; the woodwork is well under way and progress is being made on the holy icons. In September, Father Mark visited the workshop of Adam Feretti, the ironworker fabricating our great iron chandeliers which will hang on the three great beams in the nave. [PHOTO] they look absolutely wonderful and will really help to bring the interior of St Martin's to life. We expect these to be finished and installed also over same period

### +National Heritage Open Days +

The yearly National Heritage Days fell on the 9th and 10th of September this year, and as usual (with the exception of 2020) we opened both temples to the public. We welcomed around 200 visitors over the weekend, many local people and others from as far afield as Birmingham and Hong Kong! Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped provide a warm and informative welcome to all our visitors.

### +Holy Marriage +

Members of our community, Stanislav and Boriana were married in St Martin's Church on 17 September with their family and friends present. It was a happy occasion and Father Mark's first wedding.

**A WORD FROM THE FATHERS** *The saints must be honored as friends of Christ and children and heirs of God. Let us carefully observe the manner of life of all the apostles, martyrs, ascetics, and just men who announced the coming of the Lord. And let us emulate their faith, charity, hope, zeal, life, patience under suffering, and perseverance unto death so that we may also share their crowns of glory. St John of Damascus*

# The Saint: St Demetrius the Myrrh-flowing of Thessalonica



The holy, glorious and right-victorious Great-martyr (Greek: Μεγαλομάρτυς) Demetrius of Thessaloniki the Myrrh-streamer (Greek Μυροβλήτης) (also Demetrios) is one of the most popular saints in the Orthodox world. He was martyred around the year 306 in Thessalonica, and his cult rapidly grew during the Middle Ages, when he was regarded as the first recognized patron and protector of the city, militarily as well as spiritually. His feast day is celebrated on October 26. The Serbian Orthodox Church commemorates the Saint as a Mitar having a feast of Mitrovan on November 8.

*Demetrius 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 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 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.*

We are grateful to those continuing to support our church by regular or occasional gifts; may God bless you. Bank details: Orthodox Parish of St Martin & St Helen: Registered Charity No: 1192469 IBAN: GB05BUKB20226780219819 Sort Code: 20-22-67 Account No: 50349364 Appeal Account No: 80219819

## Service Times:

**Saturdays:** Great Vespers 4:30pm

**Sundays:** Matins & Holy Liturgy from 9:45am

Weekend services at St Martins. Additional (weekday) services usually at St Helen's Chapel unless otherwise stated.

St Helen's Chapel is open daily for prayer and pilgrimage.

## Additional Services for October

**Tuesday 3 October** 9.30am Hours and Holy Liturgy: Hieromartyr Dionysius the Areopagite. Bishop of Athens | St Helen's chapel

**Wednesday 18 October** 9.30am Hours and Holy Liturgy: Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke | St Helen's Chapel

**Thursday 26 October** 9.30am Hours and Holy Liturgy: Glorious Great Martyr Demetrius, The Myrrh Flowing of Thessalonica | St Helen's Chapel



**St Martin's Church, West Stockwell Street, CO1 1HN**

**St Helen's Chapel, Maidenburgh Street, CO1 1UB.**

Both temples are off the High Street, but accessible from there only on foot. Nearest car park NCP: Nunns Road, CO1 1EJ. **Confessions:** Saturdays 5pm, after Vespers or by arrangement. **Holy Marriage, Holy Baptism, Funerals, Memorials etc:** by arrangement.

**CLERGY:** Father Alexander Haig, 17 Maidenburgh Street, CO1 1UB. Phone: 01206 530 530 \ Mobile: 07947 047 201 Email: parishpriest@orthodoxcolchester.org.uk **Father Mark Shillaker** 24 Orchard Gardens, Ipswich Rd, CO4 0BX Mobile: 07917 161 295 | Email: markshillaker@gmail.com

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