

Parish Prayer List (Living)

Alexandra	Dennis	Paige	Reader Mark
Andrea	Amanda	Sherry	Joretta
Fr. Michael	Barry	Sean	Polly
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Andrea & Kirby
Lawrence	Alexandra	Illisa	Rachael
Michael	Helen	Susan K	Bob Wedder
Anna	Erin and baby	Connie	Fr. George

Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)

Christine Henn (+4/21)

Random Liturgical Notes

1. You may have noticed that beginning on Pascha, the priest uses the handcross to offer blessings to the people. This form of blessing is used by the priest only for 40 days following Pascha. A bishop will always bless the people in this way, no matter what time of year it is.
2. On some days two Gospel and Epistle readings are called for, one being the normal reading set forth in the lectionary, and the other being a reading assigned for something unique to that day, such as the commemoration of a saint. Henceforth, we will begin the practice of reading both Gospels and Epistles when two are called for. Today is such a day, as we commemorate St. John the Evangelist in addition to it being the Sunday of the Myrrbearing Women and St. Joseph of Arimathea.

+++++

Words from the Fathers

Do not lose heart, O soul, do not grieve; pronounce not over thyself a final judgment for the multitude of thy sins; do not commit thyself to fire; do not say, ‘The Lord has cast me from His face.’ Such words are not pleasing to God. Can it be that he who has fallen cannot get up? Can it be that he who has turned away cannot turn back again? Dost thou not hear how

kind the Father is to a prodigal? Do not be ashamed to turn back and say boldly; I will arise and go to my Father. Arise and go!

Saint Ephrem the Syrian, A Spiritual Psalter, Saint Theophan the Recluse (ed)

A brother whom another brother had wronged came to see Abba Sisoës and said to him, "My brother has hurt me and I want to avenge myself." The old man pleaded with him saying, "No, my child, leave vengeance to God." He said to him, "I shall not rest until I have avenged myself." The old man said, "Brother, let us pray." Then the old man stood up and said, "God, we no longer need you to care for us, since we do justice for ourselves." Hearing these words, the brothers fell at the old man's feet, saying, "I will no longer seek justice from my brother; forgive me, abba."

Desert Fathers

+++++

ST. JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA – Commemorated July 31

Joseph of Arimathea is one of the more mysterious figures in the New Testament. He is mentioned briefly, by all four of the evangelists, and yet we glean little about him from the Gospel accounts.

Yet, while little is written about Joseph in the Gospels themselves, he was a popular figure in both apocryphal (non-canonical) accounts ("Gospel of Nicodemus", "The Narrative of Joseph"), and in numerous medieval Arthurian epics, including Mallory's "Le Morte D'Arthur", and Robert de Boron's "Joseph d'Armathie".

In legend, Joseph is a quite remarkable figure - his exploits (in various accounts) include:

Founder of the first Christian Church in England; Keeper of the Holy Grail, the Cup from the Last Supper of Christ; Uncle of Mary, Mother of Jesus; Merchant involved in the tin trade

between the West coast of England, and the Mediterranean, who took the boy Jesus to Cornwall and/or Somerset in England sometime between the ages of 12 and 30; Ancestor of Sir Lancelot & Sir Galahad of Arthurian fame

Founder of Christianity in England?

The most enduring legend regarding Joseph of Arimathea regards his foundation of the first Christian Church in England at Glastonbury, in the first century (37 A.D. or 63 A.D., depending on the source). The traditional view of the Christianization of England is that it didn't occur until the missionary efforts of St. Augustine late in the 6th century (other legends discuss a missionary journey to England in the 2nd-century, by Faganus and Deruvianus).

The distinction between the Arimathean legend and the traditional Augustine view is a significant one - if Joseph really did bring Christianity to England as early as 37 A.D., it means that Christianity in England predates Christianity in other Western European nations such as Spain and France - and may even pre-date the establishment of Christianity in Rome itself.

The basic legend regarding Joseph of Arimathea, and the establishment of the first Christian Church in Glastonbury, Somerset, England goes something like this:

In the year 63 A.D. (or, possibly, earlier) Joseph is sent by the Apostle Philip from Gaul to England, with 11 (or 12, in some accounts) disciples, one of whom is his son Josephes

Joseph lands in the British west country (Somerset), and is granted some land on the Island of Yniswitrin ("Isle of Glass") by a local King, Arviragus. He places his staff in the ground on Weary-All hill, and a hawthorn bush (the "Holy Thorn") grows on the spot, and it still grows there today, blossoming in a strange manner every year at the feast of the Nativity in midwinter. (The original thorn was destroyed by Puritan fanatics during the English Civil War, but cuttings from the

original have grown into trees in both Glastonbury, and other parts of England. And they continue to bloom at approximately Christmas each year.)

At the bidding of the archangel Gabriel, they build a church of daub and wattle in honour of the Blessed Mary, 31 years after the resurrection of Christ, and 15 years after the Dormition of the Theotokos. The church is built on the site that will later become Glastonbury Abbey (also associated with being the burial place of King Arthur).

Joseph brought with him (variously) two cruets "filled with blood and sweat of the prophet Jesus", collected when Joseph took Jesus down from the cross, or the Cup from the Last Supper (a.k.a. the Holy Grail, or the Sangreal)

So, is there any historical evidence of this?

First, various Early Church Fathers are quoted to make this claim, including Irenaeus (c. 125 - 189 A.D.), Eusebius (260 - 340 A.D.), St. Hilary of Poitiers (300 - 367 A.D.), and Origen (185 - 254 A.D.).

An early British reference to the possibility of 1st century Christianization of Britain comes from a 6th century monk/historian named Gildas the Wise (500? - 572? A.D.), who reportedly spent some years at Glastonbury Abbey:

"These islands received the beams of light - that is, the holy precepts of Christ - the true Sun, as we know, at the latter part of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, in whose time this religion was propagated without impediment and death threatened to those who interfered with its professors." - "De Excidio Britanniae" ("The Ruin and Conquest of Britain") (Matthews, p. 87)

As Tiberius Caesar died in 37 A.D., this reference places Christianity in Britain even before the typical 63 A.D. date assigned in the Arimathean legends!