

Becoming Orthodox

by Father Gregory Hallam

Anyone setting out on the spiritual journey of becoming Orthodox needs the equivalent of a road map and a guide. The road map deals with process of becoming Orthodox from Enquirer to Catechumen and from Catechumen to Entry into the Church. These stages in the journey are sometimes not always well understood, so let us explore them now.

An Enquirer, as the name suggests, is someone who is in the early stages of exploring faith and life in the Orthodox Christian Church. The Enquirer will be attending the services of the Church on a regular basis, especially the Divine Liturgy - sometimes called the Eucharist - even though receiving Holy Communion will not be possible until that person is received into the Church.

Under the guidance of the parish priest, there is no reason why the Enquirer should not live the Orthodox Christian life to the best of their ability even though the sacraments will not be available to them at this time. Much is to be gained by observing how Orthodox Christians worship and live and then participating as far as



conscience and the teaching of the Church allows. There will come a time, this cannot be predetermined, when the Enquirer will feel that they now need to make that momentous decision of preparing to be received into the Orthodox Church. If the parish priest agrees, the Enquirer will be received by enrolment as a Catechumen and then begin a course of instruction with an appointed Catechist or teacher. The journey will then continue towards reception in the Church, either through Baptism or in certain circumstances by Chrismation (anointing with holy oil).

St Chad's, Heywood, Lancashire

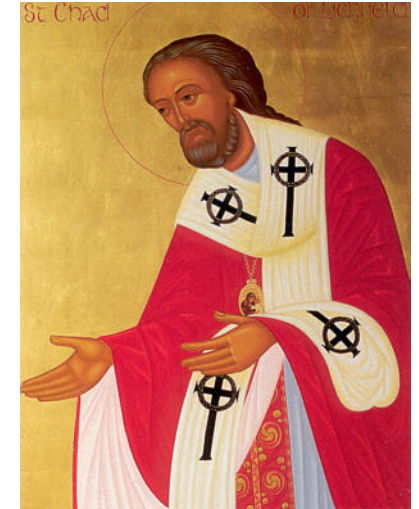
St Chad's Heywood gets the Go Ahead - but with a new date

Our new mission for Heywood in Lancashire dedicated to St Chad has its home confirmed as St George's church in the village of Heap Bridge, Gore Close (BL9 7JU), off the A58 / M66 junction. Here is a map link:

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/8eyHLA2qiisAAfbs5>

and for more location information, see here is the church website:

<http://www.stgeorgeheapbridge.org.uk/>



We had hoped to start on 13th October but this now will be on Sunday 10th November for the first Liturgy (at 11am).

Of course, services at St Aidan's will continue uninterrupted as usual.

Fr Daniel and I will be alternating in serving these monthly Liturgies, which may be of interest for those living on the northside of Greater Manchester and South Lancashire (including of course Bury and all points north).

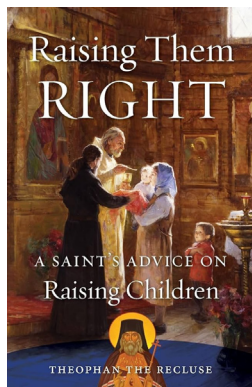
We are grateful to the Parish Church Council of St George's and the Anglican Diocese of Manchester for this church sharing agreement.

- Fr Gregory

Book Review

Raising Them Right: A Saint's Advice on Raising Children

by St Theophan the Recluse (Ancient Faith Press, 2000)



This short book of only 73 pages offers many insights not only about relating to children and young people into their 20s, but

also on a goal we all share—becoming Orthodox Christian adults committed to the Church and seeking the will of God throughout our lives. The problem is stated succinctly: *“The soul, attracted by some passion or other, stubbornly repulses every compelling force and every call; the eyes turn away from God and do not want to look at Him”*

(p. 7). St Theophan sets out the *“three stages of the Christian life: 1) Turning to God; 2) Purification or self-amendment; and 3) Sanctification”* (p. 10). Each person learns to be *“a true witness of Christian life [with] the fire of active zeal for the pleasing of God... Such zeal is produced by the action of grace. However, it does not occur without the participation of our free will”* (p. 14).

Chapter 2 *“Baptism: The adult and the child,”* explains how when the newly baptized person receives *“frequent communion...[it] sanctifies the person... and brings them peace.”*

Chapter 3, *“The Developing Child”* considers how to deal with *“the fundamental things which arouse and draw one towards sin: arbitrariness of mind (or curiosity) in the mental faculty, self-will in the faculty of will, and pleasures in the faculty of feeling.”*

Chapter 4, *“Forming Attitudes.”* considers the role of *“mind, heart and will.”* Chapter 5 *“The Years of Youth,”* explains how different young people *“resolve to live in a Christian way... at different times: at the age of seven, ten, fifteen or later.”* Chapter 6, *“Understanding a Young Person,”* considers how young people wish to test themselves...to see everything, to hear everything, to be everywhere.

The final chapter considers the challenges in *“Preserving God’s grace.”*

- Father Emmanuel Kahn

The course of instruction, called the Catechumenate, usually lasts about six months and the catechumen should expect to meet (usually by Zoom) with their Catechist on a weekly basis at a mutually convenient time. The course is individually tailored by the parish priest to the needs of the catechumen, both in their understanding and practice of the Orthodox Christian believing and living. In the journey towards Orthodoxy everyone walks toward the same goal, but, of course, not everyone starts from the same place. Some of the sessions in the catechumenate will be taken by the parish priest rather than the Catechist, notably in respect of confession and spiritual direction. This will usually take place towards the end of the Catechumenate in preparation for the candidate’s life confession. A third person assisting in the journey will be the sponsor or godparent. They will undertake to befriend, support and pray for the Catechumen up to and beyond their reception into the Church. If a suitable Orthodox person cannot be found to fulfil this holy duty then the Catechist will usually be the person who takes on this role. A final word needs to be said with regards to the manner of



reception into the Church. The standard method is by Baptism but there are certain circumstances where Chrismation, might be allowed instead. The circumstances apply when a person has been already baptised in an acceptable manner in another Christian community, albeit not Orthodox. Such a person will need to know exactly how they were baptised in the first place and then have a conversation about this with the parish priest who will receive them into the Church in the most appropriate manner. I hope you have found this explanation instructive or if you are already fully aware of the process, please do feel free to share this content with any potential Enquirer who presents themselves in our parish with an interest in becoming an Orthodox Christian.

- Fr Gregory

A Light for All to See

Orthodox Soldier, A Roots Reggae Anthem by Don Hartley



“Orthodox Soldier”, the second track on my debut EP, Song of Creation, is intended to capture the essence of a believer’s spiritual battle in a vivid and engaging way. This track resonates deeply with themes of faith, discipline, and resilience, merging the militant metaphor of a soldier with the profound journey of the Christian soul.

The vocal delivery is intended to emphasize the contrast between the peaceful nature of spiritual warfare and the determined resolve of the soldier. Hopefully I have achieved that dynamism. A strong bassline enforced by a steady ‘steppers’ rhythm serve as the heartbeat of the soldier on the battlefield, grounding the lyrics in the roots reggae tradition that conveys strength and courage.

“Orthodox Soldier” is more than just a song; it is a spiritually empowering anthem that speaks directly to the heart of the Christian warrior. The reggae rhythm, with its uplifting beats, is intended to complement the song’s weighty themes, creating a balance that is both accessible and deeply inspiring. The combination of music and message invites believers to embrace their roles as spiritual soldiers, fighting with courage and divine strength.

It’s a call to spiritual vigilance, reminding us that the battle is ongoing, fought not with physical weapons but with the divine tools of faith and love. Its repetitive chorus reinforces the sense of mission, making it a true anthem of faith that encourages every listener to stand firm as a warrior of the Lord.

Available now on all major digital platforms

Don (Daniel) Hartley



A Light for All to See

Dorothy’s Smile, A poem by Anamaria Weston



Sleepy eyes and dozy sighs,
The clock strikes three when I awake,
Soft murmurs turn into disquiet cries
And pleas my heart cannot forsake

The little bundle frets, distressed
As I rest her gently on my breast,
I must have missed the feeding cues
As she now stiffens with red hues

Froggy legs and sparkling eyes,
My baby sleeps, my baby cries
And when she graces me her smile
My worries melt for a long while

Her eyes squint, her nose twinkles
Her mouth open in a toothless grin,
Ah, how her light my darkness crinkles
And lifts my ever-drooping chin

A restless battle then ensues,
As little fists dart up and down
Awake fights sleep and often wins,
Her legs bend at every sound

Morning light creeps through the door,
Dorothy betwixt less sleep and more,
Oh, come to our bed, you’ll fit just fine,
No room for us now, rise and shine!