

From the Past

The Church magazines for the Spring of 1926 were firstly concerned with relations with Ely Cathedral. 'The Dean and Chapter, desiring to bring the Cathedral more and more into living touch with the parishes, clergy and people of the diocese, propose to ask for the prayers of the congregation in the Cathedral at the 4.00pm Evensong, for each parish in turn throughout the year. The day allotted to Sawston is Lady Day [March 25], a very suitable arrangement since the Church is dedicated to St Mary. We for our part are asked to pray for the Cathedral and its work on the Sunday previous, and this we shall very gladly do for all will deeply value such a happy bond of union between our parish and our great mother Church.' March 25 was also marked by the Mothers' Union as a day of 'Praise and Prayer'. In 2026, 'the Jubilee year of the Society, we are asked to keep it in a very special manner, looking back over the 50 years with thanksgiving and looking forward with prayer for guidance. All branches are asked to join in the continuous chain of prayer going up all over the world by Mothers for Mothers on that day'.

In 1976 the magazine had an account of the Orthodox Liturgy celebrated by Metropolitan Anthony Bloom in Cambridge, which several members of the congregation had attended. 'We found it an interesting and impressive experience, and we had no difficulty in adjusting to the practices of the Orthodox Church. In prospect, standing for an hour and a half seemed hard, but at the end we had not used the chairs that were available as much as we had expected. Much of the service consisted of litanies with many recurring phrases and petitions. The exhortation 'Again and again let us pray to the lord', typified the first part of the Liturgy, with its keynote of persistent prayer and peace. The whole service was full of solemnity and a sense of mystery, but the most awe-inspiring moment was the thrice repeated hymn:

We that in a figure answer to the Cherubim and join with them in singing the thrice-holy hymn to the life-giving Trinity, let us lay aside all the cares of this life, for we are now to receive the King of all, invisibly escorted by the ranks of angels. The ministers communicated and then embraced while the chalice was covered with a scarlet veil and lifted up. The members of the Church then went to take communion at which the bread was cut from a flat, round loaf and the wine given out with a ladle. Afterwards everyone shared in the bread which had been blessed but not consecrated.'

Mary Dicken