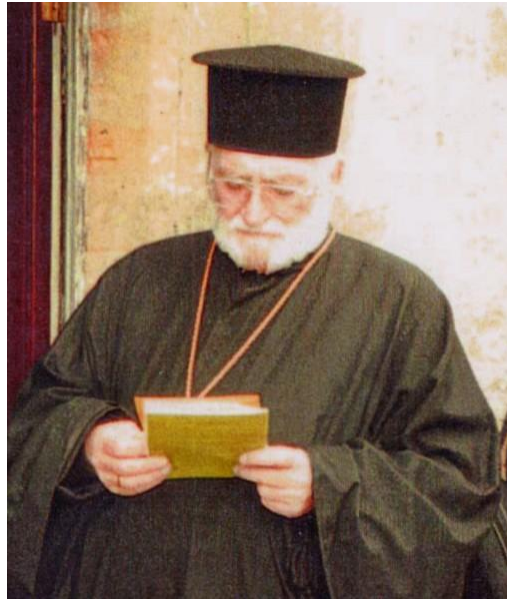


Father John Nield, reposed Jan 18th 2000



Fr John was the first parish priest of the newly established Orthodox Church of St Edward, Athelhampton, at that time the only Orthodox Church in the whole of Dorset .

Like many others, he came to Orthodoxy via “Pilgrimage to Orthodoxy”, a group consisting mainly of Anglican priests in the early 1990’s at various stages of considering their future by accepting the Orthodox Option.

A group of lay people began to meet under Fr John’s guidance and it was these who formed the initial nucleus of what became the Parish of St Edward the King. After meeting for a time at venues in Bridport, Fr John and Beryl, his wife, discovered the somewhat neglected looking little church opposite Athelhampton House which, 20 years earlier, had been declared redundant by the Church of England.

They approached the owner and, with his encouragement, the church was leased and the small group set too with enthusiasm to clean and tidy up the building. Eventually some local residents also cleared the neglected churchyard. In the church, an iconostasis was set up, icons hung on the walls, and other essentials of Orthodox worship set in place.

The first Divine Liturgy was served in the church in October 1996. From then on, the infant community expanded at a steady rate until at the end of his ministry, in 2,000, there were seventy addresses on Fr John’s mailing list, many of whom were regular, if not necessarily Sunday by Sunday worshippers.

During this time Fr John was in poor health, far more so than he would admit to most, but he approached his work with an energy that would have put others to shame. In the end his worsening physical condition won and he realised, reluctantly, that he had to resign. This he did, although with no sense of resignation, and for the next few months until his death in January 2,000 St Edwards was still very much his “baby”.

The funeral was attended by many representing different aspects of Fr John's ministry and interests, as well as by a number of priests from the Deanery, and a choir gathered from the same sources. He had been very much a part of Churches Together in Bridport. For a short time he had given lectures at an evangelical Bible College on Church History and Patristics. He also had contacts with the Pilsden Community, not far from Bridport, members of which attended our Paschal Liturgy for a number of years. The church was packed for the funeral, with representatives of these groups and others, as well as parishioners. He was buried in the Churchyard, the first Orthodox to be so.

Fr. John was a "one off", much loved, and all who knew him look back with gratitude. May his memory be eternal.