



On Saturday we celebrate the Synaxis of the Holy Archangels, Michael, Gabriel and the other Bodiless Powers of Heaven.

We believe that God is the Creator of "all things visible and invisible." In addition to the visible, material world, there is an invisible world that God has created. According to Scripture and Holy Tradition, there are nine ranks of bodiless powers. The Angels and Archangels are closest to human beings and are seen as the active workers, warriors, and messengers of God in our world. They struggle against spiritual evil and mediate between God and the world.

The Archangels Michael and Gabriel are the best known of the angels. "Michael" means "Who is like God?" and is shown in the Scriptures as the chief warrior of the spiritual armies (Daniel 11:13; 12:1; Jude 9; Revelation 12:7), while Gabriel, whose name means "God is mighty" is shown as the bearer of the good news of Christ's birth (Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26).

Readings and saints for this week:

Monday: Colossians 2:13-20; Luke 11:29-33
Martyrs Ascepsimas, Joseph & Aethalas; Dedication of the Temple of St. George

Tuesday: Colossians 2:20-23; 3:1-3; Luke 11:34-41
Joannicius the Great; Nikandros, Bishop of Myra

Wednesday: Colossians 3:17-25; 4:1; Luke 11:42-46
Martyrs Galaktion & Epistime; Holy Apostles Hermes & Companions

Thursday: Hebrews 8:1-6; Luke 12:8-12
Paul the Confessor

Friday: Colossians 4:10-18; Luke 12:2-12
33 Martyrs of Militene; Lazarus the Wonderworker

Saturday: Matthew 18:10-20; Hebrews 2:2-10; Luke 10:16-21
Synaxis of the Archangels



Sunday 2 November 2014 is the Fifth Sunday of Luke

Matins Gospel: John 21:1-14

Epistle: Galatians 2:16-20

Gospel: Luke 16:19-31

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

When the women Disciples of the Lord had learnt from the Angel the joyful message of the Resurrection, casting away the ancestral condemnation triumphantly they said to the Apostles: 'Death has been spoiled, Christ God has been raised, granting the world His great mercy.'

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Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

2 November 2014

**Archbishopric of Good Hope
Patriarchate of Alexandria & All Africa**

Our Life & our Death is with our Neighbour

In today's Gospel, Saint Luke recounts the parable that Jesus Christ tells of the rich man and Lazarus. After hearing Saint Luke's accounts of healing miracles in the last weeks, this parable can be rather jarring, for it confronts us with the reality of judgment and reminds us of our responsibility for those around us.

The story recounted is simple enough: a rich man dies, after having had no pity on the poor man at his gate. After death the poor man, Lazarus, is welcomed into heaven by the angels and described as being in Abraham's bosom, while the rich man has to endure the fires of hell. And, although he begs for relief, none is granted to him.

The rich man is not condemned for being rich, or even for being particularly hard-hearted or cruel. His sin was that of negligence. He simply failed to see his neighbour as a person and to take responsibility for him. Even as he is tormented in Hades, he shows no sign of true repentance, for he remains concerned only for himself and his own family. Saint John Chrysostom tells that this rich man's soul was dead before his bodily death, for "he did none of the works of the soul. All that warmth which issues from the love of our neighbour had fled, and he was more dead than his body."

The key to salvation is not simply to be found in what we do and don't do. Rather, it is to be found in the attitudes which we have towards God and towards our brothers and sisters. Are we so caught up in our own egotistical desires that we have become blind to the needs of those around us? The illusion of self-sufficiency was rudely shattered for this nameless rich man, for he had failed to realise that his neighbour was necessary for his salvation.



Our life and our death is with our neighbour. If we gain our brother, we have gained God, but if we scandalise our brother, we have sinned against Christ.

Saint Anthony the Great

Joining Heaven and Earth

An Introduction to the Orthodox Understanding of Icons

We saw last week that the icons in a church building help to create a sacred space and form part and parcel of the Church's divine worship. They orientate us towards the Kingdom of God, even as we journey towards it.

It is therefore important to note that we do not simply relate to the icons as static objects. They are not simply decorations on a wall, but they serve to make living persons present to us – they are a visible expression of the communion that we share with all the saints, and of course with the Holy Theotokos and with Jesus Christ Himself. This relationship is expressed in visible and tangible ways, for as Orthodox Christians all of our senses are engaged in worship. It is therefore worth noting how we engage with icons during the course of our worship.



Orthodox Christians will usually venerate icons when they enter and leave a church. The details will vary from church to church, but most churches will have icons on a stand near the entrance of the church building, together with candles to light. By bowing, crossing themselves and kissing the icon, we show our love and respect to the person portrayed. We also light candles that we place before them as we ask for their prayers. Some people will also – when appropriate and depending on the

church – venerate the icons on the iconostasis, or elsewhere in the church. In doing this, we are expressing our devotion to Christ and His saints not only with our words, but also with our bodies.

Icons also play an important role during the Divine Liturgy itself, as well as the other services of the Church. At particular points during the Liturgy the priest will cense particular icons, and sometimes all the icons in the church, together with other holy objects and all of the people present. The New Testament compares the incense that rises up to God with the prayers of the saints (Revelation 8:4) and as we greet the saints with incense, we become aware that they are praying with us. In a similar way, at certain points in the Liturgy, the priest will turn towards the icons on the iconostasis as he addresses Christ or the Theotokos in prayer.

On particular feasts, or during particular seasons, icons are also venerated in a more specific way during the services of the Church. For example, we carry icons in procession on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, we venerate the Epitaphios (the image of Christ as He is prepared for burial) on Good Friday, and the icons of particular saints may be put out for veneration on their feast days. In all these ways, the icons and the figures they represent become real in our lives, showing, as the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council stated, that the Incarnation is real and not merely imaginary.

To be continued...

The holy Apostles saw the Lord with their physical eyes; others saw the Apostles, and others again saw the holy martyrs. But I too yearn to see them with my soul and body and to have them as a medicine against every ill ... Because I am a human being and have a body, I long to see and communicate with holy things in a physical manner too.

Saint John of Damascus

Just as incense is good and fragrant even on its own, but displays its fragrance properly when it comes into contact with fire, so it is with prayer. It is good even on its own, but it becomes even better and more fragrant when it is offered up with a warm and ardent soul, when the soul becomes a censer and is burning with fierce fire ... First set your heart on fire by your eagerness, and then pray.

Saint John Chrysostom

Question Box

If you have a question about the faith and teaching of the Orthodox Church, you can send it to evangelion@goarch.co.za

Why does the Orthodox Church not seek to minister actively and be “fishers of men” like Protestants do?

The Church has been a missionary Church since the time of the Apostles, who spread the Gospel throughout the then known world, converting people and baptising them as Jesus Christ commanded them to do before He ascended into heaven:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age.
(Matthew 28:18-20)

The Church has engaged in missions throughout her history and many of the saints were great missionaries, such as Saints Cyril and Methodius, who preached the Gospel to the Slavic lands in the ninth century. However, it is also true that during certain periods in her history the Church's missionary activities have suffered due to the difficult situation that Orthodox Christians have found themselves in. This may have obscured some people's consciousness about mission in the modern era, leading them to think that it was something only for Protestants.

However, we also need to note that how the Church engages in missionary activity is not necessarily the same as how some modern Protestants do so. If we look at the history of the early Church, we see that the Christians were like the leaven in dough that gradually transformed their society, leading others to want to know more about the Church because of the fruits that they saw in their lives.

The Church's missionary activities have taken on different forms in different eras, but it always respects seeks to respect people's freedom. Our Orthodox faith is a great gift that we offer to all people. But we also trust that God to draw people to the Church in His own way and in His own time.