

On Thursday we commemorate our Father among the **Saints John Chrysostom**. He was born to pious parents in Antioch around 345 and after a good secular education decided to dedicate his life to God as a monk. He lived in very strict asceticism in a cave near Antioch, eventually ruining his health so that he had to return to the city where he was ordained a priest. There he became known for his great gifts as a preacher and was called the “Golden-mouth.” He was made Patriarch of Constantinople in 398 where he continued to preach eloquently. However, he soon gained enemies as he was not afraid to speak out against the corrupt morals and luxurious living of the nobility, including of the Empress Eudoxia who had him exiled to Pontus in 403. After being allowed back for a short time, he was again exiled to the Caucasus. However, the journey was so difficult and his health so frail that he died en route in 407. His last words were “Glory be to God for all things.” Saint John Chrysostom left us many sermons and biblical commentaries, as well as the Liturgy that bears his name and which is used on most Sundays of the year.



Sunday 9 November 2014 is the Seventh Sunday of Luke

Matins Gospel: John 21:14-25

Epistle: Galatians 6:11-18

Gospel: Luke 8:41-56

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

The Word without beginning with the Father and the Spirit, born from a Virgin for our salvation, let us believers praise and let us worship Him; for He was well-pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh and undergo death, and to raise those who had died, by His glorious Resurrection.

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Readings and saints for this week:

Monday: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16; Luke 12:13-15, 22-31
Olympus & Companions of the 70; Arsenius of Cappadocia

Tuesday: 2 Corinthians 4:6-15; Luke 12:42-48
Martyr Menas; Martyrs Victor and Stephanie

Wednesday: 2 Corinthians 9:6-11; Matthew 5:14-19
John the Merciful; Nilus the Ascetic

Thursday: John 10:1-9; Hebrews 7:26-28; 8:1-2; John 10:9-16
John Chrysostom, Abp. Of Constantinople; Damaskinos of Mount Athos

Friday: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16; John 1:43-51
Apostle Philip; Gregory Palamas, Abp. Of Thessalonica

Saturday: 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; Luke 9:37-43
Martyr Gouria & Companions; Thomas, Abp. of Constantinople



Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

9 November 2014

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

Your Faith Has Made You Well

Today we hear two remarkable accounts of healing miracles. Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came looking for Jesus, begging Him to come and heal his daughter who was dying. But before they could reach his house Jesus was approached by a woman with a flow of blood who touched the fringe of His cloak and was healed. No sooner had this happened, than Jairus received a message that his daughter had died. Undeterred, Jesus proceeded to the house, took the child by the hand, and raised her to life, demonstrating that He has power over life and death.



The account of this girl being raised from death is interrupted by the healing of the woman with a flow of blood. This is an important event of healing in itself, for this woman had been suffering from an ailment that made her ritually unclean according to Jewish law. At her wits ends, she dared to reach out to Christ and touch the fringe of His cloak and was instantly healed. And, significantly, we are told that Jesus Christ knew that power had gone out of Him. In healing her, Christ revealed His divinity and His true identity. He is the One with power over life and death, the Saviour who is able to heal us.

We too suffer under the power of sin and death and need Christ’s healing. But in order for Jesus Christ to heal us, we have to reach out to Him – we need to acknowledge our need for Him. This often requires courage and we may be more inclined to think that we should be able to manage on our own. But true faith – the faith that heals us – is the faith that has learnt that we need a Saviour and that dares to call out to Jesus Christ for help.

Jesus took the girl’s hand, healed her, and ordered that she should be given something to eat. This is evidence of life, so that not an apparition but the truth may be believed. Blessed is he whose hand Wisdom holds. I wish that righteousness held my acts and my hands. I want the Word of God to hold me, bring me into His closet, turn away the spirit of error, replace it with that of salvation, and order that I be given something to eat! The Word of God is the Bread of heaven. The Wisdom that filled the holy altar with the nourishment of the divine Body and Blood says, “Come, eat of my bread, and drink the wine that I have mixed for you.”

Saint Ambrose of Milan

Joining Heaven and Earth

An Introduction to the Orthodox Understanding of Icons

Just as icons help to create the space for our public worship in church, so they also play an important role in our private, personal prayer at home. For, just as we participate in the Church's public Liturgy, so we also called to pray "in secret" (Matthew 6:6) and to offer to God the work of our own hearts. While we can of course pray anywhere, the traditional Orthodox place to pray at home is in front of our icons.

Many Orthodox Christians have an icon corner or wall at home, which is their "home altar." The family is in many ways a Church "in miniature" and is where we first learn to pray. Here we stand before Christ in the presence of His saints as we say our prayers and enter into the inner chamber of our heart.



Icons are not simply decorations like other knick-knacks, but represent the presence of Christ and the saints among us and call us to prayer. They therefore need to be treated with respect, and we may well want to light a lamp or burn some incense in front of them. An icon corner or similar space can also be a place where we keep holy objects, such as our prayer book, Bible, holy water or holy oil.

Every person or every family's icon space will be different – some may be more elaborate, while others will be very simple. The quality of our relationship to our icons is more important than the number of icons we have. However, it is important to have an icon of Christ and one of the Holy Theotokos. We may also have icons of our patron saints and of saints and feasts that are important to us or have perhaps marked important moments of our lives.

The main reason for having icons in our homes is that remind us of God and lead us to prayer. They form a visible reminder of the life that God offers to us and calls us to. They are a doorway to the Kingdom of God and their presence in our homes forms a constant invitation to enter into that Kingdom.



The heart itself is but a small vessel, yet dragons are there, and there are also lions; there are poisonous beasts and all the treasures of evil. But there too is God, the angels, the life and the kingdom, the light and the apostles, the heavenly cities and the treasures of grace—all things are there.

Saint Macarius the Great

The Nativity Fast Begins

Saturday, 15 November, marks the beginning of the Nativity Fast. As the world around us is encouraging us to feast and to engage in a frenzy of shopping, the Church is calling us to fast and is encouraging us to remain sober and alert so that we may be ready to meet the Lord when He comes among us in His Incarnation at Christmas. This fast is not as strict as the Lenten fast, but it is good to consider *why* the Church encourages us to fast at this time. Fasting is not simply a burdensome legal obligation, but rather a precious means that the Church offers us to enable us to meet the Saviour with joy at Christmas. We can name some of the reasons for fasting as follows:

Fasting teaches us to simplify our lives and become truly free people. We may think that we are free, but when we begin to fast we realize how unfree we truly are. We are often controlled both by what society tells us we need, and by our own desires and comfort zones. The discipline of fasting calls us to a soberness and a watchfulness. It challenges us to become conscious of who we really are. It puts a distance between us and our desires that enables us to distinguish between what we want (or are told by society that we should want) and what we really need. It gives us a perspective on the world and enables us to choose wisely. As Saint Isaac the Syrian wrote:

Just as a man whose head is submerged in water cannot breathe the subtle air which is poured upon the atmosphere's empty gulf, so he who immerses his mind in the cares of the present life cannot take in the breath that is a perception of the new world.

Fasting is an aid to prayer. At the most basic level, fasting can give us more time for prayer, but the Fathers also tell us that fasting can help to keep us attentive during prayer. We do not pray well on a full stomach and fasting helps to keep us vigilant and watchful. Moreover, fasting is an expression of how serious we are about prayer. By denying ourselves, we are able to express sorrow for our sins. And by persevering in prayer and vigil we plead with God for our salvation and the salvation of all the world. Most important of all, however, fasting leads us to humility and it is humility that is the door to prayer.

Fasting as a means of sharing with those in need. Fasting is traditionally linked with both prayer and almsgiving, and one aspect of our fasting is to be able to share more with those who are in need. In doing this, we are not just giving out of our abundance, but giving in a sacrificial way. Our fasting has cost us something, and, however feeble our efforts may seem, by voluntarily feeling hunger, we can begin to appreciate the situation of those who lack the basic necessities of life. Most importantly, together with prayer, fasting can help to soften our hardened hearts, and to open us up to both God and our neighbour.