

In the Lives of the Saints it is clearly and obviously demonstrated: There is no spiritual death from which one cannot be resurrected by the Divine power of the risen and ascended Lord Christ; there is no torment, there is no misfortune, there is no misery, there is no suffering which the Lord will not change either gradually or all at once into quite compunctionate joy because of faith in Him. And again there are countless soul-stirring examples of how a sinner becomes a righteous man in the lives of the Saints: how a thief, a fornicator, a drunkard, a sensualist, a murderer, and adulterer becomes a holy man — there are many, many example of this in the Lives of the Saints; how a selfish egoistical, unbelieving, atheistic, proud, avaricious, lustful, evil, wicked, depraved, angry, spiteful, quarrelsome, malicious, envious, malevolent, boastful, vainglorious, unmerciful, gluttonous man becomes a man of God — there are many, many example of this in the Lives of the Saints.

Saint Justin Popovich



Sunday 30 November 2014 is the Feast of Saint Andrew

Matins Gospel: Mark 16:9-20

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16

Gospel: John 1:35-52

Kontakion of the Feast:

Let us praise the namesake of bravery, the divinely eloquent and first to be called of the Disciples of Christ, the kinsman of Peter. As he called out to him in days of old, so now he calls to us, "Come, we have found Him for whom we yearned."

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Readings and saints for this week:

Monday: 1 Timothy 1:1-7; Luke 19:37-44
Prophet Nahum; Philaret the Merciful

Tuesday: 1 Timothy 1:8-14; Luke 19:45-48
Prophet Habakkuk; Cyril of Phileus

Wednesday: 1 Timothy 1:18-20; 2:8-15; Luke 20:1-8
Prophet Sophonias; John the Hesychast

Thursday: Matthew 25:1-13; Galatians 3:23-29; 4:1-5; Mark 5:24-34
Great Martyr Barbara; John of Damascus

Friday: Luke 6:17-23; Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2; Matthew 11:27-30
Sabbas the Sanctified; Martyr Diogenes; Philotheos of Mount Athos

Saturday: John 10:1-9; Hebrews 13:17-21; Luke 6:17-23
Nicholas the Wonderworker; Nicholas of Asia



Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

Archbishopric of Good Hope

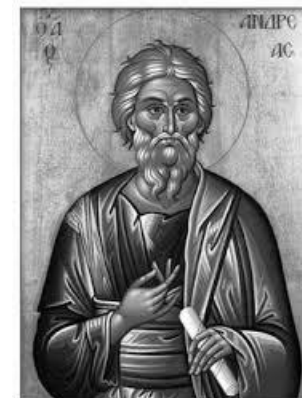
Patriarchate of Alexandria & All Africa

30 November 2014

Come and See

In today's Gospel, on the feast of Saint Andrew, we hear Saint John's account of the calling of the first Apostles. Saint Andrew is called the First-Called because he was the first to respond to Jesus Christ. He was a disciple of Saint John the Forerunner, and had been with John when he pointed to Jesus and said: "Behold, the Lamb of God." Together with a companion, he followed Jesus and asked to see where He was staying. The Lord responded with, "Come and see," and Andrew stayed with him — returning the following day to proclaim to his brother Peter: "We have found the Messiah."

Andrew was already seeking God. He had been formed by Israel's longing for the coming of Christ of which the prophets had spoken. He had responded to John the Forerunner's call to repentance and he was looking for the Messiah. He responded decisively when Jesus appeared, yet He still had to learn who Jesus really was. It was in responding to Jesus' invitation to "Come and see" — and spending time with Him — that Andrew was able to truly acknowledge who He was and proclaim Him to others.



Like Andrew, we too are searching for God, whether we are aware of it or not, and this is especially true as we await the birth of Christ at Christmas. If we are to truly welcome Him into our lives, not simply as an idea that we assent to but in reality, we too need to "Come and see." We need to make time for Him in our busy lives and get to know who Jesus Christ really is — and reflect on who He is for us. By making time for prayer, for reading the Gospel, for following the services of the Church, we can meet Jesus Christ in an ever-deeper way, enabling us to welcome His Nativity with joy.

We have found Him whom the prophets proclaimed in the Spirit! Come to His beauty, that we may be rescued in soul and in thought, and that, led by the light of His radiance, we may drive away the night of deception and the darkness of unbelief, blessing Christ, who bestows on the world great mercy.

Vespers of the Feast of Saint Andrew

Preparing the Way of the Lord

An advent series on the prophets of Israel

Last week we saw that the Katavasias that are chanted at Matins at this time of year are full of references to the Old Testament prophecies that point to the coming of Christ and provide us with a meditation on the feast that we are preparing to celebrate. We saw how the Katavasia of the Fourth Ode referred to the root of Jesse, namely, the Virgin Mary who will bring forth the flower who is Christ.



The Burning Bush

This same Katvasia tells us that Jesus Christ has:

*... sprung forth from the Virgin.
From the mount of shaded leafy trees.*

This is a direct reference to the prophet Habakkuk who proclaimed:

*God will come from Teman,
the Holy One from the mount of shaded leafy trees. (3:3)*

Teman is a region of the Sinai Peninsula and is another name for Mount Horeb on Sinai. This was where God appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai as recounted in the book of Exodus.

...the Angel of the Lord appeared to him a flame of fire from the midst of the bush. So he saw the bush burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. So Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not consumed." When therefore the Lord saw him turn aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses ... I am the God of your fathers – the God of

Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Moses then hid his face for he was afraid to look at God. (3:1-6)

It is clear from the text that this incident involved a theophany, or appearance, of God Himself. But this could not have been God the Father, for Saint John's Gospel tells us that "no one has seen the Father, except the One who is from God." (6:46) The Fathers teach us that the Angel who Moses saw was the Preincarnate Christ, God the Son, who is the Word of God. And they also understood the burning bush to be a prefiguration of the virginal birth giving of the Holy Theotokos. Saint Gregory of Nyssa writes:

From this we learn also the mystery of the Virgin: The light of divinity which through birth shone from her into human life did not consume the burning bush, even as the flower of her virginity was not withered by giving birth.

By referring to these prophecies, our liturgical texts seek to make it clear to us that Jesus Christ, whose birth we are preparing for, is the same Divine Person who appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai. As we will sing on Vespers for 20 December:

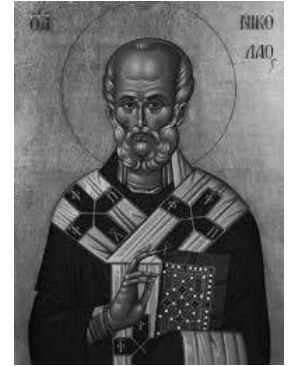
Receive, O manger, Him whom Moses the Law-giver foresaw in the bush on Horeb, now born of the Virgin through the divine Spirit.

The Ancient of days has become an infant. He who sits upon the sublime and heavenly throne, now lies in a manger. And He who cannot be touched, now lies subject to the hands of men.

Saint John Chrysostom

Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker

On Saturday we commemorate Saint Nicholas of Myra. Throughout the centuries devotion to him has spread around the world. In the secularized West he has even been transformed into the red-suited Father Christmas who has lost all connection to the original saint. However, the holy bishop from Myra can be a helpful guide as we prepare to celebrate Christ's Nativity.



Saint Nicholas was bishop of Myra in Asia Minor in the fourth century. He was imprisoned during the persecutions, but also experienced the new freedom that the Church was granted under Saint Constantine. A strong opponent of the heretic Arius, he was present at the Council of Nicaea in 325 where Arianism was condemned.

Saint Nicholas is best known, however, for his care and compassion for his flock. He was, quite simply, a genuinely good man, a true shepherd through whom Christ's love was able to shine. And he is best known by the many miraculous accounts of how he helped others.

Even as a young man he was known for his almsgiving. As a bishop he would help people in secret in order to not bring attention to himself. On different occasions he provided dowries for girls who would otherwise have been sold into prostitution. He saved the city of Myra from famine by appearing to the master of a ship full of corn and telling him to take it to the city. He interceded on behalf of people condemned to death. And he is particularly known for helping sea-farers in distress.

This week the Church commemorates three of the prophets of Israel:

- ❖ On Monday, we commemorate the **Prophet Nahum**, who lived in the seventh century before Christ and prophesied the destruction of Nineveh. While he spoke of God's judgement, he also proclaims God's loving kindness towards those who are faithful to Him. And he looks to the coming of Christ, proclaiming: "Behold on the mountains the feet of Him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace."
- ❖ On Tuesday, we commemorate the **Prophet Habakkuk**, whose name means "loving embrace." He lived in a time of turmoil just before the Babylonian exile, but he prophesied the future deliverance of the people and the coming of Christ and one of his songs is still used by the Church in the fourth Ode of Matins.
- ❖ On Wednesday, we commemorate the **Prophet Sophonias (Zephaniah)**, who also lived in the tumultuous seventh century before Christ. He warned his listeners of the terrible "Day of the Lord" and of God's judgement against the wicked. But he promises that a faithful and pure remnant will remain, and that the meek and lowly in heart will rejoice in their coming Saviour.