

Lord and Master of my life,  
Do not give me a spirit of sloth,  
despair, lust of power,  
and idle talk.

But give rather a spirit  
of chastity, humility, patience,  
and love to Your servant.

Yes, Lord and King,  
Grant me to see my own faults  
and not to judge my brother,  
for You are blessed  
unto ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer of Saint Ephrem the Syrian,  
which we pray during Great Lent



**Sunday 1 March 2015 is the  
Sunday of Orthodoxy**

**Matins Gospel:** Luke 24:13-35

**Epistle:** Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-40

**Gospel:** John 1:43-51

**Resurrectional Apolytikion**

Let us worship the Word, O ye faithful,  
praising Him that with the Father and the  
Spirit is co-beginningless God, Who was  
born of a pure Virgin that we all be saved;  
for He was pleased to mount the Cross in  
the flesh that He assumed, accepting  
thus to endure death. And by His glorious  
rising, He also willed to resurrect the  
dead.

**Apolytikion of the Sunday of  
Orthodoxy**

O Christ our God, begging forgiveness of  
our sins, we venerate Your Pure Image,  
O Good One. Of your own will you  
condescended to ascend upon the Cross  
in the flesh and deliver those You created  
from the bondage of the enemy.  
Wherefore, thankfully, we cry out, "When  
You came to save the world, Your filled  
all things with joy, O Our Saviour."

***Readings and saints for this week:***

**Monday:** Isaiah 4:2-5:7; Genesis 3:21-4:7; Proverbs 3:34-4:22  
Martyr Hesychius; Nicholas Planas

**Tuesday:** Isaiah 5:7-16; Genesis 4:8-15; Proverbs 5:1-15  
Martyrs Eutropius, Cleonicus & Basiliscus; Theodoretos the Holy Martyr of Antioch

**Wednesday:** Isaiah 5:16-25; Genesis 4:16-26; Proverbs 5:15-6:3  
Gerasimus of the Jordan; Martyrs Paul and Julianna

**Thursday:** Isaiah 6:1-12; Genesis 5:1-24; Proverbs 6:3-20  
Conon the Gardener; Mark the Ascetic

**Friday:** Isaiah 7:1-14; Genesis 5:32-6:8; Proverbs 6:20-7:1  
42 Martyrs of Amorion; Finding the Precious Cross by St. Helen

**Saturday:** Hebrews 3:12-16; Mark 1:35-44  
7 Hieromartyrs of Cherson; Lavrentios of Megara



# Evangelion

*A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith*

1 March 2015

## You Shall See Greater Things than These

Today, on the first Sunday of Great Lent, which is also the Sunday of Orthodoxy, we hear Saint John's account of the calling of the first disciples. Today's Gospel tells us how Jesus called Philip and how he then went and called Nathanael, who skeptically questioned whether anything good could come from Nazareth. However, his eyes were opened when the Lord told him how He had seen him sitting under the fig tree. Jesus Christ told him: "You will see greater things than that ... you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending over the Son of man."

We read this Gospel at the beginning of Lent because it shows us where our Lenten journey is headed. In the early Church, Lent was the time in which new converts were prepared for baptism, which was referred to as illumination, for becoming Christian is learning to see with the eyes of faith.

Most of us are already baptized and have had our eyes opened to the truth of the faith. And yet our sight tends to become darkened and we all need to learn to see with the eyes of faith. In setting out on the journey to Pascha, the great feast in which the Light of Christ conquers all darkness, we need to be able to prepare ourselves to receive that light. We need to be purified so that Christ's light does not consume us, but rather gives us life and leads us to the vision of God.

The purpose of our Lenten discipline is to help us to enter into the depths of our own hearts, so that we may learn to see with "the eye of the heart" so that, beholding God there, we may receive life in Him.



When he had been cleansed by fasting, great Moses saw the God for whom he longed. Eagerly follow his example, O my humble soul; make haste to cleanse thyself from evil in the day of abstinence, and so thou shalt behold the Lord who grants thee forgiveness, for He is all-powerful and loves mankind.

From Sunday Evening Vespers on the Sunday of Orthodoxy

# The Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit

*A series on the meaning of Chrismation*

We have seen how the mystery, or sacrament, of Christian Baptism initiates us into the life of the Church by uniting us with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, this mystery of the Church is intimately related to the mystery of Chrismation, which is administered immediately after the person has been baptized. In Saint John's Gospel, Jesus says:



*Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. (3:5)*

The mysteries of Baptism and Chrismation (sometimes called Confirmation) belong together. In the mystery of Chrismation, we are baptized with the Holy Spirit, just as the Apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Chrismation is our personal Pentecost and our entry into the life of the Holy Spirit.

During the rite of Chrismation, the priest anoints the forehead, ears, eyes, chest, nose, hands, mouth, and feet of the candidate. As he does so, he repeats the words:

*The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

The word Chrismation means "anointing" and Jesus Christ is the ultimate anointed one, for this is what the Christ means. Through Chrismation we become Christians and are called to be other Christ's, for it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that we are able to witness to Jesus Christ in our world. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem writes that:

*He [Jesus] bathed Himself in the river Jordan, and having imparted the fragrance of His divinity to the waters, He came up from them, and the Holy Spirit in substance lighted upon Him, like resting upon like. In the same manner to you also, after you had come up from the pool of the sacred stream, was given the unction, the antitype of that wherewith Christ was anointed, and this is the Holy Spirit.*



When the water washes the body, the Holy Spirit sets His seal upon the soul, in order that with our hearts spiritually purified and our bodies washed we may approach God. You therefore who are about to descend into the waters, do not think merely of water, but by the action of the Holy Spirit receive your salvation: for without both water and the Spirit you cannot become perfect.

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem

# The Sunday of Orthodoxy

Today we commemorate the victory of Orthodoxy over the heresy of iconoclasm. In the eighth century the Church had been torn apart by those who objected to the veneration of icons, and in 787 the Second Council of Nicaea responded by affirming the role of icons in the Church, stating that "Whenever these representations are contemplated, they will cause those who look at them to commemorate and love their prototype." The Council distinguished between the worship that is due to God alone, and the veneration that we give to icons, and stated that when we venerate an icon we are really venerating the reality for which it stands.

Even after the Council, iconoclasm persisted until in 844 Empress Theodora established Orthodoxy anew with a solemn procession and veneration of icons on the first Sunday of Lent. This was the beginning today's feast and celebrates the victory of true doctrine over heresy.

The triumph of Orthodoxy that we celebrate today is integrally related to the earlier struggles for the Orthodox faith, for what was at stake was not simply the validity of venerating icons, but the very reality of the Incarnation of Christ that the Church had struggled to profess in earlier centuries. Because God had become fully human in Jesus Christ, matter itself had been sanctified and had become a suitable medium for portraying His Image. As Saint John of Damascus wrote "If you have understood that the Incorporeal One became man for you, then it is evident that you can portray His human image."



The grace of truth has shone forth upon us; the mysteries darkly prefigured in the times of old have now been openly fulfilled. For behold, the Church is clothed in a beauty that surpasses all things earthly, through the icon of the incarnate Christ that was foreshadowed by the ark of testimony. This is the safeguard of the Orthodox faith; for if we hold fast to the icon of the Saviour whom we worship, we shall not go astray. Let all who do not share this faith be covered in shame; but we shall glory in the icon of the Word made flesh, which we venerate but worship not as an idol. So let us kiss it, and with all the faithful cry aloud: O God, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.

From Vespers for the Sunday of Orthodoxy

***Repentance lifts one up.  
Mourning knocks at heaven's gate.  
Holy humility opens it.***

Saint John Climacus