

We ought to have the most lively spiritual union with the heavenly inhabitants, with all the saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs, prelates, venerable and righteous men, as they are all members of one single body, the Church of Christ, to which we sinners also belong, and the living Head of which is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This is why we call upon them in prayer, converse with them, thank and praise them, It is urgently necessary for all Christians to be in union with them, if they desire to make Christian progress; for the saints are our friends, our guides to salvation, who pray and intercede for us.

Saint John of Kronstadt



**7 June 2015 is the
Sunday of All Saints**

Matins Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20

Epistle: Hebrews 11:33-40; 12:1-2

Gospel: Matthew 10:32-33; 37-38;
19:27-30

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

From on high didst Thou descend, O Compassionate One; to burial of three days hast Thou submitted that Thou mightest free us from our passions. O our Life and Resurrection, Lord, glory be to Thee.

Seasonal Kontakion:

As the first-fruits of our nature to the Planter of created things, the world presenteth the God-bearing martyred Saints in offering unto Thee, O Lord. Through their earnest entreaties, keep Thy Church in deep peace and divine tranquillity, through the pure Theotokos, O Thou Who art greatly merciful.

Readings and saints for this week:

Monday: Ephesians 2:4-10; Matthew 10:16-22
Relics of Theodore Stratelates; Martyr Kalliope

Tuesday: Romans 4:4-12; Matthew 7:15-21
Cyril, Abp. Of Alexandria; 3 Virgin-martyrs of Chios

Wednesday: Romans 4:13-25; Matthew 7:21-23
Martyrs Alexander & Antonina; Hieromartyr Timothy

Thursday: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16; Matthew 5:14-19
Apostle Bartholomew; Apostle Barnabas

Friday: Romans 5:17-21; 6:1-2; Matthew 9:14-17
Onuphrius of Egypt; Peter of Athos

Saturday: Romans 3:19-24; Matthew 7:1-8
Martyr Aquilina; Triphyllus the Bishop of Nicosia



Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

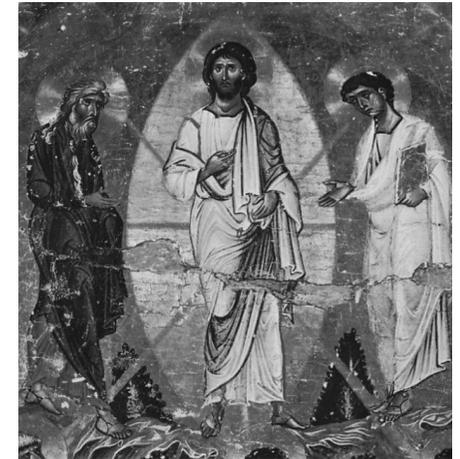
7 June 2015

Called to Holiness

As we celebrate the Sunday of All Saints today, we hear Jesus Christ both challenging His disciples and assuring them of the reward that awaits those who have left all to follow Him, and who have remained faithful to Him despite hardship and persecution. He tells us that those who “love father or mother more than me are not worth of me” and that those who have left “houses or brothers or sisters or father or other or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and inherit eternal life.”

These are challenging words. We can certainly see them acted out dramatically in the lives of many of the saints, who literally left their families, and sometimes even their countries, for the sake of the Gospel. But we may also wonder how they apply to us. Are we not also called to holiness?

It seems that the answer lies with what is in our hearts. Christ does not say that we should not love our families, nor are all called to leave their families and their lands. But He does say that if we love these things more than Him, then we are not worthy of Him.



What Jesus Christ is calling us to is the right ordering of that which we love. If He is at the centre of our lives, then we will be able to love all that He gives us, but in a way that gives glory to God. And, if we nurture our relationship with Him, then He will give us the wisdom to choose wisely so that our everyday lives may also become a true path to holiness. For holiness is to be found not only in doing dramatic things for God, but in doing everyday ordinary things with a pure heart.

It was revealed to Abba Anthony in his desert that there was one who was his equal in the city. He was a doctor by profession and whatever he had beyond his needs he gave to the poor, and every day he sang with the angels.

From the Sayings of the Desert Fathers

The Healing of Soul and Body

A series on the meaning of Holy Unction

The concept of healing is central to the Orthodox understanding of salvation. Through the entrance of sin into the world, we have become separated from God and spiritually sick and this has also had an impact on our physical well-being. While we cannot usually say that someone's specific sickness is due to their particular sins, we can trace our vulnerability to sickness to the corruptibility and mortality that entered the world through the fall.



Jesus Christ has come to heal us of all our infirmities and to lead us back to God. In the Gospels, Jesus is shown not only forgiving people their sins, but also healing them physically. This same healing ministry is continued in the Church. In Saint Luke's Gospel, we read that Jesus gave this same healing power to the Apostles:

He called the Twelve together and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to cure diseases, and He sent them out to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal. (9:1-2)

The Apostles continued this work of healing the sick and in the Epistle of Saint James we read of how the early Christians healed the sick.

Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. (5:14-15)

In the ancient world, it was common to use oil for anointing the sick due to its healing properties. However, while the Christians continued to use oil, the healing that occurred was not attributed to the oil, but rather to the prayer of faith that always accompanied the anointing. Likewise, the one who healed was not a doctor, or even the priest who administered the anointing, but the true healer was seen as Christ Himself.



The Lord did not come to make a display. He came to heal and to teach suffering men. For one who wanted to make a display the thing would have been just to appear and dazzle the beholders. But for Him Who came to heal and to teach, the way was not merely to dwell here, but to put Himself at the disposal of those who needed Him, and to be manifested according as they could bear it, not vitiating the value of the Divine appearing by exceeding their capacity to receive it.

Saint Athanasius the Great

The Sunday of All Saints

Today, on the first Sunday after Pentecost, we celebrate the Sunday of All Saints. The services for today are the final services in the "Pentecostarion," the book that contains the liturgical texts from Pascha until today. The Sunday of All Saints is therefore in many ways the culmination of our Easter faith, and it flows naturally from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, which we celebrated last week.

In today's feast we recognize all those who have struggled to live lives of holiness, including those whom we would otherwise forget. We are all called to holiness, for we are called to share in God's own life. We are called to take our struggle for salvation seriously, and the saints are those who provide us with an example in this, and who help us by their prayers.

However, true holiness is not simply making a great effort to conform to some ideal. Rather, it is about allowing the Risen Christ to live in us, and to allow the Holy Spirit to transform us and to restore in us God's age which has become distorted by our sin.



Your Church, O Christ our God, clothed itself in the blood of Your martyrs from throughout the world, as though it were a robe of linen and purple; through them, she cries out to You, "Send down upon Your people compassion, grant peace to Your commonwealth, and to our souls, great mercy."

Apolytikion of the
Sunday of All Saints

God is glorified by His Saints, and, in turn, the Saints are glorified by God.

The glory that God gives to the Saints is so great, that if people were to see a saint as he truly is, they would fall to the ground on account of reverence and fear, because physical man cannot endure the glory of such a heavenly appearance.

Do not marvel at this. The Lord loved man, whom He created, to such an extent that He poured the Holy Spirit abundantly upon man, and through this Holy Spirit man became like unto God.

The Lord gave His grace to the Saints, and they loved Him and completely devoted themselves to Him, because the sweetness of God's love surpasses the love for the world and its beauty.

And if things are so here on the earth, then in Heaven the saints are even more closely united with the Lord through love.

Saint Silouan the Athonite