

Meekness is an unchangeable state of mind which remains the same in honour and dishonour. Meekness is the rock overlooking the sea of irritability which breaks all the waves that dash against it, remaining itself unmoved. Meekness is the buttress of patience, the mother of love and the foundation of wisdom, for it is said, "The Lord will teach the meek His way." (Psalm 24:9) It prepares the forgiveness of sins; it is boldness in prayer, an abode of the Holy Spirit. "But to whom shall I look," says the Lord, "to him who is meek and quiet and trembles at my word." (Isaiah 66:2) In meek hearts the Lord finds rest, but a turbulent soul is the seat of the devil.

Saint John Climacus



**23 August 2015 is the Twelfth Sunday of Matthew**

**Matins Gospel:** Matthew 28:16-20

**Epistle:** 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

**Gospel:** Matthew 19:16-26

**Resurrectional Apolytikion:**

Let the Heavens rejoice; let earthly things be glad; for the Lord hath wrought might with His arm, He hath trampled upon death by death. The first-born of the dead hath He become. From the belly of Hades hath He delivered us, and hath granted great mercy to the world.

**Seasonal Kontakion:**

Neither the grave nor death could contain the Theotokos, the unshakable hope, ever vigilant in intercession and protection. As Mother of life, He who dwelt in the ever-virginal womb transposed her to life.

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

**Monday:** 2 Corinthians 8:7-15; Mark 3:6-12  
Hieromartyr Eutyches; Cosmas of Aitola

**Tuesday:** Titus 1:1-5; 2:15; 3:1-2, 12-15; Matthew 5:14-19  
Apostle Bartholomew; Titus of the 70

**Wednesday:** Hebrews 6:9-12; Mark 3:20-27  
Martyrs Adrian and Natalie; Righteous Joseph

**Thursday:** 2 Corinthians 10:7-18; Mark 3:28-35  
Pimen the Great; Martyr Phanurius

**Friday:** 2 Corinthians 11:5-21; Mark 4:1-9  
Moses the Ethiopian; Diomedes and Laurence

**Saturday:** Matthew 14:1-13; Acts 13:25-33; Mark 6:14-30  
Beheading of the Forerunner; Theodora of Thessaloniki



# ***Evangelion***

*A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith*

23 August 2015

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

## **Who Then Can Be Saved?**

Today we hear Saint Matthew's account of the rich young man who comes to Christ, asking what he must do to possess eternal life. Not content with being told to keep the commandments, he asks what more he must do. But when Jesus tells him: "If you wish to be perfect, go and sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and ... follow me," he cannot cope with this. We are told that he had great wealth and Christ warns us that it is very hard for someone who is rich to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

This incident does not present us with a universal command that we must all give away all our wealth, but instead, in warning us of the dangers of riches, it challenges us to look deeply into our own hearts. The rich young man was in many respects an exemplary Jew, keeping all the commandments, but he lacked the one thing necessary which was the freedom to respond to the call of Christ.

This man was trapped by his wealth and Jesus warns us that material wealth does indeed have a tendency to entrap us. But there are also other forms of riches, such as beauty, or intelligence, or particular human affections that can also too easily come between us and God. Today's Gospel encourages us to look at the things that we value and are attached to. Are we sufficiently convinced of the treasure that we have in our life in Christ that we are able to view all our possessions and abilities in their proper light, so that we are able to use them for God's service, rather than becoming possessed by them.



Let us be satisfied simply with what sustains our present life, not with what pampers it. Let us pray to God for this, as we have been taught, so that we may keep our souls unenslaved and absolutely free from domination by any of the visible things loved for the sake of the body. Let us show that we eat for the sake of living, and not be guilty of living for the sake of eating. The first is a sign of intelligence, the second proof of its absence.

Saint Maximus the Confessor

# Ordained to Serve the Church

*A series on the meaning of Holy Orders*

We saw last week that God calls us to be united to Him in the Church and that this Church, which is the Body of Christ, is guarded and made present by her ordained ministers, the bishops, priests, and deacons. The sacrament of holy orders is the guarantee of Christ's presence in His Church. It has existed since the time of the apostles and has continued through the centuries by the laying on of hands, thus ensuring the visible continuity of the Church.



## **An Authority that Comes from Jesus Christ**

This means that the Church's ministers have an objective, given character. Their authority is not dependent on their own qualifications, gifts, or holiness, but comes from God and is mediated through the Church.

From the earliest centuries of her history, the Church has found it important to be able to show that her bishops can trace their authority directly to the apostles, through an unbroken "apostolic succession." Similarly, her priests and deacons receive their authority from their bishop, and cannot act apart from him. The important principle here is that nobody can just set themselves up as an authority or do their own thing. Rather, those who exercise authority in the Church also have to be accountable to others, and even bishops are accountable to a synod of bishops or a council.

If the Church's ordained ministry comes directly from Jesus Christ, then this assures us that Christ is present in His Church, just as He promised He would always be. (Matthew 28:20) The sacramental ministers of the Church – the bishops, priests, and deacons – receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in order to show forth Christ to human beings. Through them, Jesus Christ continues to act in His Body in various ways:

- He acts as priest by perpetually offering Himself to the Father on behalf of all.
- He acts as teacher by proclaiming the Word of God to human beings.
- He acts as pastor by guiding and encouraging His flock.
- He acts as forgiver and healer by proclaiming God's forgiveness and healing souls.
- He acts as bishop by overseeing and ruling the community He has gathered to Himself.
- He acts as deacon by serving all who are in need.



If you want to cure your soul, you need four things. The first is to forgive your enemies. The second is to confess thoroughly. The third is to blame yourself. The fourth is to resolve to sin no more. If we wish to be saved, we must always blame ourselves and not attribute our wrong acts to others. And God, who is most compassionate, will forgive us.

Saint Cosmas Aitolia

## **Saint Cosmas of Aetolia**

Tomorrow we commemorate the New Hieromartyr, Cosmas of Aetolia (1714-1779), one of the most influential of Church's modern saints during the period of Turkish rule.

Saint Cosmas was from the town of Mega Dendron of Aetolia. His devout parents raised him in the fear of God and gave him a love for the Scriptures. He attended various schools before he went to study at the school of the Monastery of Vatopedi on the Holy Mountain at the age of twenty. He later went to the Athonite Monastery of Philotheou where he was tonsured a monk and ordained a priest.

While on the Holy Mountain Saint Cosmas became aware both of the riches of the Orthodox faith and also of the needs of the people of his time who were ignorant of the faith. He wrote:

*Among the countless gifts which my Lord has granted me, he made me worthy to acquire a little Greek learning and I became a monk. Studying the holy and sacred Gospel, I found in it many and different teachings which are all pearls, diamonds, treasures, riches, joy, gladness eternal life. Among the other things I also found this teaching in which Christ says to us: no Christian, man or woman, should be concerned only with himself, how he can be saved, but must be concerned also with his brethren so that they may not fall into sin.*

*Hearing this sweetest teaching spoken by our Christ, my brethren, to concern ourselves with our fellows, that teaching gnawed at me inside my heart for many years, just as a worm eats away at wood. ... what could I do?*

As a result, having received the blessing of his abbot, Saint Cosmas left Mount Athos and became a travelling missionary. He travelled from village to village, staying two nights in each, and instructing the people in the basics of the Orthodox faith. He succeeded in linking theological truth to the practicalities of daily life, preaching in a manner that spoke directly to the heart.

Saint Cosmas encouraged the opening of schools among the Orthodox Christians of the Ottoman era. He stood up for the poor against the rich and powerful, and for the Christian tradition against the Ottoman rulers. He also defended the holiness of the Lord's Day by opposing the holding of bazaars on a Sunday. All these things led those with power to conspire against him. As a result, he was falsely accused and martyred on 24 August 1779. The Synaxarion reads:

*The Saint, filled with joy and thanksgiving to God, blessed the four corners of the universe with the Sign of the Cross and prayed for the salvation of all Christians. He refused to have his hands tied, so that he could cross them, and it was without offering the least resistance that he was hanged on a tree and gloriously gave his soul into God's keeping. He was then sixty-five years old.*

