

Grumbling is caused by misery and it can be put aside by doxology (giving praise). Grumbling begets grumbling and doxology begets doxology. When someone doesn't grumble over a problem troubling him, but rather praises God, then the devil gets frustrated and goes off to someone else who grumbles, in order to cause everything to go even worse for him. You see, the more one grumbles, the more one falls into ruin.

Sometimes the devil deceives us and makes us unable to be pleased with anything; however, one can celebrate all things in a spiritual manner, with doxology, and secure God's constant blessing.

Saint Paisios of Mt Athos



**30 August 2015 is the
Thirteenth Sunday of Matthew**

Matins Gospel: Mark 16:1-8

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 16:13-24

Gospel: Matthew 21:33-42

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

Having learned the joyful proclamation of the Resurrection from the Angel, and having cast off the ancestral condemnation, the women disciples of the Lord spake to the Apostles exultantly: Death is despoiled and Christ God is risen, granting great mercy to the world.

Seasonal Kontakion:

In your holy birth, Immaculate One, Joachim and Anna were rid of the shame of childlessness; Adam and Eve of the corruption of death. And so your people, free of the guilt of their sins, celebrate crying: "The barren one gives birth to the Theotokos, who nourishes our life."

Readings and saints for this week:

Monday: Hebrews 9:1-7; Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28
Venerable Sash of the Theotokos; Cyprian of Carthage

Tuesday: 1 Timothy 2:1-7; Luke 4:16-22
Beginning of the Indiction; Synaxis of the Recovery of the Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos

Wednesday: 2 Corinthians 13:3-13; Mark 4:35-41
Martyr Mammas; John, Abp. of Constantinople

Thursday: Galatians 1:1-3, 20-24; 2:1-5; Mark 5:1-20
Hieromartyr Anthimus; Righteous Theoctistus & Euthymius

Friday: Galatians 2:6-10; Mark 5:22-24, 35-43; 6:1
Hieromartyr Babylas; Prophet Moses

Saturday: 1 Corinthians 4:1-5; Matthew 23:29-39
Zacharias the Prophet; Urban, Theodore, Medimnos, & 77 Companions at Nicomedeia



Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

30 August 2015

The Vineyard of the Lord

Today we hear Saint Matthew's account of the parable of the wicked tenants that Jesus Christ told to His disciples. A landowner had planted a vineyard and leased it to tenants when he went abroad. When the time came to collect the harvest, he sent his servants to the tenants who treated them badly. Eventually he sent his son, thinking that the tenants would respect him. However, they seized him and killed him, planning to take his inheritance.

Jesus is clearly using this parable to point to Himself. Since the beginning of creation, God had been caring for His world and had entrusted it to human tenants. When the people of Israel had strayed from His ways, He had sent them prophets to call them back to Himself. Finally, He sent them His own Son, but Christ points here to how He too would be rejected by the Jews. However, having been rejected, He would also become the "cornerstone" of the new people that God would form in the Church.

This parable refers to the events of our salvation history, but it also refers to each of us personally. In his commentary on this Gospel passage, Saint John Chrysostom point out how much care the landowner took with his vineyard, even doing things that were really the tenants' responsibility. God has shown great care for each of us, but too often we are unaware of this, or take it for granted. Like the tenants, we run the risk of ignoring God's messengers and even rejecting His Son who comes to us. We have a great responsibility to rightly use all the blessings we have received, and to co-operate with God in caring for His vineyard in our different ways.



It is God, Who is merciful and grants everyone what he needs, Who is building him up when He gives him more than he needs; in doing so He shows the abundance of His love for men and teaches him to give thanks. When He does not grant him what he needs, He makes him compensate for the thing he needs through the working of the mind and teaches him patience.

Saint Dorotheos of Gaza

Ordained to Serve the Church

A series on the meaning of Holy Orders

We have seen that the sacrament of Holy Orders is given to us by God in order to make the Church present and visible as an ordered community whose authority comes from Jesus Christ. There are three fundamental orders of ordained service in the Church, namely, the episcopate (bishops), presbyterate (priests), and diaconate (deacons). They each have their own particular gifts and roles, but are all given to us in order to build up the Body of Christ.



To Oversee the Church of God

The word bishop comes from the New Testament word *episkopos*, meaning “overseer.” The bishops are the leading members of the clergy and are responsible for overseeing and ensuring the unity and the good health of the Church. They are the successors of the Apostles and are responsible for particular local Churches (dioceses) in particular territories that they have been ordained to serve.

Bishops serve to make present and to further the unity of the Church, ensuring that we are really part of the “One, Holy, Apostolic, and Catholic Church.” They link us to the rest of the Church both historically, by receiving their “Apostolic Succession” from the Apostles, and geographically, by being in communion with the rest of the bishops throughout the world. It is through our communion with our local bishop that we can be sure that we are in communion with the rest of the Church.

All bishops are fundamentally equal in the Orthodox Church, but there are differences in rank and in organizational structure that have developed through the course of history. The bishops of a particular territory usually meet together regularly in synod, with the patriarch usually being the senior bishop of a region. In exceptional circumstances, the bishops of the whole Church throughout the world may also meet together in a Council.

This shows us that the Orthodox understanding of the Church is conciliar, a word that comes from “council”. By meeting together in synod or in council, the bishops represent all of their Churches throughout the world. And, at the same time, the bishops represent and make present the universal Church in their own dioceses.



Everyone who belongs to God and Jesus Christ stands by his bishop... Make certain, therefore, that you all observe one common Eucharist; for there is but one Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and but one cup of union with His Blood, and one single altar of sacrifice – even as also there is but one bishop, with his clergy... This will ensure that all your doings are in full accord with the will of God.

Saint Ignatius of Antioch

A New Church Year

This Tuesday marks the beginning of a new Church year. In the Roman Empire, the first of September was the day on which the emperor would announce a decree of taxation. But it was also the time (in the northern hemisphere) for harvesting the fruits of the earth and for beginning a new agricultural cycle as we also see in Jewish worship. The Church took over this calendar but gave it a deeper significance.

The Christian liturgical year comprises different cycles and feasts and we need a calendar in order to give them some cohesion and order. As the year unfolds it enables us to follow the various events in the life of Christ and in the history of our salvation. It shows us something of the power of the Holy Spirit which is made real for us in the lives of the saints. This is not simply a matter of giving us intellectual knowledge; instead the events and people are made present to us today.

Ultimately, the liturgical year exists in order to draw us closer to Christ and to be united with Him in the Church. By following the various events of His Life and His ministry, by hearing the Gospels read during the course of the year, by entering with Him into His suffering, death and resurrection, we are called to be conformed to Him as we gradually allow the Holy Spirit to form refashion the Image of God in us. We are invited to unite ourselves with His birth, His growth, His suffering, His death and His triumph.

During the course of the year we are also drawn into the cycle of the saints who are the glorified members of Christ’s Body. Their light is really an extension of the light of Christ, and their sanctity is an extension of His sanctity. To celebrate the feast of a saint is to celebrate a special grace that flows from Christ to that saint, and in which we too are called to participate.



Apolytikion of Beginning of the Indiction

Creator of the universe, setting times and seasons by Your sole authority, bless the cycle of the year of Your grace, O Lord, guarding our rulers and Your nation in peace, at the intercession of the Theotokos, and save us.

Kontakion of Beginning of the Indiction

You who created all things in Your infinite wisdom, and set the times by Your own authority, grant Your Christian people victories. Blessing our comings and goings throughout this year, guide our works according to Your divine will.

Abba Poeman said concerning Abba Pior that every day he made a new beginning.

From the Sayings of the Desert Fathers