



This spiritual treasury of the Holy Gospel is unassailable; and once it is placed in the treasury of our minds, it becomes immune to any attempt upon it. Unless, that is, we give occasion through our own slothfulness to him who wants to take it from us. For when our enemy, the crafty Devil, sees spiritual treasure amassed, he flies into a fury and gnashes his teeth. He is constantly on the alert to find his chance to take away some of what is stored within us. But there is no opportunity for him other than our own slothfulness. That is why we need to be constantly on the alert, and to repel his assaults.

Saint John Chrysostom

**4 October 2015 is the
Second Sunday of Luke**

Matins Gospel: John 20:1-10

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

Gospel: Luke 6:31-36

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews and the soldiers were guarding Thine immaculate Body, Thou didst arise on the third day, O Saviour, granting life unto the world. Wherefore, the powers of the Heavens cried out to Thee, O Lifegiver: Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ. Glory to Thy Kingdom. Glory to Thy dispensation, O only Friend of man.

Seasonal Kontakion:

O Protection of Christians that cannot be put to shame, mediation unto the creator most constant: O despise not the voices of those who have sinned; but be quick, O good one, to come unto our aid, who in faith cry unto thee: Hasten to intercession and speed thou to make supplication, O thou who dost ever protect, O Theotokos, them that honor thee.

Readings and saints for this week:

Monday: Philippians 1:1-7; Luke 6:24-30
Martyr Charitina; Methodia of Cimolus

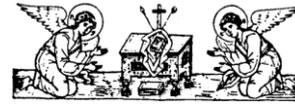
Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16; John 20:19-31
Apostle Thomas; Martyr Erotidus

Wednesday: Philippians 1:12-20; Luke 6:46-49, 7:1
Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus; Hieromartyr Polychronus

Thursday: Philippians 1:20-27; Luke 7:17-30
Righteous Pelagia; Virgin Pelagia

Friday: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16; Matthew 9:36-38; 10:1-8
Apostle James, Son of Alphaeus; Andronicus and Athanasia

Saturday: 1 Corinthians 15:58; 16:1-3; Luke 5:27-32
Martyrs Eulampius & Eulampia; Righteous Theophilus



Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

4 October 2015

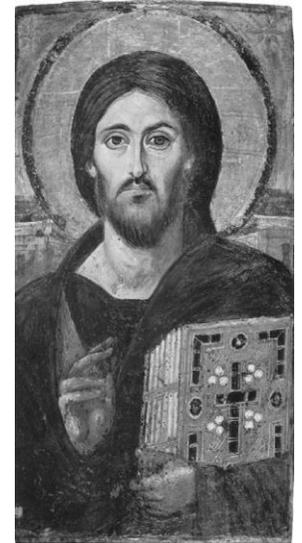
Archbishopric of Good Hope
Patriarchate of Alexandria & All Africa

Be Merciful as Your Father is Merciful...

Today's Gospel reading is taken from Saint Luke's account of the Sermon on the Mount, and in it we hear Jesus Christ's challenging words about loving our enemies.

We are used to the idea that we should not do to others what we would not wish them to do to us. Indeed, this is found in various religions and was well-known to Jesus' Jewish contemporaries. However, Jesus Christ goes beyond this precept, turning a negative into a positive, and saying that we should treat others as we would wish to be treated by them. And He goes even further by insisting that our love for others should be disinterested. We are not to love them in the hope that they should love us back; instead, we are to "expect nothing in return." Most radically, perhaps, we are even called to love our enemies, those who most definitely do not seem to love us.

In such teachings we encounter the truly radical nature of the Gospel. If we are honest with ourselves, we should probably admit that this seems impossible – to love those who hurt us and continue to hurt us! But Christ gives us a clue in the final words of today's Gospel: "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful." This is not some abstract command or some external standard that we cannot live up to. By ourselves we cannot love. But we learn to love by becoming attentive to the love of God. For God is the "Lover of humankind" as we frequently repeat in the Liturgy, and it is only by coming to see His love in our lives that we can gradually come to share in His love, learning to see other people as He sees them, and acquiring perhaps even just a few drops from His measureless ocean of mercy.



There is no other way to be saved, except through our neighbour... This is purity of heart: when you see the sinful or the sick, to feel compassion for them and to be tenderhearted towards them.

Saint Macarius the Great

Ordained to Serve the Church

A series on the meaning of Holy Orders

We saw last week that the deacons assist the bishop and priests and that in the early Church they exercised a prominent role that was strongly linked to the charitable work of the Church. However, the deacons have also had an important liturgical role since the earliest times.



St Stephen, the first martyr, was one of the first deacons chosen as described in Acts 6.

A Bridge between Nave and Altar

A deacon cannot celebrate the sacraments by himself, and must have the blessing of the presiding priest or bishop to put on his vestments and to serve. Likewise, he cannot give a blessing, but it is his task to lead the people in prayer, which we see particularly in the litanies. He represents the faithful as he assists the priest at the altar and in many ways provides a bridge between the priest in the sanctuary and the faithful in the nave, or body of the church. And, when it is time for the faithful to receive Holy Communion, it is the deacon who invites them with the words, *“With the fear of God, faith and love, draw near.”*

With the blessing of the presiding priest or bishop, the deacon is also expected to read the Gospel during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. This expresses the conviction that he shares in the Church’s ministry of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ to all people.

The deacon is ordained during the Liturgy after the consecration of the Holy Gifts in order to show that he does not consecrate them

but assists in their distribution. During the consecration, hymns to the martyrs and apostles are sung, reminding him that he must proclaim the true faith of the Church and be faithful until death.

As the one who is called to serve, the deacon reminds all Orthodox Christians of our vocation to serve others. And as a bridge figure between the priests and the faithful, the deacon helps to build up the unity of the Church, reminding us all that, in fulfilling our particular roles, we too are called to nurture the unity of the Church.



It is fitting that you should concur with the will of your Bishop, which you also do. For your justly renowned presbytery, worthy of God, is fitted as exactly to the Bishop as the strings are to the harp. Therefore, in your concord and harmonious love, Jesus Christ is sung. And man by man, you become a choir, that being harmonious in love and taking up the song of God in unison you may with one voice sing to the Father.

Saint Ignatius of Antioch

Saints Sergios and Bacchus

Wednesday is the feast of Saint Sergios and Saint Bacchus, and the name day of our Archbishop Sergios. These saints were nobles at the court of the Emperor Maximian who greatly valued them. When the emperor heard that they did not participate in worshipping the idols, he summoned them into his presence and they confessed their faith in the One God. The emperor was furious, had them stripped and paraded them around the streets in women’s clothes. When they were urged them to save themselves by denying Christ, they declared: ‘Both honour and dishonour, both life and death — all are one to him who seeks the heavenly Kingdom.’ They were then scourged and Saint Bacchus died as a result of the scourging. After this Saint Sergios was taken to Resapha in Syria, where he was tortured and beheaded by the sword. The date of his repose is given as either 296 or 303. Resapha was later renamed Sergiopolis in honour of Saint Sergios.

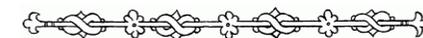


Many years to His Eminence Archbishop Sergios on his name day!



Saint Thomas the Apostle

On Tuesday we commemorate Saint Thomas the Apostle. The twentieth chapter of St John’s Gospel describes how, when he doubted the appearance of the Risen Lord, Christ appeared to him again, saying: “Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing,” at which Thomas cried out, “My Lord and my God.” Through this event the Holy Scriptures show that Christ is risen bodily, not merely as a spirit, as some heresies claim; and that He is in fact God. After Pentecost, St Thomas proclaimed the Gospel in the East, and established the Christian faith as far as India, where a small remnant of the ancient Church still traces its foundation to him. According to some accounts he met a martyr’s end; according to others, he reposed in peace. St John Chrysostom mentions that his tomb was in Edessa in Syria and his relics may have been translated there from India in the fourth century.



The assembly of saints bears resemblance to Paradise, in it each day is plucked the fruit of Him who gives life to all, in it is trodden the cluster of grapes to be the Medicine of Life.

Saint Ephrem the Syrian