

But nothing causes such exceeding grief as when anyone, lying under the captivity of sin, calls to mind from where he has fallen, because he turned aside to carnal and earthly things, instead of directing his mind in the beautiful ways of the knowledge of God. So you find Adam concealing himself, when he knew that God was present and wishing to be hidden when called by God with that voice which wounded the soul of him yourself? Why are you concealed? Why do you avoid Him Whom you once longed to see? A guilty conscience is so burdensome that it punishes itself without a judge, and wishes for covering, and yet is bare before God.”

Saint Ambrose of Milan



25 October 2015 is the Sixth Sunday of Luke

Matins Gospel: John 21:1-14

Epistle: Galatians 2:16-20

Gospel: Luke 8:26-39

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:

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: Luke 21:12-19; 2 Timothy 2:1-10; John 15:17-27; 16:1-2
Commemoration of the Earthquake; Demetrius the Myrrh-streamer

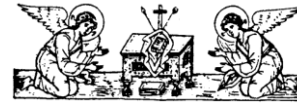
Tuesday: Colossians 2:20-23; 3:1-3; Luke 11:1-10
Great Martyr Nestor; Cyriacus, Abp. Of Constanstinople

Wednesday: Luke 1:39-49, 56; Hebrews 9:1-7; Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28
Holy Protection of the Theotokos; Martyrs Terrence & Eunice

Thursday: Colossians 4:2-9; Luke 11:14-23
Martyr Anastasia; Abramius the Recluse

Friday: Colossians 4:10-18; Luke 11:23-26
Cleopas & Artemas of the 70; Martyrs Zenobius & Zenobia

Saturday: Romans 16:1-16; Luke 8:16-21
Stachys and Companions of the 70; Epimachus of Alexandria



Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

25 October 2015

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

What is Your Name?

Today we hear Saint Luke’s account of how Jesus Christ cast many demons out of a man in the territory of the Gerasenes. The demons had reduced this man to a pitiable state and when Jesus confronted them they were terrified and begged Him to allow them to enter into a herd of pigs. The man was freed of his possession and when the townspeople arrived they found him fully clothed and in his right mind, sitting at the feet of Christ.

This incident is very dramatic, but it teaches important truths about the power of evil in our world, and how Christ comes to free us from it. The possessed man was living among the tombs which signify death and corruption. He was naked, signifying the loss of his nature and virtue. He was divided within himself, for we are told that there were many demons in him – indeed, he was so possessed by them that when Christ asked him his name he replied “Legion.”

This dramatic incident presents us with an extreme example of the human condition that we all face in one way or another. Since the fall, our human nature has been corrupted by the power of death. We have all become naked to some degree, because the Image of God in us has become blurred. We have all become divided within ourselves as we find ourselves at the mercy of conflicting desires.

In asking this man his name, Jesus Christ seeks to bring this man back to himself and to restore him to the person he was created to be, free from the influence of the demonic powers. At Pascha we sing that Christ has given life to “those in the tombs.” He has come to us to restore God’s Image within us, to free us from our divided desires and to restore our inner unity so that we are able to serve Him.



Why do you increase your bonds? Take hold of your life before your life grows dark and you seek help and do not find it. This life has been given to you for repentance; do not waste it in vain pursuits.

Saint Isaac the Syrian

A Life Centred on Christ Alone

A series on the meaning of Monasticism

We have seen that the monastic movement became more organized in the third and fourth centuries. Saint Anthony came to be seen as the father of anchoritic (or hermit) monasticism and Saint Pachomius of coenobitical (or communal) monasticism, while Saint Basil helped to integrate the monastic movement into the wider Church. From this time on, monastics were to play an important role in the Church, although there continued to be a considerable variety of forms in which it developed.



Defenders of the Church's Faith

In the period of the Christological controversies from the fourth century on, we find monks taking a leading role in defending and defining the Church's faith. This is seen particularly in someone like Saint Maximos the Confessor in the seventh century, who struggled against the heresies of monothelism and monoenergism. We also see it in the role played by Saint Theodore the Studite (759-826) and his followers, who defended the faith of the Church against the heresy of iconoclasm.

The Development of the Church's Worship

This period also saw the development of the Church's hymnography, in which the monasteries played a leading role. The services became more elaborate and gifted monastic hymnographers, such as Saint Romanus

the Melode, Saint Theodore the Studite, and Saint Kassiani the nun, expressed the truths of the faith in poetic hymns of great depth.

A Variety of Forms

Monasticism continued to take on a variety of forms in different situations. Two of the leading monastic centres that emerged during this period reflect this diversity. The monastery of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai was isolated and austere, and emphasized withdrawal, stillness (hesychia), and the constant prayer of the heart. By contrast, the Studite monastery in Constantinople was urban, involved in the broader Church, and placed more emphasis on an elaborate and organized liturgical life. While there was a certain tension between these two forms, it was a creative tension that was to bear much fruit in the Church.



Prayer frees the mind of all thought of the sensory and raises it to God Himself, Who is above all, to converse with Him and daringly ask Him for anything. Thus a man spends his life in purity, as one who, having already experienced communion with God, is thereupon again preparing for this communion.

Saint Nilus of Sinai

The Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos

On Wednesday, we celebrate the feast of the Protection of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. This feast was established following a vision of Saint Andrew, the Fool for Christ. On 1 October 911 he was standing at the back of the Blachernae Church of the Mother of God in Constantinople during an allnight vigil, together with his disciple Epiphanius. At around four in the morning, the Holy Theotokos appeared above the people, watching over the congregation as she covered the faithful with her veil. Turning to Epiphanius, Saint Andrew asked: "Do you see how the Queen and Lady of all is praying for the whole world?" Epiphanius replied "Yes, Father, I see it and stand in dread." As a result of this vision, the Church began to commemorate this feast on 1 October. However, in 1960 the Greek Church transferred it to 28 October in order to commemorate the protection which the Mother of God granted to the Greek forces on the Albanian front who withstood the Italian invasion in 1940.

This feast reminds us that the Holy Theotokos has a special role in protecting and caring for us. In giving birth to the Son of God, she stands in a unique relationship to Jesus Christ and, through this, is also tenderly concerned for all members of the Church, especially those most in need of her motherly protection.



O Virgin, we extol the great grace of thy Protection, which thou didst spread out like a bright cloud beyond all understanding; for thou dost invisibly protect thy people from the foe's every assault. Since we have thee as our shelter and certain help, we cry to thee with our whole soul: Glory to thy great deeds, O most pure Maid. Glory to thy shelter most divine. Glory to thy care and providence for us, O spotless one.

Apolytikion for the feast

Everything will happen suddenly. It may even happen tonight. Maybe it has begun already? Don't you see that your crops have failed and your animals have died? The rivers and springs have dried up. Today you are deprived of one thing, tomorrow another. God is giving it to us a little at a time, and we stupid people don't understand.

I say this to you and I counsel you, even if the sky were to fall down, even if the earth would rise up, even if the whole world were destroyed, as it is due to do so, today, tomorrow, don't be concerned with what God is going to do. Let them burn your body, let them fry it, let them take your possessions – don't concern yourself. Give them away – they are not yours. You need your soul and Christ. Even if the whole world were to fall apart, no one can take these two things away from you against your will. Guard these two, and don't lose them.

Saint Kosmos Aitolos