

While we are on earth, let us repent. For we are like clay in a workman's hands. If a potter makes a vessel and it gets out of shape or breaks in his hands, he molds it over again; but if he has once thrown it into the flames of the furnace he can do nothing more with it. Similarly, while we are in this world, let us, too, repent with our whole heart of the evil we have done in the flesh, so that we may be saved by the Lord while we have a chance to repent. For once we have departed this world we can no longer confess there or repent any more. Thus, brothers, by doing the Father's will and keeping the flesh pure and abiding by the Lord's commands, we shall obtain eternal life. For the Lord says in the Gospel: If you fail to guard what is small, who will give you what is great? For I tell you that "he who is faithful in very little, is faithful also in much."

Saint Clement of Rome



**29 November 2015 is the
Thirteenth Sunday of Luke**

Matins Gospel: Luke 24:1-12

Epistle: Ephesians 5:8-19

Gospel: Luke 18:18-27

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:

On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to * God the Word ineffably, * Who was before all the ages. * Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing * the gladsome tidings; * with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him * Who is willing to be gazed on * as a young Child Who * before the ages is God.

Readings and saints for this week:

Monday: Matthew 2:13-23; 1 Corinthians 4:9-16; John 1:35-52
Apostle Andrew the 1st Called; Froumentios of Ethiopia

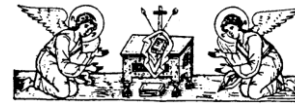
Tuesday: 1 Timothy 5:11-21; Luke 19:45-48
Prophet Nahum; Philaret the Merciful

Wednesday: 1 Timothy 5:22-25; 6:1-11; Luke 20:1-8
Prophet Habakkuk; Cyril of Phileus

Thursday: 1 Timothy 6:17-21; Luke 20:9-18
Prophet Sophonias; John the Hesychast

Friday: Matthew 25:1-13; Galatians 3:23-29; 4:1-5; Mark 5:24-34
Great Martyr Barbara; John of Damascus

Saturday: Luke 6:17-23; Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2; Matthew 11:27-30
Sabbas the Sanctified; Martyr Diogenes; Philotheos of Mount Athos



Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

29 November 2015

Archbishopric of Good Hope

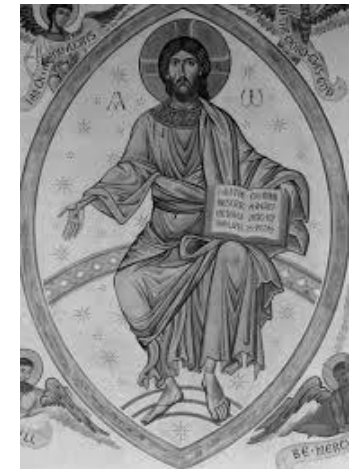
Patriarchate of Alexandria & All Africa

What Must I Do?

Today we hear Saint Luke's account of the encounter between the rich young ruler and Jesus Christ. This man asked what he must do to inherit eternal life and when Christ told him to keep the commandments which he knew so well, he answered that he had been doing that since his youth. With great discernment, Jesus Christ saw into his heart and called him to sell all his possessions, give the money to the poor, and follow Him. But when he heard this he was sad, for he was very rich and was too attached to his possessions to follow Christ.

Like last Sunday's Gospel, this encounter is a warning of the power that riches can have over us. And, indeed, it is not just money that can keep us from following Christ, but anything that we value more than Him, be it our relationships, activities or careers. It is not enough to keep the commandments on our own terms; instead we need to be open to whatever it is God asks of us.

But there is something more to this incident. Saint Luke tells us that this man was "overcome with sadness." Somewhere within himself he realised, even if not consciously, what he was missing by rejecting Christ's call. Sadness and grief can be the beginning of repentance, for they enable us to see that there is something that is missing, something for which we long. Too often we seek to cover over our sadness with mindless activity or entertainment, seeking ways to escape. Yet if we allow it to, it can help us to return to the God whom we have rejected.



All that is done in accord with the commandments: to love one another, to bear one another's burdens, to give alms and the like... is well-pleasing to God not when a man acts mercifully on account of some human consideration, but because the act is good in itself... The thing is perfect when a man gives alms without meanness or reluctance, without despising the recipient,, giving as freely as if he were receiving, doing a kindness as graciously as if a kindness were shown to him.

Saint Dorotheos of Gaza

Nothing is More Godlike than Love

by Saint Maximos the Confessor

Nothing is more truly Godlike than divine love, nothing more mysterious, nothing more apt to raise up human beings to deification.

For it has gathered together in itself all good things that are recounted by the *logos* of truth in the form of virtue, and it has absolutely no relation to anything that has the form of wickedness, since it is the fulfilment of the law and the prophets.

For they were succeeded by the mystery of love, which out of human beings makes us gods, and reduces the individual commandments to a universal meaning [*logos*].

Everything is circumscribed by love according to God's good pleasure in a single form, and love is dispensed in many forms in accordance with God's economy.

For what form of good things does love not possess?

Neither faith, the first premise in matters concerning true religion, assuring the one who possesses it of the existence of God and of divine matters, and that much more surely than the eye by attending to the appearances of sensible things furnishes an opinion concerning them for those who see; nor hope, which establishes the truly subsisting good, and that much more effectively than the hand does to even the most solid of material things that fall beneath its touch.

For does not love grant enjoyment of those things believed in and hoped for, by itself making present the things to come?

[...] Faith is the foundation of everything that comes after it, I mean hope and love, and firmly establishes what is true. Hope is the strength of the extremes, I mean faith and love, for it appears as faithful by itself and loved by both, and teaches through itself to make it to the end of the course.

Love is the fulfilment of these, wholly embraced as the final last desire, and furnishes them rest from their movement. For love gives faith the reality of what it believes and hope the presence of what it hopes for, and the enjoyment of what is present.

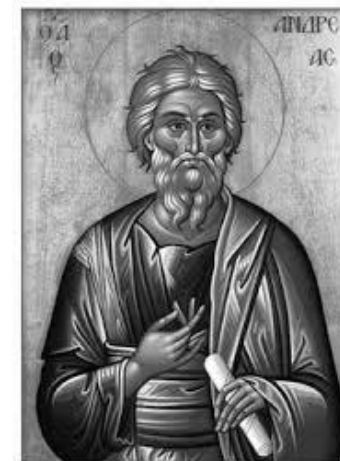
Love alone, properly speaking, proves that the human person is in the image of the Creator, by making his self-determination submit to reason, not bending reason under it, and persuading the inclination to follow nature and not in any way to be at variance with the *logos* of nature.

In this way we are all, as it were, one nature, so that we are able to have one inclination and one will with God and with one another, not having any discord with God or one another, whenever by the law of grace, through which by our inclination the law of nature is renewed, we choose what is ultimate.



The Feast of Saint Andrew: Come and See

Tomorrow we celebrate the feast of the Apostle Andrew, who is known in the Orthodox Church as the "First called." He was a disciple of Saint John the Baptist and was present when St John pointed to Jesus and said "Behold, the Lamb of God!" In response to his question, "Where are you staying?" Jesus Christ answered him, "Come and see." Saint Andrew followed Christ and became convinced that He was the Messiah and went and called his brother Peter. After Pentecost Saint Andrew was to preach the Gospel throughout Asia Minor and was finally martyred in the Peloponnese by being crucified upside down.



The Church encourages us to identify ourselves with Saint Andrew as we prepare to celebrate the coming of the Saviour this Christmas. He reminds us of the longings of the people of Israel which found their fulfillment in the birth of Christ, bringing joy to the whole world. Therefore, on this feast we begin to sing at Matins:

The feast of Saint Andrew marks an important step in our journey to the Nativity, for this is the day on which the pre-Christmas hymns begin to be chanted. Just as he encouraged his brother to "Come and see" the Messiah whom he had found, so in the Liturgy he exhorts us to "Come and see" the Messiah.

We have found Him whom the prophets proclaimed in the Spirit! Come to His beauty, that we may be rescued in soul and in thought, and that, led by the light of His radiance, we may drive away the night of deception and the darkness of unbelief, blessing Christ, who bestows upon the world great mercy.

Vespers of the Feast of Saint Andrew

Rejoice, O Isaiah, and receive the Word of God. Prophecy to Mary the Maiden. She is the Burning Bush unconsumed by the fire of divinity. Adorn yourself, O Bethlehem. Open your gates, O Eden. Enter, O Magi, and see salvation swaddled in a crib. Behold the star shining above the cave; it announces the life-giving Lord who saves the human race.

What is it that defines the Christian? Keeping watch every day and hour and being ready to carry out perfectly what pleases God, in the knowledge that the Lord will come at an hour we do not expect.

Saint Basil the Great