

The only thing God requires of us is that we do not sin. But this is achieved, not by acting according to the law, but by carefully guarding the divine image in us and our supernal dignity. When we thus live in our natural state, wearing the resplendent robe of the Spirit, we dwell in God and God dwells in us. Then we are called gods by adoption and sons of God, sealed by the light of the knowledge of God.

Saint Symeon the New Theologian



**9 October is the  
Third Sunday of Luke**

**Matins Gospel:** Luke 24:13-35

**Epistle:** 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

**Gospel:** Luke 7:11-16

**Resurrectional Apolytikion:**

Thou didst abolish death by Thy Cross;  
Thou didst open Paradise to the thief;  
Thou didst transform the myrrh-bearers' lamentation, and didst bid Thine Apostles to preach that Thou art risen, O Christ God, 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 honour thee.

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

**Monday, 10 October:** Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:1-3; Luke 7:36-50  
Martyrs Eulampius & Eulampia; Righteous Theophilus

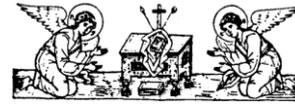
**Tuesday, 11 October:** Acts 8:26-39; Luke 8:1-3  
Philip of the 7 Deacons; Theophanes the Confessor

**Wednesday, 12 October:** Ephesians 3:8-21; Luke 8:22-25  
Martyrs Probus, Andronicus, & Tarachus; Simeon the New Theologian

**Thursday, 13 October:** Ephesians 4:14-17; Luke 9:7-11  
Carpus, Papyrus, Agathodorus, & Agathonica; Benjamin the Deacon

**Friday, 14 October:** Ephesians 4:17-25; Luke 9:12-18  
Martyrs Nazarius, Gervasius, Protasius, & Celsus

**Saturday, 15 October:** 1 Corinthians 14:20-25; Luke 6:1-10  
Hieromartyr Lucian; Righteous Sabinus



# ***Evangelion***

***A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith***

9 October 2016

## **I Say to You, Arise...**

Today we hear Saint Luke's account of the raising of the widow of Nain's son. As Jesus Christ was passing by this town, He encountered a funeral procession, had compassion on the weeping mother, and touched her dead son, thereby raising him to life. The people around were astounded at this, filled with the fear of God, and recognised that God had visited His people.

Here we see the very heart of the Gospel message: Jesus Christ has come to raise us from death to life. But this is not simply an abstract principle. Rather, it involved a personal encounter between Jesus Christ and the grieving woman. He saw her as a unique person. He saw her pain and stopped in order to address her. He went up to the stretcher and touched her son, causing the funeral procession to stop. In short, Jesus paid attention to her and was present to her.

The gospel account tells us that Jesus Christ was "filled with compassion." Here too we see something that lies at the very heart of our faith: God cares about each of us deeply. As we repeatedly confess in the Liturgy, He is the "Lover of humankind" who longs for our salvation and who seeks to heal and restore us. He grieves when we are grieving and is with us in our pain.

Jesus Christ touched the young man, thereby raising Him from the dead. This may seem like a distant incident that is far-removed from our lives. But we too can be touched by Jesus when we open ourselves to Him and allow ourselves to be addressed by Him. Jesus Christ is still present to us in the Church and offers Himself to us in her mysteries, and especially in Holy Communion. But we need to open ourselves to Him in order to recognise His presence and receive His healing touch.



The Virgin's Son met the widow's son. He became like a sponge for her tears and as life for the death of her son. Death turned about in its den and turned its back on the victorious one.

Saint Ephrem the Syrian

## Question Box

If you have a question about the faith or teaching of the Orthodox Church, you can send it to [evangelion@goarch.co.za](mailto:evangelion@goarch.co.za)

### **Should Orthodox Christians read the Bible – and how? I am confused as my Protestant friends share things from the Bible with me that sound odd, but they seem to know it very well. And when I try to read it I get very confused. What should I do?**

This can indeed be confusing, partly because many Protestants start with assumptions about “the Bible” that are not shared by the Orthodox Church. While the Church treasures the Scriptures, and wants us to be nourished by them, she recognises that for an individual to simply dip into the Bible and think that they can interpret it themselves is dangerous.

We should realise that what we today call “the Bible” is really a collection of writings that have very different origins and purposes, and it comprises different types of literature. While it is indeed inspired and holy, we need to interpret it correctly and read it in the context of the Church’s ongoing life and tradition.

This means that to understand what a particular text is saying, we may need to know something about its background and of the concerns of its human author. And, more importantly, we need to know how the Church has traditionally interpreted that passage. For example, what we now call the Old Testament were the Jewish Scriptures at the time of Christ that the earliest Christians continued to use. However, they now interpreted them in the light of Christ and read them as pointing to Him as the Church has continued to do.

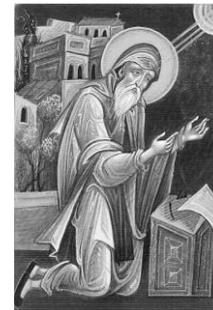
If we are to be nourished by the Scriptures today, then we need to learn to read them with the mind of the Church. For some this will involve studying how the Orthodox Church interprets the Scriptures. But for most of us, reading the Bible does not have to be a big intellectual endeavor if we stick to what is most important. A good way of doing this is to read the daily readings that the Church uses in her services. These are given on the back page of each *Evangelion* and can also be found on various websites ([www.goarch.org/chapel/calendar](http://www.goarch.org/chapel/calendar) is probably best and it will also send them to you by email or via an App). Alternatively, a good place to begin is with one of the gospels.

However, in all of this it is important to remember that we read the Scriptures in order to be nourished and to grow in love of Christ, rather than to seek intellectual knowledge or engage in arguments. We should read the Scripture in a prayerful spirit, seeking the face of Christ, and applying what we read to our own lives. Don’t worry too much about things that puzzle you – there will no doubt be an answer to them, but they probably won’t be that important to your life right now.

Illumine our hearts, O Master, with the pure light of Your divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Your Gospel teaching. Implant also in us the fear of Your blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing to You.

For You are the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and to You we ascribe glory, together with Your Father who is from everlasting and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

*A traditional Orthodox prayer used before reading the Scriptures*



On Wednesday we commemorate **Saint Symeon the New Theologian**, a monk in the Studite Monastery in Constantinople and later the abbot of the Monastery of St Mamas. After a

life of great asceticism, including many trials, criticisms and afflictions, he reposed in peace in 1022. His teaching on the soul's ability to enter directly into communion with God in this life aroused some opposition but his teachings are firmly rooted in his doctrine of the Church and his writings contain many powerful affirmations of the centrality of participation in the Holy Mysteries in our struggle for salvation. He is the author of many sublimely beautiful sermons, writings and hymns. With St John the Evangelist and St Gregory, Patriarch of Constantinople, he is one of only three whom the Church has officially called “Theologian.”

The candles which you light reveal to you the intelligible light. Just as the church, that house of great beauty, is full of light from many candles, so the house of your soul, which is more precious than that church, should be illumined and full of light in a noetic sense – that is to say, that within you all the spiritual virtues should burn with divine fire... The multitude of burning lamps signify the illumined thoughts which should shine within you like lamps, so that there should be no dark thought in the house of your soul, but that all should be aflame and shining with the light of the Holy Spirit.

Saint Symeon the New Theologian