

Do not let any opportunity pass to pray for anyone, either at his request or at the request of his relatives, friends, of those who esteem him, or of his acquaintances. The Lord looks favourably upon the prayer of our love, and upon our boldness before him. Besides this, prayer for others is very beneficial to the one himself who prays for others; it purifies the heart, strengthens faith and hope in God, and enkindles our love for God and our neighbor. When praying, say thus: 'Lord, it is possible for Thee to do this or that to this servant of Thine; do this for him, for Thy name is the Merciful Love of Men and the Almighty.'

Saint John of Kronstadt



**23 October is the Sixth Sunday of Luke**

**Matins Gospel:** John 20:1-10

**Epistle:** Galatians 1:11-19

**Gospel:** Luke 8:26-39

**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.

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

**Monday, 24 October:** Philippians 1:1-7; Luke 10:22-24  
Great Martyr Arethas; Martyr Sebastia

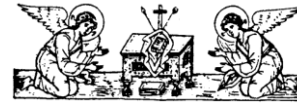
**Tuesday, 25 October:** Philippians 1:8-14; Luke 11:1-10  
Martyrs Marcian & Martyrius; Tabitha the Merciful

**Wednesday, 26 October:** Luke 21:12-19; 2 Timothy 2:1-10; John 15:17-27; 16:1-2  
Commemoration of the Earthquake; Demetrius the Myrrh-streamer

**Thursday, 27 October:** Philippians 1:20-27; Luke 11:14-23  
Great Martyr Nestor; Cyriacus, Abp. of Constanstinople

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

**Saturday, 29 October:** 1 Corinthians 15:58; 16:1-3; Luke 8:16-21  
Martyr Anastasia; Abramius the Recluse



## ***Evangelion***

*A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith*

23 October 2016

### **The Call to Freedom**

In today's Gospel, we hear Saint Luke's account of how Jesus cast the demons out of a man who was possessed by them. They had made this man's life a misery: He was naked, cast out of everyday society (living in the tombs), and behaved in a dangerous manner. By casting the demons out of him, Jesus restored this man to himself. In this, He demonstrated His authority over all that exists. But He also showed that He has come to restore us to life and to rescue us from all that diminishes our humanity.

Talk of demons may seem strange in our modern society, and we may wonder what was really going on in this passage. Yet the experience of not being in control of our own lives should not be so alien to us. Quite apart from the external forces of evil at work in our world, how many of us are really in control of our own lives? In addition to obvious and recognised addictions, the pressures of advertising, and the way society places expectations on us, we are also divided within ourselves. Saint Paul describes a universal struggle when he writes: "I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do." (Romans 7: 19) Since the fall, our human nature has become wounded, causing conflict within us. So, while we *want* to do what is good, we often find ourselves powerless to do so.

The Church teaches us that human beings are created in God's Image, and that a central aspect of this involves being free and rational beings. This is not a freedom to do or have whatever we like – which is really an enslavement to our passions – but is rather the inner freedom to choose what is right, and good, and true. This is a freedom that we are called to develop as we grow into a life of virtue and become ever-more free human beings. It is this freedom that Jesus Christ gave to the man in today's Gospel – and it is this freedom that He wants to restore in us.



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

Since we possess the Lord Jesus who has freed us by His suffering, let us always look on Him and hope for medicine for our wounds from His sign. That is to say, if perhaps the poison of greed spreads in us, we should look to Him, and He will cure us. If the malicious desire of the scorpion stings us, we should beg Him, and He will cure us. If bites of worldly thoughts tear us, we should ask Him, and we will live. These are the spiritual serpents of our souls. The Lord was crucified in order to crush them. He says concerning them, "You will tread upon serpents and scorpions, and they will do no harm to you."

Saint Maximus of Turin

## 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)

**One of our Sunday school kids asked about last week's Gospel reading instructing us to "Love our enemies." Her question was: "The devil is our enemy, so should we love him?"**

**We answered her as best we could to indicate that this refers to other people etc. She's little, so we try not to delve too much into evil and demons. But I would really appreciate your input on this.**

Thanks for your question! It can be tricky to explain these things to children, but your response is basically spot on. With all of us, but especially with children, it is better to focus on the positive that we are called to – on God and His love for us, and on the angels and saints who help and protect us. And on what He calls us to do, such as loving other people, including our enemies. So, what follows is not necessarily intended for children, but more to provide some additional thoughts.

The reality is that there is evil in our world, and the Church understands this to originate with the devil and his (fallen) angels. And there are texts in the Scriptures and the Fathers that encourage us to hate evil and the devil. But what does this mean, and what are we to make of it?

Firstly, we should be wary of seeing this as an instruction to *feel* full of hate. What we are actually being called to do is to reject Satan (which we do in baptism, even by spitting on him), and to refuse his attempts to deceive and manipulate us. But that requires a certain sobriety, rather than just getting caught up in negative emotions towards him. For in a heightened emotional state it is all-too-easy to confuse the devil with other people.

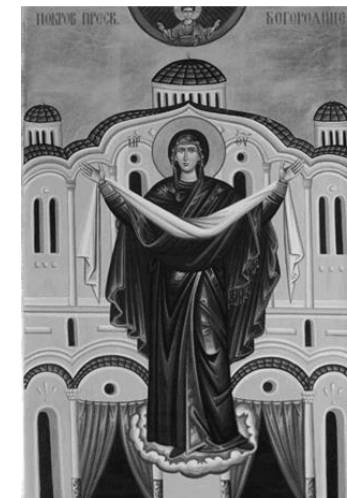
Secondly, it is actually by loving others, and especially our enemies, that we reject (or hate) the devil. He wants us to hate, for his goal is to sow division among people in order to destroy us. And so he tries to get us to respond by hating so that the world will become engulfed in a spiral of hatred. By refusing to do this we are taking a stand against Him.

## The Protection of the Holy Theotokos

On Friday 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 all-night 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.

In 1960 the Greek Church transferred this feast to 28 October in order to commemorate the protection that 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

Give your intentions in prayer to God, Who knows everyone, even before our birth. And do not ask that everything will be according to your will, because a man does not know what is profitable for him. But say to God: Let Thy will be done! For He does everything for our benefit.

Saint Gennadius of Constantinople