

Imagine a circle with its centre and radii or rays going out from this centre. The further these radii are from the centre the more widely they are dispersed and separated from one another; and conversely, the closer they come to the centre, the closer they are to one another.

Suppose now that this circle is the world, the very centre of the circle is God, and the lines going from the centre to the circumference or from the circumference to the centre are the paths of men's lives. Then here we see the same.

Insofar as the Saints move inward within the circle towards its centre, wishing to come near to God, then, in the degree of their penetration, they come closer both to God and to one another; moreover, inasmuch as they come nearer to God, they come nearer to one another, and inasmuch as they come nearer to one another, they come nearer to God. It is the same with drawing away ...

Saint Dorotheos of Gaza

**Sunday 3 November 2013 is the Fifth Sunday of Luke**

**Matins Gospel:** John 20:11-18

**Epistle:** 2 Corinthians 11:31-33; 12:1-9

**Gospel:** Luke 16:19-31

**Resurrectional Apolytikion:**

When You went down to death, O Immortal Life, then You slew Hades with the lightening flash of Your Godhead; but when from the depths below the earth You raised the dead, all the Powers above the heavens cried out: 'Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!'

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

**Monday:** Philippians 2:12-15; Luke 12:13-15, 22-31  
Joannicius the Great; Nikandros, Bishop of Myra

**Tuesday:** Philippians 2:16-23; Luke 12:42-48  
Martyrs Galaktion & Epistime; Holy Apostles Hermes & Companions

**Wednesday:** Hebrews 8:1-6; Luke 12:8-12  
Paul the Confessor

**Thursday:** Philippians 3:1-8; Luke 13:1-9  
33 Martyrs of Militene; Lazarus the Wonderworker

**Friday:** Matthew 18:10-20; Hebrews 2:2-10; Luke 10:16-21  
Synaxis of the Archangels

**Saturday:** John 10:1-9; 2 Corinthians 1:8-11; Luke 9:37-43  
Nectarius the Wonderworker; Martyrs Onesiphorus & Porphyrius



Archbishopric of Good Hope,  
Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa

# Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

3 November 2013

## The Rich Man and Lazarus

In today's Gospel Saint Luke recounts the parable that Jesus Christ tells of the rich man and Lazarus. After hearing Saint Luke's accounts of healing miracles in the last weeks, this parable can be rather jarring, for it confronts us with the reality of judgment and reminds us of our responsibility for those around us.

The story that it recounts is simple enough: a rich man dies, after having had no pity on the poor man at his gate. After death the poor man, Lazarus, is welcomed into heaven by the angels and described as being in Abraham's bosom, while the rich man has to endure the fires of hell. And, although he begs for relief, none is granted to him.

The rich man is not condemned for being rich, or even for being particularly hard-hearted or cruel. His sin was that of negligence. He simply failed to see his neighbour as a person and to take responsibility for him. Even as he is tormented in Hades, he shows no sign of true repentance, for he remains concerned only for himself and his own family. Saint John Chrysostom tells that this rich man's soul was dead before his bodily death, for "he did none of the works of the soul. All that warmth which issues from the love of our neighbour had fled, and he was more dead than his body."

The key to salvation is not simply to be found in what we do and don't do. Rather, it is to be found in the attitudes which we have towards God and towards our brothers and sisters. Are we so caught up in our own egotistical desires that we have become blind to the needs of those around us? The illusion of self-sufficiency was rudely shattered for this nameless rich man, for he had failed to realise that his neighbour was necessary for his salvation.

Our life and our death is with our neighbour. If we gain our brother, we have gained God, but if we scandalise our brother, we have sinned against Christ.

Saint Anthony the Great



# A Mercy of Peace, a Sacrifice of Praise

An introduction to the Divine Liturgy (continued)

As we move into the Liturgy of the Holy Gifts and prepare to offer the Gifts of bread and wine which will become the Body and Blood of Christ, we enter into one of the most solemn acts of the Liturgy in which we are urged to become quiet and to lay aside our earthly cares as we prepare to receive Jesus Christ. This change in tone is underlined by the Cherubic hymn which the choir sings while the priest prepares for the procession of the Great Entrance.



## The Cherubic Hymn

In this hymn, we identify ourselves with the angels as we sing:

*We who in a mystery represent the Cherubim and sing the thrice-holy hymn to the life-giving Trinity, let us now lay aside every care of this life. For we are about to receive the King of all, invisibly escorted by the angelic hosts. Alleluia.*

Who are the Cherubim and what does it mean to say that we represent them? According to the Christian tradition, there are nine orders of bodiless powers and the Seraphim and the Cherubim are those angels who are closest to God. "Cherubim" means "the seat of the glory of God" and in the Scriptures, the Fathers and many of the liturgical texts we find references to them as the seat or throne of God. They are also described as those who "carry" God, much like a king was carried in procession.

We sing this hymn while the priest censes the altar and sanctuary, the main icons and the people. This is also an imitation of the angelic life, for in his Apocalypse Saint John tells us that it is the angels who are constantly offering incense, together with the prayers of the saints, in the heavenly Liturgy. (Revelation 8:3-4)

In offering our incense and song, we are participating in this heavenly Liturgy and joining our praise to that of the whole Church which is both in heaven and on earth. In doing this, we are called to "lay aside every care of this life." As we move towards God and His Kingdom we seek to exit the world of world of everyday life so that we may see more clearly with the true eyes of faith and devote ourselves entirely to the worship of God.



When someone is aflame with love for God, he can no longer bear to see those things visible to our sensible eyes. For now that he has received other eyes, the eyes of faith, at all times he intellectually perceives the things of heaven, and it is upon them that he fixes his intellect. While he walks upon earth, it is as if he is in heaven...

Saint John Chrysostom

Where Christ is, there are the angels too,  
and where Christ and the angels are, there is Heaven.

Saint John Chrysostom

## On Friday we celebrate the **Synaxis of the Holy Archangels, Michael, Gabriel and the other Bodiless Powers of Heaven.**

In the Creed we confess that we believe that God is the Creator of "all things visible and invisible." In addition to the visible, material world, there is an invisible world that God has created. The Bible sometimes refers to it as "heaven" or "above the heavens" and it is not part of the physical, material universe. It does not exist in space. However, this does not make it any less real.



According to Scripture and Holy Tradition, there are nine ranks of bodiless powers. Closest to God are the Cherubim and Seraphim who are described as offering continual adoration and praise to God. (See Isaiah 6:3 and Revelation 4:8) In the middle of the ranking are the Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Dominions and Thrones, whom we are not told much about. And closest to human beings are the Angels and Archangels who are seen as the active workers, warriors and messengers of God in our world.

Angels and Archangels are seen to struggle against spiritual evil and to mediate between God and the world. They appear to human beings in various forms in both the Old and the New Testaments as well as in the life of the Church. They bring God's message to the world, but also mediate His power and His presence.

The Archangels Michael and Gabriel are the best known of the angels. "Michael" means "Who is like God?" and is shown in the Scriptures to be the chief warrior of the spiritual armies (Daniel 11:13; 12:1; Jude 9; Revelation 12:7), while Gabriel, whose name means "God is mighty" is shown as the bearer of the good news of Christ's birth (Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19,26) .

The appearances of the bodiless powers to human beings are described in a physical way, but this is a purely symbolic description for the angels are by nature immaterial.