



On Wednesday we commemorate our Father among the Saints **John Chrysostom**. He was born to pious parents in Antioch around 345 and after a good secular education he decided to dedicate his life to God as a monk. He lived in very strict asceticism in a cave near Antioch, eventually ruining his health so that he had to return to the city where he was ordained a priest. There he became known for his great gifts as a preacher and was called the “Golden-mouth.” He was made Patriarch of Constantinople in 398 where he continued to preach eloquently. However, he soon gained enemies as he was not afraid to speak out against the corrupt morals and luxurious living of the nobility, including of the Empress Eudoxia who had him exiled to Pontus in 403. After being allowed back for a short time, he was again exiled to the Caucasus. However, the journey was so difficult and his health so frail that he died en route in 407. His last words were “Glory be to God for all things.” Saint John Chrysostom left us many sermons and biblical commentaries.

Sunday 10 November 2013 is the Eighth Sunday of Luke

Matins Gospel: John 20:19-31

Epistle: Galatians 1:11-19

Gospel: Luke 10:25-37

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

Let everything in heaven rejoice, let everything on earth be glad, for the Lord has shown strength with His arm; by death He has trampled on death; He has become the first born from the dead; from the belly of Hades He has delivered us, and granted the world His great mercy.

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Readings and saints for this week:

Monday: 2 Corinthians 4:6-15; Luke 14:1, 12-15
Martyr Menas; Martyrs Victor and Stephanie

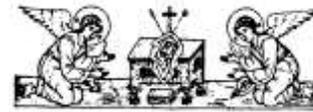
Tuesday: 2 Corinthians 9:6-11; Matthew 5:14-19
John the Merciful; Nilus the Ascetic

Wednesday: John 10:1-9; Hebrews 7:26-28; 8:1-2; John 10:9-16
John Chrysostom, Abp. Of Constantinople; Damaskinos of Mount Athos

Thursday: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16; John 1:43-51
Apostle Philip; Gregory Palamas, Abp. Of Thessalonica

Friday: Colossians 2:1-7; Luke 16:15-18; 17:1-4
Martyr Gouria & Companions

Saturday: Romans 10:11-21; 11:1-2; Matthew 9:9-13
Apostle and Evangelist Matthew



Archbishopric of Good Hope,
Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa

Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

10 November 2013

Who is my Neighbour?

Today Saint Luke recounts the familiar account of the parable of the Good Samaritan. He describes how a lawyer sought to test Jesus. Not content with knowing that the path to salvation involves loving both God and one’s neighbour, he pushed Jesus further, wanting to know exactly who his neighbour is. And it is in response to the question “Who is my neighbour?” that Jesus Christ tells this parable.



In order to understand Christ’s response in this parable, we need to appreciate the hostility that existed between the Jews and the Samaritans. The Jews despised the Samaritans and the thought that a Samaritan could have been the neighbour that the Law referred to would have been unthinkable to an observant Jew.

In this parable we see how God breaks through our “normal” human ways of thinking. Jesus Christ tells us that our neighbour is not exclusively someone connected to us by the ties of blood, language or similar background. Rather, our neighbour is simply the person whom God has put on our path at any given moment.

It is in our response to those whom God puts on our path in our day to day life that we see our true response to God. Too often we like to be in control: we are happy to do the charitable works that suits us. But God can put people on our path whom we would not necessarily choose and the neighbour whom God chooses for us may be the last person whom we would choose to be associated with. And Jesus Christ teaches us that it is precisely in such encounters that we find the true path to salvation.

The Lord wants us to love one another. Here is freedom: in love for God and neighbour. In this freedom, there is equality. In earthly orders, there may not be equality, but this is not important for the soul. Not everyone can be a king, not everyone a patriarch or a boss. But in any position it is possible to love God and to please Him, and only this is important. And whoever loves God more on earth will be in greater glory in His Kingdom.

Saint Silouan the Athonite

A Mercy of Peace, a Sacrifice of Praise

An introduction to the Divine Liturgy (continued)

Halfway through the singing of the Cherubic Hymn, the choir goes silent as the priest prepares to transfer the Holy Gifts to the altar. Holding the Gifts aloft, he solemnly exits the altar through the north door, processes through the nave of the Church in order to participate in the Great Entrance through the Royal Doors.



The Great Entrance

As we saw with the Little Entrance with the Gospel Book, the movement of the Divine Liturgy is always from West to East. It is a movement towards the altar, which represents the Kingdom of Heaven. Now, with the Entrance of the Holy Gifts, the gifts which represent Christ Himself, but also the identification of our lives with Him, are being taken up and placed on the altar in order to be offered to God. Through this action, Jesus Christ takes up our lives, and the concerns of all the world, and returns them to God.

As the priest processes through the Church, he sings:

*May the Lord God remember you all in His Kingdom,
always, now and forever and to the ages of ages.*

These words recall the cry of the penitent thief, who was crucified with Christ and who cried out on the Cross: "Remember me when You come into Your Kingdom." It also recalls the Lord's response of "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:42-43) As we approach the most solemn part of the Divine Liturgy, we are reminded that it is only through repentance that we may enter the Kingdom of God. During Great Lent we sing "Open to me the gates of repentance, O Giver of Life" and that is what we are doing here too. We know that we are not worthy to approach the Holy Gifts, yet we know that, as we pray in one of the prayers of preparation for Holy Communion, "all those who were brought to you by repentance you ranked in the choir of your friends."

Once the clergy have placed the Holy Gifts on the altar, the choir completes the Cherubic Hymn. The Gifts are covered with a veil and censed and are ready to be offered to God that they may become the Body and Blood of Christ.



A soldier asked Abba Mius if God accepted repentance. After the old man had taught him many things he said, 'Tell me, my dear, if your cloak is torn, do you throw it away?' He replied, 'No, I mend it and use it again.' The old man said to him, 'If you are so careful about your cloak, will not God me equally careful about his creature?'

From the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*

Preparing for Christ's Nativity



On Friday, 15 November, we begin the period of preparation for Christmas known as the Nativity Fast, which in the West is sometimes also called Advent. We prepare for Great Feasts by a period of fasting and Christ's Nativity is preceded by a forty day fast that is similar in some ways to Great Lent. Indeed, the feasts of the Nativity and Theophany are in many ways patterned after Pascha, the great feast of feasts. Jesus Christ

lay as an infant in the cave so that He might lie in a tomb. He was buried in baptism so that He might descend to the dead and conquer death by death. He was worshipped by the wise men so that all of creation might adore Him in His triumph over death.

Although the Nativity fast is not as strict as the Lenten fast, its purpose is the same. It calls us to simplify our lives, curb our desires and focus on that which we are about to celebrate, so that we may be able to welcome Christ's Incarnation with joy. It calls us to repent and change our lives so that, little by little, our hardened hearts may be broken open and we may become more receptive to His presence in our lives and better able to reflect His love to others.

During this time of preparation for the birth of Christ, the Church's liturgy is full of rich biblical symbolism. It draws on the Old Testament prophecies which speak of Christ's coming in the flesh, and identifies itself with the people of Israel which was longing for its Messiah. As we enter into the Church's liturgy, we realise that this coming of Christ is not simply something historical, but it is something that we are called to relive in our own lives today. The texts repeatedly speak about "now" and encourage us to be watchful and ready, so that we may greet the Incarnation of Christ with great joy.

Behold, the time of our salvation has drawn near. O Cave, make ready!

The Virgin is drawing near to give birth.

***O Bethlehem, land of Judah, be glad and rejoice,
for from you our Lord has dawned.***

***Listen, mountains and hills, and lands around Judea,
for Christ is coming to save man whom He fashioned,
since He loves mankind.***

(Vespers of the Forefeast, 20 December)