

One of the elders has said: "Before everything else humility of wisdom is needful for us, so that we may be ready to say to every word which we hear, forgive me; for by humility of wisdom all the arrows of the enemy and adversary are broken."

... If without faith it is impossible to please God, and if by means of almsgiving and faith sins are cleansed, if by the fear of the Lord everyone is brought away from evil, and if the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord, and one who is labouring must be continent in everything, then why did the elder say before everything else that humility of wisdom is needful for us, setting aside everything else which is so needful?

The elder wishes to show us by this that neither the very fear of God, nor almsgiving, nor faith, nor continence, nor any other virtue can be perfected without the humility of wisdom.

This is why he says, "Before everything else, humility of wisdom is needful to us—so as to be ready to say to every word we hear forgive me; for by humility of wisdom are all the arrows of the adversary broken."

Saint Dorotheos of Gaza

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

**Monday:** Colossians 2:13-20; Luke 17:20-25  
Great Martyr Plato; Martyr Romanus

**Tuesday:** Colossians 2:20-23; 3:1-3; Luke 17:26-37; 18:8  
Prophet Obadiah; Barlaam of Caesarea

**Wednesday:** Colossians 3:17-25; 4:1; Luke 18:15-17, 26-30  
Forefeast of the Entry of the Theotokos; Gregory Decapolite

**Thursday:** Luke 1:39-49, 56; Hebrews 9:1-7; Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28  
Entry of the Theotokos

**Friday:** Philemon 1:1-25; Luke 19:12-28  
Philemon & Archippus of the 70; Martyrs Cecilia and Companions

**Saturday:** 2 Corinthians 5:1-10; Luke 10:19-21  
Amphilochius, Bp. Of Iconium; Gregory, Bp. of Agrigentum

**Sunday 17 November 2013 is the Ninth Sunday of Luke**

**Matins Gospel:** John 21:1-14

**Epistle:** Galatians 2:16-20

**Gospel:** Luke 12:16-21

**Resurrectional Apolytikion:**

When the women Disciples of the Lord had learnt from the Angel the joyful message of the Resurrection, casting away the ancestral condemnation triumphantly they said to the Apostles: 'Death has been despoiled, Christ God has been raised, granting the world His great mercy.'

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# Evangelion

*A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith*

Archbishopric of Good Hope,  
Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa

17 November 2013

## Building bigger barns

Today we hear Jesus Christ issuing a stern warning on the dangers of greed. He tells the parable of a rich man who "stores up treasures for himself instead of becoming rich in the sight of God." Having had good returns on his harvest, this man had said to himself that he would pull down his barns in order to build bigger ones that would accommodate all his grains and his possessions. Little did he realize that he would die that very night and that all his possessions would be of no use to him.

While the fruits of the earth are good and given to us to be used wisely, our human nature has been corrupted by the fall and so we tend to hold onto them graspingly, becoming trapped by them, or thinking that they can provide us with security against the dangers that we face. This parable confronts us with the reality of death and with the fact that material wealth will be of no use to us when we die. Indeed, if we relate to it in a grasping, acquisitive way, it can even be a hindrance, for it prevents us from accumulating the spiritual treasures about which Christ speaks.

As we begin the Nativity fast in preparation for the celebration of the Incarnation of Christ at Christmas, we are called to be watchful and sober. This is a time for us to take stock of what life is really about. The reminder that we will die, possibly unexpectedly, is not meant to make us gloomy and depressed, but should rather help us to focus on the things that do endure beyond the grave. For true joy consists not in piling up possessions, but rather in being in a right relationship with God and with those around us and in using our possessions in a way that will benefit others.

"I shall tear down my barns and build even larger ones." Once you have filled these up in their turn, then what are you going to do? Will you pull them down to rebuild others once more? Is this a worse madness than to be endlessly tormented: to build tenaciously and at once pull down? If that is what you want, you have the houses of the poor for your barns. "Build up treasures in heaven": what is stored there "neither moth nor decay destroy, nor thieves break in and steal."

Saint Basil the Great



## A Mercy of Peace, a Sacrifice of Praise

An introduction to the Divine Liturgy (continued)

After the Great Entrance, the Liturgy proceeds with the Litany of the Precious Gifts which the deacon intones by singing: "Let us complete our prayer to the Lord."

At one level, our prayer is never complete and our day is never perfect, as we pray that it will be in one of the petitions that follow. Yet the purpose of these prayers is to take us to another level and to enable us to encounter the perfection and peace of God's presence that endures irrespective of the circumstances of our lives.



### The Litany of the Precious Gifts

In these petitions we pray that the present day should be peaceful, that our guardian angel should be an angel of peace, that the whole world should enjoy peace, and that the end of our lives should be peaceful. As we prepare to offer the Holy Gifts to God and to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion, we are profoundly aware that we need God's gift of peace, both for our world and in our own lives.

Praying for this does not mean that we will never encounter violence or have a difficult day. Not only is our world full of violence, but we are full of conflicting passions and desires. Yet as we grown in faith, we encounter a reality that is deeper than all that can disturb us. That is why we also pray

for those things that are good and profitable for our souls and that we may be able to live a life of repentance.

We likewise pray for a Christian end to our lives and that we may be able to give a good defence before the dread judgement seat of Christ. But if we desire a Christian death, we need to live a Christian life and this life begins now. Such a life is also a life of repentance, of turning around and focusing on the things that truly matter in life.

We will only truly encounter the peace which Jesus Christ has come to offer us when we abandon ourselves to Him. As we prepare to offer our lives to Him in the Holy Eucharist, we know that we need His help, for only He knows what is truly "good and profitable for our souls."



You yourselves do not know what is in your best interests – unlike God, who knows your interests very well. Often you ask for things that are harmful and dangerous; yet God, who is concerned with your salvation, does not pay attention to your request, but in every case takes care of your interests.

Saint John Chrysostom

## The Feast of the Entrance of the Holy Theotokos into the Temple

On Thursday we celebrate the feast of the Entrance of the Most Holy Mother of God into the Temple which is one of the twelve Great Feasts of the Church. According to the tradition of the Church, the Theotokos was brought into the Temple when she was three years old and consecrated to God. She was led into the Holy of Holies to be nourished by the angels in order to prepare her for her virginal conception of the Son of God.

This feast is not simply about the details of what happened to the Theotokos in the Temple, but is, more importantly, a symbolic statement about our salvation history. One of the hymns of the feast calls it "the prelude of the good will of God," for it announces and prefigures the coming of God's salvation in the Incarnation of Christ which we will celebrate at Christmas.

In this feast we see the Holy Theotokos taken into the temple, and yet we also know that she herself will become "the living temple of the Holy Glory of Christ our God." She is "the temple that is to hold God" and is consecrated to be the "dwelling place of the Almighty." She enters the Holy of Holies, but will herself become the Holy of Holies and the "abode of heaven."



***Today is the prelude of the good pleasure of God, and the proclaiming of the salvation of humankind. In the Temple of God the Virgin is revealed, and beforehand she announces Christ to all. To her then let us cry aloud with mighty voice: Hail, the fulfilment of the Creator's dispensation!***

Apolytikion for the feast

Led by the Holy Spirit, the holy and immaculate maiden is taken to dwell in the holy temple. She who is in truth the most holy temple of our holy God is nourished by an angel. He has sanctified all things by her entry and has made godlike the fallen nature of mortal man.

Vespers of the Entry of the Theotokos