



Tomorrow we commemorate the **Holy Great Martyr Catherine of Alexandria**. Coming from a noble and wealthy family, she was both beautiful and intelligent and received an outstanding education. She was known for her debates with the leading philosophers of her day and when the Emperor Maximin tried to make his subjects offer idolatrous sacrifices, she objected and entered into public debate with the leading scholars and orators he could find, silencing them all with her arguments and resulting in them asking for baptism. After they had been sentenced to death, Saint Catherine was tortured on a specially constructed spiked wheel, but was freed by an angel. She was eventually beheaded outside the walls of Alexandria in 305.

Sunday 24 November 2013 is the Thirteenth Sunday of Luke

Matins Gospel: John 21:14-25

Epistle: Galatians 6:11-18

Gospel: Luke 18:18-27

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

The Word without beginning with the Father and the Spirit, born from a Virgin for our salvation, let us believers praise and let us worship Him; for He was well pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh and undergo death, and to raise those who had died, by His glorious Resurrection.

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Readings and saints for this week:

Monday: Galatians 3:23-29; 4:1-5; Mark 5:24-34
Apodosis of the Entry; Great Martyr Catherine

Tuesday: 1 Thessalonians 1:6-10; Luke 19:45-48
Alypius the Stylite; Nikon

Wednesday: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8; Luke 20:1-8
Martyr James the Persian; Righteous Nathaniel

Thursday: 1 Thessalonians 2:9-14; Luke 20:9-18
Stephen the New; Martyr Irenarchos

Friday: 1 Thessalonians 2:14-20; Luke 20:19-26
Martyrs Paramonos & Philumenos; Nicholas, Abp. of Thessalonica

Saturday: Matthew 2:13-23; 1 Corinthians 4:9-16; John 1:35-52
Apostle Andrew the 1st Called; Froumentios of Ethiopia



Archbishopric of Good Hope,
Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa

Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

24 November 2013

Following Christ

Today we hear Saint Luke's account of the encounter between the rich young ruler and Jesus Christ. This man asked what he must do to inherit eternal life and when Christ told him to keep the commandments which he knew so well, he answered that he had been doing that since his youth. With great discernment, Jesus Christ saw into his heart and called him to sell all his possessions, give the money to the poor, and follow Him. But when he heard this he was sad, for he was very rich and was too attached to his possessions to follow Christ.

Like last Sunday's Gospel, this encounter is a warning of the power that riches can have over us. And, indeed, it is not just money that can keep us from following Christ, but anything that we value more than Him, be it our relationships, activities or careers. It is not enough to keep the commandments on our own terms; instead we need to be open to whatever it is God asks of us.

But there is something more to this incident. Saint Luke tells us that this man was "overcome with sadness". Somewhere within himself he realised, even if not consciously, what he was missing by rejecting Christ's call. Sadness and grief can be the beginning of repentance, for they enable us to see that there is something that is missing, something for which we long. Too often we seek to cover over our sadness with mindless activity or entertainment, seeking ways to escape. Yet if we allow it to, it can help us to return to the God whom we have rejected.



Just as the thought of fire does not warm the body,
so faith without love does not actualize the light
of spiritual knowledge in the soul.

Saint Maximus the Confessor

A Mercy of Peace, a Sacrifice of Praise

An introduction to the Divine Liturgy (continued)

After the Litany of the Precious Gifts, the priest turns to face the people, blesses them and says: "Peace to all." This greeting of peace is given several times during the Liturgy. As we have seen before, without God's peace among us, we cannot celebrate the Liturgy. Drawing near to God means being at peace with Him and with those around us.



Let us love one another

At this point in the Divine Liturgy, the greeting of peace is followed with the words:

*Let us love one another,
that with one mind we may confess:*

to which we respond:

*Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Trinity consubstantial and undivided.*

Saint John Chrysostom tells us that the priest offers the peace of God because it is the mother of all good things and prepares the way for love, which is its sister. By receiving the blessing of peace, we make our way towards love, for, without love, we cannot confess our faith. Saint John the Theologian makes it quite clear in that "Whoever says 'I love God' and hates his brother is a liar" (1 John 4: 20). Faith and love always go together and we cannot truly confess our belief in God if we do not love one another.

Love is the foundation of our lives as Christians and Christ commands us to love one another "even as I have loved you." (John 13:34) Yet real Christian love is no easy thing; and as we learn to love we realise that we need God's help, the support of the Church and the strength that is given to us in the Holy Mysteries.

The outward expression of this call to love is the kiss of peace that takes part at this point in the Liturgy. In earlier times this was exchanged among all of the faithful, but today it is exchanged by the celebrating clergy. But this action reminds us that without being in a communion of love with those around us, we cannot celebrate the Divine Liturgy. It is this love that builds up the faithful and binds them together so that they may truly be the Body of Christ. Saint Maximus the Confessor tells us that the kiss of love:

prefigures and foreshadows the concord among the faithful, their oneness of mind and rational identity, in faith and love, which will come about when the inexpressible good things to come are revealed.

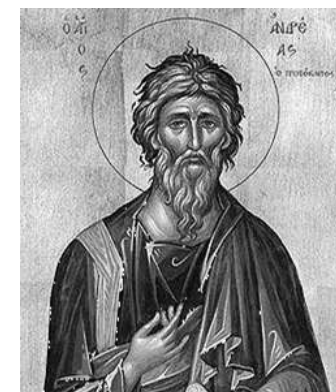
The one who has found love eats and drinks Christ every day and hour and so is made immortal. 'Whoever eats of this bread,' He says, 'which I will give him, will never taste death.' Blessed is he who consumes the bread of love, which is Jesus! He who eats Christ, the God over all, as John bears witness, saying, 'God is love.'

Saint Isaac the Syrian

Come and See:

The Feast of Saint Andrew

On Saturday we celebrate the feast of the Apostle Andrew, who is known in the Orthodox Church as the "First called." He was a disciple of Saint John the Baptist and was present when St John pointed to Jesus and said "Behold, the Lamb of God!" In response to his question, "Where are you staying?" Jesus Christ answered him, "Come and see." St Andrew followed Christ and became convinced that He was the Messiah and went and called his brother Peter. After Pentecost St Andrew was to preach the Gospel throughout Asia Minor and was finally martyred in the Peloponnese by being crucified upside down.



The feast of Saint Andrew marks an important step in our journey to the Nativity, for this is the day on which the pre-Christmas hymns begin to be chanted. Just as he encouraged his brother to "Come and see" the Messiah whom he had found, so in the Liturgy he exhorts us to "Come and see" the Messiah.

*We have found Him whom the
prophets proclaimed in the Spirit!
Come to His beauty, that we may be
rescued in soul and in thought, and
that, led by the light of His radiance,
we may drive away the night of
deception and the darkness of
unbelief, blessing Christ, who
bestows upon the world great mercy.*

Vespers of the Feast of St. Andrew

The Church encourages us to identify ourselves with Saint Andrew as we prepare to celebrate the coming of the Saviour this Christmas. He reminds us of the longings of the people of Israel which found their fulfillment in the birth of Christ, bringing joy to the whole world. Therefore, on this feast we begin to sing at Matins:

*Rejoice, O Isaiah,
and receive the Word of God.
Prophecy to Mary the Maiden.
She is the Burning Bush
unconsumed by the fire of divinity.
Adorn yourself, O Bethlehem.
Open your gates, O Eden.
Enter, O Magi,
and see salvation
swaddled in a crib.
Behold the star
shining above the cave;
It announces the life-giving Lord
who saves the human race.*