



Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

19 January 2014

Apart from love nothing whatever has existed, nor ever will. Its names and actions are many. More numerous still are its distinctive marks; divine and innumerable are its properties. Yet it is one in nature, wholly beyond utterance whether on the part of angels or men or any other creatures, even such as are unknown to us. Reason cannot comprehend it; its glory is inaccessible, its counsels unsearchable. It is eternal because it is beyond time, invisible because thought cannot comprehend it, though it may perceive it. Many are the beauties of this holy Sion not made with hands! He who has begun to see it no longer delights in sensible objects; he ceases to be attached to the glory of this world.

Saint Symeon the New Theologian

Sunday 19 January 2014 is the Twelfth Sunday of Luke.

Matins Gospel: John 20:11-18

Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11

Gospel: Luke 17:12-19

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: 2 Corinthians 4:6-15; Luke 6:17-23
Euthymius the Great; Zacharias the New Martyr of Patra

Tuesday: Philippians 1:12-20; Luke 12:8-12
Maximus the Confessor; Martyr Neophytos

Wednesday: 2 Timothy 1:3-8; Matthew 10:32-33; 37-38; 19:27-30
Timothy of the 70; Martyr Anastasius the Persian

Thursday: Philippians 3:20-21; 4:1-3; Mark 2:23-28; 3:1-5
Hieromartyr Clement; Martyr Agathangelus

Friday: Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2; Matthew 6:22-33
Xenia, Deaconess of Rome; Hieromartyr Babylas

Saturday: Hebrews 7:26-28; 8:1-2; John 10:9-16
Gregory the Theologian; Synaxis of the New Martyrs of Russia

A Grateful Heart

Today the Church returns once more to listening to the Gospel readings according to Saint Luke, and we hear his account of how Jesus Christ healed ten lepers. Ten men suffering from leprosy came and asked Him to have mercy on them, and He told them to go and show themselves to the priests in order to confirm their healing. As they went away, they found that they were healed. On discovering this, one of the lepers, who was a Samaritan, returned to Jesus to thank Him. However, the other nine continued on their way, prompting Jesus to remark that it was only one of them who came back to give thanks.

This incident reminds us that we can all-too-easily take God's gifts for granted, and forget to thank Him for them. Cultivating a spirit of gratitude is of fundamental importance in our Christian life, for we often need to become aware of all that God does for us. We may wonder how the nine lepers could have forgotten to give thanks for their healing, yet if we are not grateful for all that God does for us in our everyday life, we can run the risk of also being blind to His more dramatic acts.

Often people think of prayer mainly as asking things from God. While we should indeed bring our needs and the needs of the world to God in prayer, true prayer begins with acknowledging who God is, with praising Him for who He is and thanking Him for all that He has done for us. For prayer is ultimately about cultivating a relationship with God as we learn to not only rely on Him for all our needs, but also recognize how He answers these needs and thank Him for it.



You should continually and unceasingly call to mind all the blessings which God in His love has bestowed on you in the past, and still bestows for the salvation of your soul.

Saint Mark the Ascetic

A Mercy of Peace, a Sacrifice of Praise

An introduction to the Divine Liturgy (continued)

We saw last week that the faith that we profess during the Divine Liturgy – and indeed the faith that enables us to celebrate the Liturgy – is faith in Jesus Christ who has come among us in order to conquer death. Although we continue to die, death is not the end of life, but is rather the gateway to eternal life.

The Last Judgement

As we recite the Creed, we continue by professing our faith in the second coming of Jesus Christ with the affirmation:



*He is coming again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and His Kingdom will have no end.*

The Church believes that Jesus Christ, having ascended into heaven will come again in glory to judge the world. This world as we know it is not the end and we are called to await the coming of Christ with eager anticipation. The Gospel warns us to be vigilant, for not only does Christ come to us in many not-so-obvious ways in the course of our lives, but He will also come in great splendour at the end of time.

Jesus Christ comes to judge the living and the dead. In Saint Matthew's Gospel (25:31-46) Jesus shows us the basis on which we are to be judged, namely, whether we have responded to Him in the persons who need us most.

Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. ... Truly I say to you, as you did it to the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.

When we stand before Christ at the last judgement, we will be judged by one criterion, namely, love. Christian love is not some abstract, sentimental feeling, but a concrete response to both God and our fellow human beings. It is no easy thing, but something that we need to keep learning and the whole point of much of our prayer and asceticism is precisely to teach us such love, so that we may be prepared to meet Christ.

As we seek to love, we realise how much we fail. We cannot do this relying solely on our own efforts and have to continue to throw ourselves onto the mercy of God, for it is only by God's mercy that we will be saved.

Do not despise Christ's commandment of love, for it is the means whereby you become the child of God.

Saint Maximus the Confessor

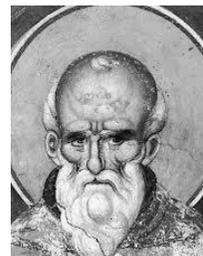
When simplicity is lacking and you say, 'I'll do this, that and the other, and God will give me what I ask for', then nothing happens. Yes indeed, I should do this, that and the other, but with such secrecy and such simplicity and such meekness, that even I who ask for the thing am unconscious of it.

Do everything simply and meekly. Do nothing with ulterior motives. Don't say 'I'll do this in order to have that result', but do it naturally, without taking cognizance of it. That is, pray simply and don't think about what God will bestow on your soul. Don't make any calculations. You know of course, what God bestows when you enter into communion with Him, but it is as if you don't know. ...

Your heart must be simple, and not divided and dishonest, sincere and not devious and self-seeking. All people desire to find a good and simple soul; they feel comfortable with such a person and they approach him without fear and without suspicion. And such a person lives with inner peace and has good relations with everyone and with all creation.



Saint Porphyrios the Kapsokalyvite



Saint Maximus the Confessor

On Tuesday we commemorate Saint Maximus the Confessor. He was born into a noble family in 580 and after completing his studies with distinction served in the court of the emperor, but soon withdrew to a monastery and spent many years in ascetical training and prayer. When the monks had to disperse, St Maximus embarked on an itinerant life, spending time in Crete, Cyprus and eventually Carthage. During this time he was able to express the great depth of the Orthodox faith in his writings, presenting a magnificent synthesis which saw the human

being as priest of a cosmic liturgy who is called to gather together the inner principles of all things in order to offer them to God. But this was also a time in which the Church was threatened by the monothelite heresy, which the emperor was attempting to impose on the Church. St Maximus saw clearly that this teaching, which denied that Christ had a human will, struck at the very basis of our faith, for if Christ had not assumed our will, then He could not heal it, thus restoring human freedom to its original state. The emperor warned St Maximus to either accept the monothelite belief or else keep silent, but he was unable to avoid speaking out. After much imprisonment and torture, which included cutting off his tongue and his right hand, he died of his wounds in 662. His lonely and costly stand, helped to preserve the Orthodox Faith and his right hand is venerated today at the Monastery of St Paul on Mount Athos.