

Christians, always rejoice, for evil, death, sin, the devil and hell have been conquered by Christ. But when all of this is conquered, is there anyone in the world who can bring our joy to naught? You are the lord of this eternal rejoicing as long as you do not give in to sin. Joy burns in our hearts from His truth, love, resurrection, and from the Church and His saints. Joy burns in our hearts all because of sufferings for Him, mockings for Him, and death for Him, insofar as these sufferings write our names in heaven. There is no true joy on earth without the victory over death, but the victory over death does not exist without the Resurrection, and the Resurrection does not exist without Christ. The risen God-Man Christ, the founder of the Church, constantly pours out this joy into the hearts of His followers through the Holy Mysteries and good deeds. Our faith is fulfilled in this eternal joy, insofar as the joy of faith in Christ is the only true joy for human nature.

Saint Justin Popovich

Sunday 18 August 2013 is the Eighth Sunday of Matthew

Matins Gospel: John 20:11-18

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

Gospel: Matthew 14:14-22

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

By means of Your Cross, O Lord,
You abolished death. To the robber
You opened Paradise. The
lamentation of the myrrhbearing
women You transformed, and You
gave Your Apostles the order to
proclaim to all that You had risen, O
Christ our God, and granted the
world Your great mercy

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Readings and saints for this week:

Monday: 1 Corinthians 11:31-34; 12:1-6; Matthew 18:1-11
Great Martyr Andrew Stratelates; Martyrs Timothy, Agapius and Thecla

Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 12:12-26; Matthew 18:18-22; 19:1-2; 13-15
Prophet Samuel; Martyr Luke of Bouleutos

Wednesday: 1 Corinthians 13:4-13; 14:1-5; Matthew 20:1-16
Holy Apostle Thaddaeus; Martyr Bassa and her Children

Thursday: 1 Corinthians 14:6-19; Matthew 20:17-28
Martyr Agathonicus; Martyr Anthuse

Friday: Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28
Apodosis of the Dormition; Ireneaus, Bishop

Saturday: Romans 14:6-9; Matthew 15:32-39
Hieromartyr Eutyches; Cosmas of Aitola



Archbishopric of Good Hope,
Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa

Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

18 August 2013

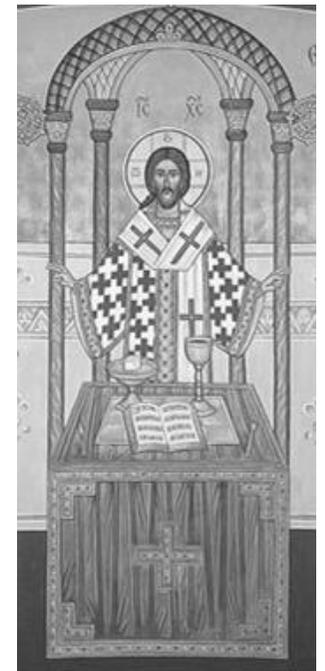
The Bread of Life

Today we hear Saint Matthew's account of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes and see how Jesus Christ satisfies the deepest hunger of those who seek Him.

The crowds had followed Jesus into the wilderness where He had taken pity on them and healed the sick. However, when evening fell He was aware that they needed to be fed. When the disciples protested that they had no food, He instructed them to feed the crowd themselves, and the five loaves and two fish were miraculously multiplied to feed the crowd of five thousand men, not counting the women and children.

This incident shows Christ's compassionate concern for those in His care. And it also shows Him challenging His disciples to collaborate with Him in caring for those in need. Their first response was that they did not have anything with which to feed the people, but Jesus Christ shows us that even the little things that we often overlook can be transformed and put to a great use when they are offered to Him for the service of His Kingdom.

However, the multiplication of the loaves and fish is about more than simply satisfying people's physical hunger, but is also about a spiritual reality. Jesus Christ is Himself the Living Bread who feeds us both with His Word and with His own Body and Blood. This Gospel therefore challenges us to reflect on what it is that we really hungry for, and what sort of food will truly satisfy our souls.



A certain monk told me that when he was very sick, his mother said to his father, "How our little boy is suffering. I would gladly give myself to be cut up into pieces if that would ease his suffering." Such is the love of God for people. He pitied people so much that he wanted to suffer for them, like their own mother, and even more. But no one can understand this great love without the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Saint Silouan the Athonite

A Mercy of Peace, a Sacrifice of Praise

An introduction to the Divine Liturgy (continued)

After the Great Litany, the Divine Liturgy proceeds with what are known as the Antiphons. The word “antiphon” means opposite voices and they are called this because they were originally sung by two alternating choirs. They were also originally chanted in procession as people processed to the Church where the Liturgy was to be celebrated. They have since become part of the Divine Liturgy itself, but they nevertheless still serve to prepare us to joyfully enter into the Church’s worship.

There are three antiphons and between them the Short Litany is repeated. They mainly comprise verses from the Psalms, followed by a refrain. These verses and refrains can vary according to particular feasts and usually on Sunday the third antiphon involves the singing of the Beatitudes from Saint Matthew’s Gospel. (Matthew 5:3-12)



Whose love for mankind beyond all telling

Each antiphon begins with a prayer that the priest prays quietly. The prayer of the first antiphon sets the tone for the whole Liturgy:

Lord, our God, whose might is beyond compare and whose glory is beyond understanding, whose mercy is without measure and whose love for mankind beyond all telling, look upon us and upon this holy house, Master, according to your loving kindness, and bestow on us and on those who pray with us your acts of rich mercy and compassion.

The Liturgy begins with the love of God for human beings. This is the very beginning and centre of our faith, yet it is something so great that we cannot properly grasp it. It is “beyond all telling.” However, we see the measure of God’s love for us in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. In Christ, God

reaches out to us in order to draw us to Himself. He loves us in an exclusive way and wants us to love Him in return. Saint Nicholas Cabasilas writes:

From wherever we are He brings us back to Himself, and does not allow us to fix our intellect on anything else, nor to love any created thing... With a wondrous compulsion and an authority full of love for mankind, He draws us towards Himself alone, and unites us to Himself alone. By this “force” He has gathered into the house and to the feast those He invited, saying to His servant: Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.” (Luke 14:23)

We human beings are the reason for the Incarnation of God the Word, and it was for our salvation that He showed such love for mankind as to be born and manifest Himself in a human body.

Saint Athanasius the Great

If you see your neighbour in sin, don't look only at this, but also think about what he has done or does that is good, and infrequently trying this in general, while not partially judging, you will find that he is better than you.

Saint Basil the Great

Question Box

If you have a question about the faith and teaching of the Orthodox Church, you can send it to evangelion@goarch.co.za

I am confused about the fasting practices of the Church. We are told that we are supposed to fast in order to simplify our lives and share with the poor, but we are also told can eat lobster and shellfish which are luxuries. Is this not hypocritical? Would it not be better to simply eat a hamburger? Or to stick to the spirit of the fast and let each individual to decide what it is best for him or her to give up?

The Church’s fasting rules can indeed seem contradictory, but we need to understand that they emerged out of a specific context. In this context, shellfish was originally the food of the poor, and eating it was seen as an act of self-denial. This is no longer so in many parts of the world and there is indeed danger that we get so caught up on the rules of what we may and may not eat that we lose sight of the underlying point of our fasting. When we end up spending more money and time on fasting food than on non-fasting food, then something is wrong!

However, it is also important to realise that we do not fast as isolated individuals, but as members of the Church. While we do need to take our individual circumstances and health into account – and should consult our priest if in doubt about how we should fast – there is also a danger in relying too much on our own judgments. An important point about fasting is that we are called to lay aside our own preferences or judgments. Even things that seem contradictory to us are there because they are part of a history that is much longer and broader than us. It is possible that the details of the Church’s fasting rules may change, but, until they do, growing in Christian faith means learning the humility that is needed to submit ourselves to things that may seem arbitrary.

Finally, we should not assume that because things are allowed they are therefore mandatory! If we are serious about fasting, we should certainly try to keep to a spirit of simplicity (unless there are exceptional circumstances that require otherwise). But we do not do this by making fasting into a matter of individual preference, for an important part of fasting is learning to let go of our own desires.