



The holy Church includes many people, men, women and children without number. They are all quite different from one another in birth, in size, in nationality and language, in style of living and age, in trades and opinions, in clothes and customs, in knowledge and rank, in welfare and in appearance. Thanks to her, they are nonetheless all reborn, newly created in the Spirit. The Church grants to all of them without distinction the grace of belonging to Christ and of taking his name by calling themselves Christians.

Saint Maximus the Confessor

**1 November 2015 is the Fifth Sunday of Luke**

**Matins Gospel:** John 21:14-25

**Epistle:** 1 Corinthians 12:27-31; 13:1-8

**Gospel:** Luke 16:19-31

**Resurrectional Apolytikion:**

Let us worship the Word, O ye faithful, praising Him that with the Father and the Spirit is co-beginningless God, Who was born of a pure Virgin that we all be saved; for He was pleased to mount the Cross in the flesh that He assumed, accepting thus to endure death. And by His glorious rising, He also willed to resurrect the dead.

**Seasonal Kontakion:**

O Protection of Christians that cannot be put to shame, mediation unto the creator most constant: O despise not the voices of those who have sinned; but be quick, O good one, to come unto our aid, who in faith cry unto thee: Hasten to intercession and speed thou to make supplication, O thou who dost ever protect, O Theotokos, them that honour thee.

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

**Monday:** 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5; Luke 11:29-33  
Martyr Acindynus & Companions; Domnina, Domna, & Kyriaki, Martyrs

**Tuesday:** 1 Thessalonians 1:6-10; Luke 11:34-41  
Martyrs Ascepsimas, Joseph & Aeithalas; Dedication of the Temple of St. George

**Wednesday:** 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8; Luke 11:42-46  
Joannicius the Great; Nikandros, Bishop of Myra

**Thursday:** 1 Thessalonians 2:9-14; Luke 11:47-54; 12:1  
Martyrs Galaktion & Epistime; Holy Apostles Hermes & Companions

**Friday:** Hebrews 8:1-6; Luke 12:8-12  
Paul the Confessor

**Saturday:** 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; Luke 9:1-6  
33 Martyrs of Militene



# ***Evangelion***

*A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith*

1 November 2015

Archbishopric of Good Hope  
Patriarchate of Alexandria & All Africa

## **Our Life & Death is with our Neighbour**

In today's Gospel from Saint Luke, we hear the parable that Jesus Christ tells of the rich man and Lazarus. After hearing Saint Luke's accounts of miracles of healing in the last weeks, this parable can be rather jarring, for it confronts us with the reality of judgment and reminds us of our responsibility for those around us.

The story that it recounts is simple enough: a rich man dies, after having had no pity on the poor man at his gate. After death the poor man, Lazarus, is welcomed into heaven by the angels, while the rich man has to endure the fires of hell. And, although he begs for relief, none is granted to him.

The rich man is not condemned for being rich, or even for being particularly hard-hearted or cruel. His sin was that of negligence. He simply failed to see his neighbour as a person and to take responsibility for him. Even as he is tormented in Hades, he shows no sign of true repentance, for he remains concerned only for himself and his own family. Saint John Chrysostom tells that this rich man's soul was dead before his bodily death, for "he did none of the works of the soul. All that warmth which issues from the love of our neighbour had fled, and he was more dead than his body."

The key to salvation is not simply to be found in what we do and don't do. Rather, it is to be found in the attitudes which we have towards God and towards our brothers and sisters. Are we so caught up in our own egotistical desires that we have become blind to the needs of those around us? The illusion of self-sufficiency was rudely shattered for this nameless rich man, for he had failed to realise that his neighbour was necessary for his salvation.



Our life and our death is with our neighbour. If we gain our brother, we have gained God, but if we scandalise our brother, we have sinned against Christ.

Saint Anthony the Great

# A Life Centred on Christ Alone

*A series on the meaning of Monasticism*

We have seen that monasticism developed in various centres in the early Church and underwent a gradual development, although it continued to know different forms. With the various Muslim conquests, the centre of gravity of Orthodox monasticism shifted from Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Cappadocia, and became more focused on Greece. However, the conversion of Russia and the Slavic lands would also see the blossoming of monasticism further north in later centuries.



*The Holy Monastery of Simonos Petra*

## The Holy Mountain

In this context, a central and unique role is occupied by the monasteries of Mount Athos or the Holy Mountain, and mountain and peninsula in northern Greece. It was formally founded in 963 when Saint Athanasius of Athos established the monastery of the Great Lavra, although monks had been living there before that. It is now home to 20 Orthodox monasteries, together with their dependencies, and forms an autonomous state under Greek sovereignty.

The monasteries of Mount Athos have undergone various trials and developments during the course of their history, and in recent decades they have been blessed by a renewed vigour.

However, throughout the course of its existence the Holy Mountain has been an important beacon for the Orthodox faithful. In particular, in the hesychast controversy of the fourteenth century, it reminded the Church of the central Orthodox belief that we can truly know and experience God.

As one finds elsewhere in Orthodox monasticism, there are different forms of monastic life on the Holy Mountain, from large communal monasteries, through smaller skete communities, to hermits living on their own. However, it is especially associated with hesychasm, in which the praying monk is united to God in the silence of the heart.



*A hermit outside his cell*

But indeed he who possesses

Christ dwelling in him,

how can he be said to be alone, tell me?

For the Father and the Spirit are united with my Christ.

How therefore can we speak of being a solitary

When the monk is united with the Three-in-one?

He is one who is united with God even if he lives alone,

Even if he lives in a desert, even in a cave...

He who makes a heaven of his cell through virtue,

Contemplates and looks upon the Creator of heaven and earth,

Installed in his cell.

Saint Symeon the New Theologian

Abba Poemen said: "There is no greater love than that a man lays down his life for his neighbour. When you hear someone complaining and you struggle with yourself and do not answer him back with complaints; when you are hurt and bear it patiently, not looking for revenge, then you are laying down your life for your neighbour."

From the Sayings of the Desert Fathers

## 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](mailto:evangelion@goarch.co.za)

**We were discussing last Sunday's Gospel (Luke 8:26-39) and have the following questions: 1. Is a demon a fallen angel? 2. As a demon can dwell in a person, can an angel also dwell in a person?**

In answer to the first question, yes, the word demon actually means a fallen angel. The Church teaches that before human beings fell some of the angels rebelled against God. Their leader was one of the most gifted Cherubim, Lucifer, who was joined by angels of different ranks, as described by the Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel. (Isaiah 14: 12-15; Ezekiel 28: 12-18) This led to a war in heaven in which the Archangel Michael resisted the rebellious angels and they were thrown down to earth. (Revelation 12: 7-9) From that time on, there was a war between the angelic beings loyal to God, and the fallen angels or demons, led by Lucifer or Satan.

Since the fall of human beings, there is conflict within the human person between the angels of light and the angels of darkness. The angels of light were sent by God to help us, as can be seen in the account of the Archangel Raphael helping Tobit (see the book of Tobit in the Old Testament), the account of the Archangel Michael helping Joshua in battle (Joshua 5: 13-14), and many others. The Church teaches that we each have a guardian angel who accompanies us and protects us and that the angels are continually praying for us and raising our prayers up to God.

However, to answer the second question, people cannot be possessed by angels in the same way that they can be possessed by demons because angels, as God's messengers and helpers, respect our human personhood. When people are possessed by demons they become disintegrated, losing their own unique, whole personality. But this is the work of the demons, while the work of God (and therefore of the angels of light) is restore the distorted Image of God in us, enabling us to truly be who we were created to be. In this, it is the Holy Spirit who comes to dwell in us (as we pray in the prayer "O Heavenly King...") but He does it in a way that does not distort our own personhood.