

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



**30 October is the Fifth Sunday of Luke**

**Matins Gospel:** John 20:11-18

**Epistle:** 2 Corinthians 11:31-33; 12:1-9

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

**Resurrectional Apolytikion:**

When Thou didst descend unto death, O Life Immortal, then didst Thou slay Hades with the lightning of Thy Divinity. And when Thou didst also raise the dead out of the nethermost depths, all the powers in the Heavens cried out: O Life-giver, Christ our God, glory be to Thee.

**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, 31 October:** Romans 16:1-16; Luke 11:29-33  
Stachys & Companions of the 70; Epimachus of Alexandria

**Tuesday, 1 November:** 1 Corinthians 12:27-31; 13:1-8; Matthew 10:1, 5-8  
Unmercenary Cosmas & Damian; David of Euboia

**Wednesday, 2 November:** Philippians 2:24-30; Luke 11:42-46  
Martyr Acindynus & Companions; Domnina, Domna, & Kyriaki, Martyrs

**Thursday, 3 November:** Philippians 3:1-8; Luke 11:47-54; 12:1  
Martyrs Ascepsimas, Joseph & Aeithalas; Dedication of the Temple of St. George

**Friday, 4 November:** Philippians 3:8-19; Luke 12:2-12  
Joannicius the Great; Nikandros, Bishop of Myra

**Saturday, 5 November:** 2 Corinthians 1:8-11; Luke 9:1-6  
Martyrs Galaktion & Epistime



# ***Evangelion***

*A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith*

30 October 2016

**Archbishopric of Good Hope  
Patriarchate of Alexandria & All Africa**

## **The Danger of Hardened Hearts**

In today's Gospel, Saint Luke recounts Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus. After a lifetime of having had no pity on the poor man at his gate, the rich man dies and is tormented in hell, while the poor Lazarus is welcomed into heaven by the angels. The parable makes clear that a real gulf exists between them, and despite the rich man's pleading, his fate has already been sealed.

The Fathers find it significant that this rich man has no name, whereas Lazarus, the poor beggar, is explicitly named. In this, the usual ways of the world in which the rich are known by name and the poor are anonymous are turned around. The beggar who was ignored at the gate is welcomed into heaven by the angels, while the well-known celebrity has become nameless.

Moreover, this rich man has become nameless because he has become heartless. He did not simply not do what he was supposed to have done, but he failed to see the person of Lazarus as a human being who was in need. His heart had become hardened and as a result he failed to see the need of someone he walked past daily. As Saint Cyril of Alexandria tells us that: "The rich man, being

uncompassionate, was nameless in God's presence." By failing to respond to his neighbour, by failing to *see* those around him, his own humanity was diminished.

It is all-too-easy for our own hearts to become hardened. There is so much suffering around us that we can be tempted to look away, and to cocoon ourselves in our safe spaces. But when we cut ourselves off from other human beings and fail to see their dignity and their need, then it is our own humanity that becomes diminished. We need to resist the hardening of our hearts and pray that God will help us to see other people with the eyes of faith.



How then is it possible for the rich man to be saved? By possessing his goods in common with those who are in need, being such as Job was, and exterminating out of his soul the desire for more, and in no areas going beyond real need.

Saint John Chrysostom

Do not consider your riches as belonging to yourselves alone; open wide your hand to those who are in need; assist those in poverty and pain; comfort those who have fallen into extreme distress; console those who are in sorrow or oppressed with bodily maladies, and the want of necessities; and also comfort the saints who embrace a voluntary poverty so that they may serve God without distraction. Nor will your doing so be unrewarded. For when your earthly wealth abandons you, as you reach the end of your life, then they will make you partakers of their hope and of the consolation given to them by God. For being good and kind to man, He will lovingly and bountifully refresh those who have laboured in this world, and more especially such as have wisely and humbly and soberly borne borne the heavy burden of poverty. The wise Paul also gives similar advice to those who live in wealth and abundance respecting those in misery: "Your abundance may supply their lack: that their abundance may also supply your lack."

Saint Cyril of Alexandria

### Question Box

If you have a question about the faith or teaching of the Orthodox Church, you can send it to [evangelion@goarch.co.za](mailto:evangelion@goarch.co.za)

**When I mentioned the question section to the Sunday School kids, they had a few more questions. The first is: Why are girls not allowed in the altar area?**

This is a common misconception – the truth is that *nobody* is allowed into the altar area, except those who have a task to perform there. The altar is a sacred space – well, the whole church building is a sacred space, but the altar is even more so as it is the focus of all our worship and the place where Jesus Christ is made present in the form of bread and wine.

In order to guard this sacred space, the Church teaches that only the clergy and those with a reason for being there may enter the altar area. Moreover, anyone who needs to fulfill a task there must have a blessing to enter the altar. It is not that girls are excluded from the altar, but that everyone is excluded from the altar because it is the "holy of holies" and needs to be kept sacred.

Now, it is true that some people do need to enter the altar and that this may include altar servers, who are generally men or boys. But, they should not do so casually or without a blessing to do so and it is certainly not the case that men or boys may automatically enter the altar. Moreover, there are situations (such as in women's monasteries) in which women may be given a blessing to serve in the altar. However, in general, the Church has found it more appropriate to have men or boys assisting the priest in the altar.

## The Holy Unmercenaries Cosmos and Damian

On Tuesday we commemorate the Holy Unmercenaries, Saints Cosmas and Damian. These two brothers lived in region of Ephesus in the third century. Born of devout parents, they received a good education, but turned away from this in order to devote themselves to healing the sick. Having freely received the grace of the Holy Spirit, they gave freely, refusing to accept payment for their work, and healing rich and poor alike. They desired only that their patients should come to faith in Christ and see that it was through His power that they were healed. After their deaths, streams of pilgrims began to come to the Church built over their tombs and their relics and icon were an abundant source of healing for the sick.



*Sainted Unmercenaries and Wonder Workers, regard our infirmities; freely you have received, freely share with us.*

Apolytikion of Saints Cosmos & Damian

Just as if a man were bound hand and foot with chains, and someone came and loosed his bands, and let him walk free without interference, so the Lord looses from its bonds the soul that is bound with the chains of death, and lets it go, and sets the mind free to walk at ease and unhindered into God's air.

Suppose a man were in the middle of a river in full flood, and overwhelmed by the water lay lifeless, drowned, with dreadful monsters all round him.

If another man, who is not used to swimming, should wish to save the one who fell in, he too is lost, and is drowned with him. Clearly there is need of a skilled swimmer, an expert, to go out into the depth of the water of the gulf, and dive, and bring up the drowned man there among the monsters.

The water itself, when it sees a man skilled and knowing how to navigate it, helps such a man, and bears him up to the surface.

The soul, in the same way, has been plunged and drowned in the abyss of darkness and the deep of death, and is dead and parted from God among dreadful monsters; and who is able to go down into those secret chambers and the depths of hell and death, except that expert Workman who fashioned the body?

In His own person He enters into two quarters, into the depth of hell, and into the deep gulf of the heart, where the soul with its thoughts is held fast by death, and brings up out of the darksome hole the Adam that lay dead.

Saint Macarius the Great