



On Friday we commemorate the **Holy Unmercenarys, Saints Cosmas and Damian**. These two brothers lived in the 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.

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

**Monday:** Luke 1:39-49, 56; Hebrews 9:1-7; Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28  
Holy Protection of the Theotokos; Martyrs Terence & Eunice

**Tuesday:** Philippians 1:8-14; Luke 11:34-41  
Martyr Anastasia; Abramius the Recluse

**Wednesday:** Philippians 1:12-20; Luke 11:42-46  
Cleopas & Artemas of the 70; Martyrs Zenobius & Zenobia

**Thursday:** Philippians 1:20-27; Luke 11:47-54; 12:1  
Stachus & Companions of the 70; Epimachus of Alexandria

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

**Saturday:** 1 Corinthians 15:58; 16:1-3; Luke 9:1-6  
Martyr Acindynus & Companions

**Sunday 27 October 2013 is the  
Seventh Sunday of Luke**

**Matins Gospel:** John 20:1-10

**Epistle:** 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

**Gospel:** Luke 8:41-56

#### **Resurrectional Apolytikion:**

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, and while soldiers were guarding your most pure Body, you rose, O Saviour, on the third day, giving life to the world. Therefore the heavenly Powers cried out to you, Giver of life: Glory to your Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to your Kingdom! Glory to your dispensation, only lover of humankind!

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Archbishopric of Good Hope,  
Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa

# *Evangelion*

*A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith*

27 October 2013

## **The Power of God**

Today Saint Luke recounts two remarkable miracles that Jesus Christ worked. We hear how Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came looking for Jesus, begging Him to come to his house to heal his daughter who was dying. But before they could reach his house Jesus was approached by a woman with a flow of blood who touched the fringe of His cloak and was healed. No sooner had this happened, than Jairus received a message that his daughter had died. Undeterred, Jesus proceeded to the house, took the child by the hand, and raised her to life.

The raising to life of Jairus' daughter is a dramatic event that is intended to show us that Jesus Christ has authority even over death. As the author of life, He has power over life and death, and here we see Him anticipating His own victory over death in order to show that death has no more power over us. Instead, it has become like sleeping.

This account of the girl being raised from death is interrupted by the healing of the woman with a flow of blood. This is an important event of healing in itself, for this woman had been suffering from an ailment that made her ritually unclean according to Jewish law. At her wits ends, she dared to reach out to Christ and touch the fringe of His cloak and was instantly healed. And, significantly, we are told that Jesus Christ knew that power had gone out of Him. This was His own power and the Fathers tell us that only God could heal through His own power. In healing this woman, He revealed His divinity. Jesus Christ does not heal through anyone else's power, but through who He is. Likewise, he raises the dead because He is Himself the conqueror of death.



He took on a human body so that humanity might be able to attain to divinity, and He revealed His divinity so that His humanity might not be trampled underfoot.

Saint Ephrem the Syrian

# A Mercy of Peace, a Sacrifice of Praise

An introduction to the Divine Liturgy (continued)

After the Gospel reading and the dismissal of the catechumens, the focus of the Liturgy shifts. The priest places the Book of the Gospels to the side and unfolds the *eiletan* or the *antimension*, the cloth on which the Holy Gifts are to be placed, marking the beginning of the Liturgy of the Faithful, or the Liturgy of the Holy Gifts. He prays two prayers, asking for God's mercy both for himself and for all who pray with him and for the first time there is reference to the Holy Communion that we are to receive as he prays:

*Again and many times we fall down before you and beseech you, who are good and the lover of mankind, that heeding our prayer you will cleanse our souls and bodies from every defilement of flesh and spirit, and will grant us to stand without guilt or condemnation before your holy altar. Give also to those who pray with us the grace of progress in right living, faith and spiritual understanding. Grant that always worshipping you with fear and love, they may partake of your holy Mysteries without guilt or condemnation, and be counted worthy of your heavenly kingdom.*



## The offering of ourselves

Orthodox Christians believe that the bread and wine that are offered on the altar will truly become the Body and Blood of Christ. For this reason, we pray that we may approach them "with fear and love" and that, in approaching them we may not be condemned.

However, even before the Holy Gifts are consecrated and become the Body and Blood of Christ, we still treat them with great reverence, for they carry a great symbolic significance. In offering bread and wine to God, we are really offering Him ourselves – our very being and the whole of our lives.

Human beings have offered sacrifices to various gods since the beginning of time. However, with the coming of Jesus Christ, this act of offering has taken on a new meaning. In offering Himself to God for the sin of the whole world, Jesus Christ has become the fulfilment of all sacrifice. He is the Lamb of God who offers Himself to the Father and it is only in Him that we can offer anything to God. He is the One who, as the priest will pray, "offers and is offered, who receives and is distributed, Christ our God."

The Gifts of bread and wine which we are about to offer represent Christ whom we are offering to the Father for all people and for the entire world. But as we offer them, we are called to identify ourselves with them, for they also represent our lives and our struggles as we profess our willingness to give ourselves to God together with Christ.

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

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

## Tomorrow we celebrate the feast of the Protection of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

This feast was established following a vision of Saint Andrew, the Fool for Christ. On 1 October 911 he was standing at the back of the Blachernae Church of the Mother of God in Constantinople during an all-night vigil, together with his disciple Epiphanius. At around four in the morning, the Holy Theotokos appeared above the people, watching over the congregation as she covered the faithful with her veil.

Turning to Epiphanius, Saint Andrew asked: "Do you see how the Queen and Lady of all is praying for the whole world?" Epiphanius replied "Yes, Father, I see it and stand in dread." As a result of this vision, the Church began to commemorate this feast on 1 October. However, in 1960 the Greek Church transferred it to 28 October in order to commemorate the protection which the Mother of God granted to the Greek forces on the Albanian front who withstood the Italian invasion in 1940.

This feast reminds us that the Holy

Theotokos has a special role in protecting and caring for us. In giving birth to the Son of God, she stands in a unique relationship to Jesus Christ and, through this, is also tenderly concerned for all members of the Church, especially those most in need of her motherly protection.



*O Virgin, we extol the great grace of thy Protection, which thou didst spread out like a bright cloud beyond all understanding; for thou dost invisibly protect thy people from the foe's every assault. Since we have thee as our shelter and certain help, we cry to thee with our whole soul: Glory to thy great deeds, O most pure Maid. Glory to thy shelter most divine. Glory to thy care and providence for us, O spotless one.*

Apolytikion for the feast