



25th Sunday After Pentecost

St. John Chrysostom

13 / 26 November

Resurrection Tropar, Tone 8: Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One! / Thou didst endure the three-day burial / to free us from our sufferings! / O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee.

Troparion of St John Chrysostom tone 8: Grace like a flame shining forth from thy mouth has illumined the universe,/ and disclosed to the world treasures of poverty and shown us the height of humility./ And as by thine own words thou teachest us, Father John Chrysostom,/ so intercede with the Word, Christ our God,

to save our souls.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 8: By rising from the tomb Thou didst raise the dead and resurrect Adam/ Eve exults in Thy Resurrection, / and the world celebrates Thy rising from the dead, O Greatly Merciful One.

Kontakion of St John Chrysostom tone 2: Thou hast received divine grace from heaven,/ and with thy lips thou dost teach all men to adore the one God in Three Persons./ O John Chrysostom, most blessed Saint, we rightly praise thee;/ for thou art our teacher, revealing things divine

Matins Gospel III

EPISTLE: Ephesians 4:1-6

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, With all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism; One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

I BESEECH YOU TO HAVE A WALK WORTHY OF THE CALLING WITH WHICH YOU WERE CALLED

Great has the power of Paul's chain been shown to be, and more glorious than miracles. It is not in vain then, as it would seem, nor without an object, that he here holds it forward ...It is not merely being a prisoner that is honourable, but being so for Christ's sake ...Nothing is equal to this ...But what is this calling? You were called as His body, it is said...You have Christ as your head; and though you were 'enemies,' and had committed misdeed out of number, yet 'He has raised you up with Him and made you sit with Him' (Eph. 2:6) ...But how is it possible to 'walk worthily' of it? 'With all lowliness.' Such a one walks worthily. This is the basis of all virtue. If you are lowly, and realise what you are, and how you were saved, and will take this recollection as a motive to all virtue ...The lowly-minded man is able to be at once generous and a grateful servant. 'For what do you have,' he says, 'that you did not receive?' (I Cor.4:7) ...Even in your good deeds be lowly; for hear what Christ says, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit' (Matt.5:3), and He places this in first order ...How is it possible to forbear, if a man is passionate or censorious? ...If you, he would say, are not forbearing to your neighbour, how shall God be forbearing to you? ...Wherever there is love all things are to be borne ...

THERE IS ONE BODY AND ONE SPIRIT

The love which Paul requires of us is no common love, but that which cements us together, and makes us cleave inseparably to one another, and effects as great and as perfect a union as though it were between limb and limb. For this is that love which produces great and glorious fruits. Hence he says, there is 'one body;' one, both by sympathy, and by not opposing the good of others, and by sharing their joy, having expressed all at once by this figure. He then beautifully adds, 'and one Spirit,' showing that from the one body there will be one Spirit ...God has called you all on the same terms. He has bestowed nothing upon one more than upon another. To all He has freely given immortality, to all eternal life, to all immortal glory, to all brotherhood, to all inheritance. He is the common Head of all; 'He has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Jesus Christ' (Eph. 2:6). You then, who in the spiritual world have such great equality of privileges, how is it that you are high-minded?

St. John Chrysostom. Homilies IX, X, XI on Ephesians IV. B#57, pp. 94, 96, 97, 99, 102.

for the Hierarch: Heb. 7:26-8:2

THE GOSPEL: St Luke 10:25-37

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbour as yourself.'" And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think was neighbour to him who fell among the thieves?" And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

The parable of the Good Samaritan is a classic tale that teaches us how we may each put the Great Commandments to love God and to love our neighbor into practice. However, as with almost everything in the Gospel, this parable is rich with layers of meaning, revealing to us the fullness of the God/man Jesus Christ. In this parable, not only do we see a lesson about how we should act towards others but also we see how God has acted towards us. This parable expresses the whole plan of our salvation from beginning to end.

Blessed Theophylact, in his commentary upon the Gospel, states that "it was our human nature that was going down from Jerusalem, that is, was descending from tranquility and peace, for Jerusalem means 'vision of peace'. Where was man descending? To Jericho, a place sunk down low and suffocating with heat, that is to a life of passions. See that He did not say, 'went down', but, 'was going down,' For fallen human nature is always inclined downwards, not just once of old, but continuously going down towards passionate life. And man 'fell among thieves,' that is, among demons...who strip the man, depriving him of his raiment of virtue, and then inflict the wounds of sin. They strip us of every good thought and of God's protection and when we are thus naked, they lay on the stripes of sin. They leave human nature 'half dead.'" Here we see the whole problem, the reason that we require God to save us for we are "half dead" - we are an immortal soul joined to a mortal body. We are "stuck" as it were, unable to ascend to the Kingdom of God, and yet not quite lost completely. How then can we be saved, how then can this situation be resolved?

This question is the whole reason we are here; the whole point of our faith is that it provides a means of healing, a way back to the Kingdom of God. Men do, in fact, seek spiritual healing in many ways, but it is Jesus Christ, in the person of the Samaritan, who comes to us and is able to help us. The priest and the Levite who came by and saw the injured man represent the law and the prophets who desired to make human nature righteous, but were unable to do so. They were defeated by the severity of the wounds of sin and they were compelled to "pass by". The law was given to man by God not as a means to heal sin, but rather as a safety measure to prevent man from falling into further injury from sin. God knew that He would Himself come to heal men, but as the time had not yet come, He gave the law to His people to help them avoid further injury from sin - but it did not heal them, it only stabilized the situation so that things might not deteriorate further.

Finally though, the Samaritan comes to the fallen man - that is Jesus Christ comes to heal our soul. Note that it is said that the Samaritan did not come upon this man by chance, but as the parable says, he "journeyed and came to him". Jesus Christ came into this world to find us and to bring us healing. Out of His great love for us, He "came to us and had compassion upon us". It is only Jesus Christ who has the power to treat the wounds of sin and to begin to heal them. He first binds our wounds with oil and wine. In binding our wounds, He restrained the power of sin no longer permitting it to operate in us freely. In binding our wounds, He "poured on oil and wine". Oil, when applied to a wound serves to soothe it and wine is an astringent which destroys the infection which might otherwise set in. We can understand the oil as the grace of God, which He pours out upon our soul. It soothes the irritation of sin by the promise

of healing and blessings. Not only this, but it is also by the power and action of the grace of God in us that the healing is effected and we begin to be transformed into the likeness of Christ. The wine is the forgiveness of sin which comes through repentance. It cleanses the soul from the corruption which sin introduces. The wine, when poured on a wound is at first sharp, stinging and unpleasant. So with repentance which at first stings the soul and is unpleasant as we humble ourselves, confessing our sins. But this stinging is only temporary for once the wound is cleansed by forgiveness, it subsides and the healing can continue unimpeded by the infection of corruption.

We can also see in the oil and wine the images of the sacraments. The wounds of sin are washed first by baptism and then the oil of chrism is applied, sealing the soul with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Then we receive in the sacrament of Holy Communion, the most holy Body and most precious Blood of Christ. In these sacraments we see the binding of the wound by baptism and pouring on the oil and wine by the application of Chrism and the reception of the Eucharist. We receive these gifts of the sacraments from the font of the Church which leads us to the next part of the parable.

Jesus Christ does not stop with this simple "first aid", bandaging the wound and pouring on oil and wine. He knows that the wounds of sin are deep and require ongoing care. Thus the parable tells us that the Samaritan picked up the wounded man and placed him on his own beast of burden and took him to an inn where he cared for him further. Then, even though it was necessary that he himself move on, he gave the wounded man into the care of the innkeeper providing all that was necessary for his care and promising to return again to complete the care of the wounded man. The "beast of burden" is the body of the Lord. In receiving us, He places us on His own "beast of burden, that is, His own Body. We are made members of the Body of Christ. And then He brings us to an inn where He cares for us and gives us into the care of others while He is away. This inn is the Church and the innkeeper represents those who are given the responsibility in the Church for the care of the souls therein - that is the bishops and priests and deacons.

When He comes to us and begins to heal us and treat our wounds, our Lord does not leave us alone but brings us into the Church that we might not be left alone. The Church in its essence is not a religious organization, but rather it is a spiritual hospital whose purpose is the care and healing of the souls wounded by sin. For this, Jesus Christ has supplied the Church with all that is necessary to the task. He has given to the Church the sacraments by which His transforming grace is poured out upon us. He has also given to the Church the Scripture, the written Word of God by which she is continually guided in her task. In the Church there is also the Holy Tradition which is the means of treatment and therapy by which the wounds of sin continue to heal, further injury is prevented and by which we become strong in the faith so that we might not again fall under the power of the "robbers": sin and the demons.

Having placed us in the hospital of the Church, Jesus has not left us alone, but has placed us in the company of our fellow strugglers, of those other souls wounded by sins who are seeking, as are we, to be healed and to return to the Kingdom of God. Nor has He abandoned us, but has ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us and has promised that He will return to us and will take us with Himself into His heavenly kingdom.

In this parable of the Good Samaritan, we can see how it is that we must work out in our own lives the love of God and neighbour. But we also see the love of God for us expressed in His incarnation and in bringing us to salvation. We see that He cleanses and binds the wounds of sin that leave us "half dead" and He gives us His grace and forgiveness to begin the healing of our wounds. He then adopts us into His own Body and places us into the Church where we receive all that is necessary for our recovery and spiritual health. He has promised, as well, to return to receive us into His heavenly Kingdom that we might live with Him throughout eternity.

Archpriest David Moser
<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/propoved/info>

for the Hierarchy: John 10:9-16

Saints of the week

13 / 26 November - St John Chrysostom - the Golden-Tongued - He was born in Antioch in the year 347, his father's name being Secundus and his mother's Anthusa. Studying Greek philosophy, John became disgusted with Hellenic paganism and turned to the Christian faith as the one and all-embracing truth. John was baptised by Meletius, Patriarch of Antioch, and, after that, his parents were also baptised. After their death, John became a monk and began to live in strict asceticism. He wrote a book: 'On the Priesthood', after which the holy Apostles John and Peter appeared to him, prophesying for him

great service, great grace and also great suffering. When the time came for him to be ordained priest, an angel of God appeared at the same time to Patriarch Flavian (Meletius's successor) and to John himself. When the Patriarch ordained him, a shining white dove was seen above John's head. Renowned for his wisdom, his asceticism and the power of his words, John was, at the desire of Emperor Arcadius, chosen as Patriarch of Constantinople. He governed the Church for six years as Patriarch with unequalled zeal and wisdom, sending missionaries to the pagan Celts and Scythians and purging the Church of simony, deposing many bishops who were given to this vice. He extended the Church's charitable works, wrote a rite for the Holy Liturgy, put heretics to shame, denounced the Empress Eudoxia, interpreted the Scriptures with his golden mind and tongue and left to the Church many precious books of sermons. The people glorified him; the jealous loathed him; the Empress twice had him sent into exile. He spent three years in exile, and died on Holy Cross Day, September 14th, 407, in a place called Comana in Armenia. The holy Apostles John and Peter again appeared to him at the time of his death, and also the holy martyr Basiliscus (see May 22nd), in whose church he received Communion for the last time. 'Glory to God for everything!' were his last words, and with them the soul of Chrysostom the Patriarch entered into Paradise. Of his relics, the head is preserved in the Church of the Dormition in Moscow, and the body in the Vatican in Rome.

Tropar to St. John Chrysostom, Tone 8: Grace shining forth from thy mouth like a beacon hath illumined the universe, and disclosed to the world treasures of uncovetousness, and shown us the heights of humility; but while instructing by thy words, O Father John Chrysostom, intercede with the Word, Christ our God, to save our souls.

Kondak for St. John Chrysostom, Tone 6: From the heavens hast thou received divine grace and by thy lips thou dost teach all to worship the One God in Trinity, O John Chrysostom, all-blessed righteous one. Rightly do we acclaim thee, for thou art a teacher revealing things divine. The Holy Martyrs Antoninus, Nicephorus, Herman and Manetha; Our Holy Father, the Martyr Damascene; St. Quintianus & St. Euprasius, bishops of Clermont, Gaul.

14 / 27 November - The Holy Apostle Philip - He was born in Bethsaida near the Sea of Galilee, as were Peter and Andrew. Instructed in the Holy Scriptures from his youth, Philip immediately responded to the call of Christ and followed Him (John 1:43). After the descent of the Holy Spirit, Philip preached the Gospel with zeal in many regions of Asia and in Greece, where the Jews sought to kill him but the Lord saved him by the might of His wonders. The Jewish leaders, whose aim it was to kill Philip, were suddenly blinded, and found themselves in total darkness. There was a great earthquake, and the earth opened and swallowed up Philip's wicked persecutors. Many other wonders were wrought, especially the healing of the sick, by which many of the pagans came to faith in Christ. In the Phrygian town of Hierapolis, St Philip worked for the Gospel with John the Theologian, his own sister Mariamna and the Apostle Bartholomew. There was in that place a dangerous snake, which the pagans fed with care and worshipped as a god. God's Apostle destroyed the snake with prayer as though with a spear. This called forth the fury of the benighted people, and the wicked pagans seized Philip and crucified him upside-down on a tree, and then crucified Bartholomew also. At this, the earth opened and swallowed up the judge and many others with him. The terrified people ran to take the crucified apostles down, but they succeeded only in taking Bartholomew down alive; Philip had already breathed his last. Bartholomew made Stachys bishop for those baptised in the city. Stachys had been cured of blindness and baptised by Philip, having been blind for forty years. St Philip's relics were later taken to Rome. This wonderful Apostle suffered in the year 86, in the time of the Emperor Domitian; St Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Salonica; St Justinian, Emperor of Byzantium;

St Dyfrig, bishop in Hereford & Gwent, hermit of Bardsey Island (c.550).- St. Dyfrig was the son of the unmarried Princess Efrddyl, daughter of King Peibio Clafrog (the Leprous) of Ergyng. The King was furious when he discovered his daughter was pregnant, some say and he tried to destroy her by casting her into the River. He failed and Dyfrig was born at Chilstone (Child's Stone) in the parish of Madley (Herefords), traditionally in the mid-6th century. When the baby Dyfrig kissed his grandfather, he cured him of his leprosy and the King Peibio quickly grew to love him. He gave him the whole area around Madley called Ynys Efrddyl. Here, Dyfrig, who had grown up a Christian, founded a monastery at Hennllann (Hentland) where he entered the religious life. After seven years, he founded a second establishment at Moccas and, at these two places, he became the tutor of many saints: Teilo, Samson, Ufelfyw, Merchwyn, Elwredd, Gwnwyn, Cynwal, Arthfoddw, Cynnwr, Arwystl, Inabwy, Cynfran, Gwrfan, Elhaern, Iddneu, Gwrddogwy, Gwernabwy, Ieuan, Aeddau and Cynfarch amongst them. Dyfrig became Bishop of Ergyng, probably from Caer-Ergyng (Weston-under-Penyard) and then Bishop of the whole of Glywysing & Gwent. Later, he was supposedly, raised to be Archbishop of Wales by St. Germanus, with his base at Caerleon. In this capacity, he is said have consecrated St. Deiniol as Bishop of Bangor Fawr and to have crowned the High-King Arthur at Caer Vudi (variously thought to be Silchester or Woodchester). Dyfrig was a great friend of St. Illtud and supported him in the foundation of Llanilltud Fawr Abbey (Llantwit Major) which he often visited. He would always spend lent on Ynys Byr (Caldy Island) nearby and consecrated St. Samson as Bishop of Dol there in AD 521. He also liked to call upon St. Cadog at Llancarfan and had a small cell built a mile away where the Fynnon Ddyfrig still survives. In AD 545, Archbishop Dyfrig attended the Synod of Llandewi Brefi in order to condemn the Pelagian

Heresy and, with St. Deiniol, persuaded St. Dewi to also attend. The latter spoke so eloquently that Dyfrig resigned his Archiepiscopate in Dewi's favour. Dewi moved the Archiepiscopal See to Mynyw (St. Davids) while Dyfrig retired to the Abbey on Ynys Enlli (Bardsey). He was not there long before he died (on 14th November) and was buried within the monastic confines. His body was later translated to Llandaff Cathedral, in 1120, where his shrine can still be seen today. St. Dyfrig is amongst the most important of early Welsh saints, despite the fact that the area in which he was active is now part of the English county of Herefordshire.

‡ **Scripture Readings - John 21:15-25 (Matins Gospel); 1 Timothy 1:1-7; Luke 14:12-15; 1 Corinthians 4:9-16 (Apostle); John 1:43-51 (Apostle) ‡**

15 / 28 November - Beginning of Nativity Fast - Repose of St. Herman, wonderworker of Alaska;

The Holy Martyrs Gurias, Samonas and Abibus - Gurias and Samonas were eminent citizens of Edessa. At the time of a persecution of Christians, they hid outside the city and lived in fasting and prayer, giving courage to the faithful who came to them for counsel. They were seized and taken before the judge, who threatened them with death if they refused to observe the imperial decree on the worship of idols. Christ's holy martyrs replied: 'If we observe the imperial decree, we shall be lost even if you do not kill us.' They were thrown into prison after harsh torture, and were there confined from August 1st to November 10th, enduring hunger, darkness and great hardship. They were then brought out again and tortured afresh, and, as they remained steadfast in the Christian faith, were condemned to death and beheaded with the sword in the year 322, under the wicked Emperor Licinius (who ruled the eastern half of the Empire until 324). Later Abibus, a deacon in Edessa, was tortured for Christ his Lord and, in the flames, gave his spirit into God's hands. His mother took his unharmed body from the fire and buried it together with those of Gurias and Samonas. When the persecution had ended, Christians built a church in honour of these three martyrs, and placed their wonderworking relics in one coffin. Of the manifold miracles of these wonderful saints of God, one is specially remembered: A widow in Edessa had a young daughter, who was to marry a Goth serving in the Greek army. As the mother was concerned at the thought of sending her daughter to a distant land, the Goth swore over the grave of the martyrs that he would do no ill to the girl, but take her as his legal wife. He was, though, in fact, already married. When he took the girl back to his own land, he treated her, not as his wife, but as a slave, until his lawful wife died. He then agreed with his kinsman that he should bury his living slave along with his dead wife. The slave implored the holy martyrs with tears to save her, and they appeared to her in the grave, took hold of her and, in an instant, carried her from the land of the Goths to Edessa, to their church. On the following day, when the church was opened, the girl was found by the tomb of the saints, and the story of her miraculous deliverance was heard. The Holy Martyrs Elpidius, Marcellus and Eustochius; The Feast of the Icon of the Mother of God of Kupyatich;

Venerable Father Paisius Velichkovsky - He was born in Ukraine in 1722, one of the many children of a priest. He attended the Ecclesiastical Academy in Kiev, but was disappointed by the worldliness, love of ease and western theological climate that he found there. After four years he left the school and embarked on a search for a spiritual father and a monastery where he could live in poverty. He eventually found wise spiritual guides in Romania, where many of the Russian monks had fled after Peter the Great's reforms. From there he traveled to the Holy Mountain. Spiritual life was at a low ebb there also, and Plato (the name he had been given as a novice) became a hermit, devoting his days to prayer and reading the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers. After four years, a visiting Elder from Romania tonsured him a monk under the name Paisius, and advised him to live with other monks to avoid the spiritual dangers of taking up the solitary life too soon. A few brethren from Romania arrived, seeking to make him their spiritual father, but as he felt unworthy to take on this task, all of them lived in poverty and mutual obedience. Others joined them from Romania and the Slavic countries, and in time they took up the cenobitic life, with Paisius as their reluctant abbot. In 1763 the entire community (grown to sixty-five in number) left the Holy Mountain and returned to Romania. They were given a monastery where they adopted the Athonite rule of life. Abbot Paisius introduced the Jesus Prayer and other aspects of hesychasm to the monastic life there: before this time, they had been used mostly by hermits. The services of the Church were conducted fully, with the choirs chanting alternately in Slavonic and Romanian. The monks confessed to their Elder every evening so as not to let the sun go down on their anger, and a brother who held a grudge against another was forbidden to enter the church, or even to say the Lord's Prayer, until he had settled it. The monastic brotherhood eventually grew to more than a thousand, divided into two monasteries. Visitors and pilgrims came from Russia, Greece and other lands to experience its holy example. St Paisius had learned Greek while on Mt Athos, and undertook to produce accurate Slavonic translations of the writings of many of the Fathers of the Church. The Greek Philokalia had been published not long before, and St Paisius produced a Slavonic version that was read throughout the Slavic Orthodox world. (This is the Philokalia that the pilgrim carries with him in The Way of a Pilgrim). The Saint reposed in peace in 1794, one year after the publication of his Slavonic Philokalia. The Synaxarion summarizes his influence: "These translations, and the influence of the Saint through the activity of his disciples in Russia, led to a widespread spiritual renewal, and to the restoration of traditional monastic life there which lasted until the Revolution of 1917."

St. Maughold, apostle to the Isle of Man (d.488) - an Irish prince and reputedly a captain of robbers who was converted by Patrick. Upon his conversion, he became a new man by putting on the spirit of Christ. One version of the legend says that Patrick told him to put to sea in a coracle without oars as a penance for his evil deeds. Another says that he set sail in order to avoid the temptations of the world. In both stories, he retired to the Isle of Man (Eubonia) off the coast of Lancashire, England. Earlier Patrick had sent his nephew, Saint Germanus, as bishop to plant the Church on the island. Germanus was succeeded by Saints Romulus and Conindrus during whose time Maughold arrived on the island and began to live an austere, penitential life in the mountainous area now named after him Saint Maughold. After their deaths, Maughold was unanimously chosen as bishop by the Monks. In one of the 18 parish churchyards on the island can be found Saint Maughold's well. The very clear water of the well is received in a large stone coffin. Those seeking cures of various ailments, particularly poisoning, are seated in the saint's chair just above the well and given a glass of well-water to drink. Maughold's shrine was here until the relics were scattered during the Reformation. Maughold, commemorated in both the British and Irish calendars, is described in the Martyrology of Oengus as "a rod of gold, a vast ingot, the great bishop MacCaille." Many topological features on the Isle of Man, which he divided into 25 parishes, bear Maughold's name.

‡ **Scripture Readings - 1 Timothy 1:8-14; Luke 14:25-35 ‡**

16 / 29 November - Nativity Fast - The Holy Apostle Matthew the Evangelist - the son of Alphaeus was at first a tax-collector, and it was as such that the Lord saw him in Capernaum and said to him: 'Follow Me!' Leaving everything, he followed Him (Matt. 9:9). After that, Matthew prepared a feast in his house, and there provided an opportunity for the Lord to voice some great truths about His coming to earth. After receiving the Holy Spirit, Matthew preached the Gospel among the Parthians and Medes and in Ethiopia, the land of the negroes. In Ethiopia, he consecrated as bishop one Plato, a follower of his, and himself withdrew to prayerful solitude on a mountain, where the Lord appeared to him. Matthew baptised the wife and son of the prince of that land, at which the prince was greatly enraged and sent a guard to bring Matthew before him for trial. The soldiers went off, but returned to the prince, saying that they had heard Matthew's voice, but had been unable to set eyes on him. The prince then sent a second guard. When this guard drew near to the Apostle, he shone with a heavenly radiance so brilliant that the soldiers were unable to look at him, but threw down their weapons in terror and returned home. The prince then went himself. When he approached Matthew, such radiance shone forth from the saint that the prince was blinded on the instant. But the Apostle had a kind heart: he prayed to God and the prince's sight was restored—unfortunately, only on the physical plane, his spiritual eyes remaining closed. He seized St Matthew and put him to harsh torture, twice lighting a fire on his chest, but the power of God kept him alive and unharmed. Then the Apostle prayed to God, and gave his spirit into His hands. The prince commanded that the martyr's body be put into a leaden coffin and cast into the sea. The saint appeared to Bishop Plato and told him where to find his body in its coffin, and the bishop went and brought them back. Seeing this new marvel, the prince was baptised and received the name Matthew. He then set aside all earthly vanity and became a priest, serving the Church in a manner pleasing to God. When Plato died, the Apostle Matthew appeared to this Matthew and counselled him to accept the episcopate. So he became a bishop, and was a good shepherd for many years, until God took him to His immortal Kingdom. St Matthew the Apostle wrote his Gospel in Aramaic, and it was very soon translated into Greek. It has come down to us in Greek, the Aramaic original being lost. Of this Evangelist, it is said that he never ate meat, but fed only on vegetables and fruit; Our Holy Father Sergius of Malopinega.

‡ **Scripture Readings - John 21: 15-25 (Matins Gospel); 1 Timothy 1:18-20, 2:8-15; Luke 15:1-10; 1 Corinthians 4:9-16 (Apostle); Matthew 9:9-13 (Apostle) ‡**

17 / 30 November — Nativity Fast — St Gregory the Wonder-worker, Bishop of Neocaesarea - Here is a man of God and a mighty wonderworker, who was called a second Moses! Born of wealthy and eminent pagan parents, Gregory at first studied Hellenic and Egyptian philosophy, but, seeing its barrenness and insufficiency, he turned to Christian teachers, particularly Origen of Alexandria, with whom he studied for several years and by whom he was baptised. Pure in soul and body, he desired to consecrate himself utterly to Christ, to which end he withdrew to the desert, where, in painful asceticism, he spent many years. His fame spread abroad everywhere, and Phaedimus, the bishop of Amasea, wanted to make him Bishop of Caesarea. The discerning Gregory was warned of Phaedimus's intention, and hid in the wilderness from those sent to find him, so that they failed in their quest. Finally, Phaedimus consecrated him by devious means, and Gregory had to accept the work of a shepherd. The most holy Mother of God appeared to him, together with St John the Theologian, and, at her command, St John gave him the Creed that is known by Gregory's name. (The Nicene Creed, that Gregory was instrumental in establishing at the Second Ecumenical Council in 381). Who can enumerate the miracles of this second Moses? He commanded evil spirits, commanded mountains and waters, healed every sort of pain and ill, became invisible to his persecutors and had insight into both distant events and men's thoughts. He finished his earthly course in the year 270, in great old age. When he arrived in Caesarea as

bishop, the whole town was composed of pagans, with just seventeen Christians. When he departed this life, the whole town was Christian, with just seventeen pagans. He therefore received a wreath of glory from his Lord in the heavenly Kingdom. Our Holy Father Nihon of Radonezh' Our Holy Father Gennadius of Vatopedi;

St. Hilda, abs & eldress, who convened the Council of Whitby and adopted the orthodox Pascha.- Daughter of Hereric. Sister of Saint Hereswitha. Grand-niece of King Saint Edwin. Baptized in 627 at age thirteen by Saint Paulinus of York. Lived as a lay woman until age 33 when she became a Benedictine nun at the monastery of Chelles in France. Abbess at Hartepool, Northumberland, England. Abbess of the double monastery of Whitby, Streaneshalch. Abbess to Saint Wilfrid of York, Saint John of Beverley, and three other bishops. Patroness and supporter of learning and culture, including patronage of the poet Caedmon. Hilda and her houses followed the Celtic liturgy and rule, but many houses had adopted the continental Benedictine rule, and the Roman liturgy. Hilda convened a conference in 664 to help settle one a single rule. When the conference settled on the Roman and Benedictine, they were adopted throughout England, and Hilda insured the observance of her houses. Born 614 at Northumbria, England Died 680 of natural causes Representation - holding Whitby abbey in her hands with a crown on her head or at her feet; turning serpents into stone; stopping wild birds from stealing a corn crop; being carried to heaven by the angels

‡ **Scripture Readings - 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Luke 16:1-9 ‡**

18 November / 1 December — Nativity Fast - The Holy Martyr Platon — From the town of Ancyra in Galatia, he was born and brought up a Christian. Even in his youth, he showed great perfection in every virtue. Platon did not conceal his faith in Christ the Lord, but preached it openly, denouncing idolaters for their bowing down to dead creatures in place of the living Creator. For this, he was brought before the governor, Agrippinus, for trial, and was harshly tortured by him. When the governor began to urge him to escape death and save his life by worshipping idols, Platon replied: 'There are two deaths: the temporal and the eternal; and there are two lives: the one transitory and the other without end.' Then Agrippinus put him to harsher torture. Among other tortures, he commanded that red-hot cannon balls be placed on his naked body, and that his flesh be cut into strips. 'Torture me more harshly', cried the martyr to the torturers, 'that your inhumanity and my endurance may be the more clearly seen. 'When the torturer spoke to the martyr about the philosopher Platon, saying that he was a pagan philosopher, he replied: 'I am not like Platon, nor he like me, except in our names. I learn and teach the wisdom that is of Christ, while he teaches the wisdom that is folly before God.' After that, Platon was thrown into prison, where he spent eighteen days without bread or water. When the warders marvelled that Platon could live without food for so long, he said to them: 'You are satiated by food, but I by holy prayer; you rejoice in wine, but I in Christ the true Vine.' He was finally beheaded with the sword in about 266, and received a wreath of eternal glory. The Holy Martyrs Romanus and Barulas; St. Mawes, bishop in Cornwall & Brittany (5th c.).

‡ **Scripture Readings - 1 Timothy 4:4-8, 16; Luke 16:15-18; 17:1-4 ‡**

19 November / 2 December — Nativity Fast (Fish Allowed) - The Holy Prophet Obadiah — Obadiah lived at the court of King Ahab, but, when the king turned away from true worship and bowed down to idols, Obadiah did not follow the king's example, but continued to serve the one, true God. When the wicked Queen Jezebel, because of her feud with Elias, hunted down all the prophets of God, Obadiah took a hundred of them and hid them in two caves, feeding them till the persecution was over (I Kings 18:4). A contemporary of the great Prophet Elias, Obadiah revered him greatly and hearkened to him in all things, being a follower and pupil of his. He lived nine hundred years before Christ, and entered peacefully into rest. The Holy Martyr Barlaam; Our Holy Fathers Barlaam and Joasaph the Heir; The Holy Martyr Heliodorus;

St. Egbert, archbishop of York (766) - He was son of Eata and brother of Eadbert, King of Northumbria. Having received deacon's Orders at Rome he returned to Northumbria and was appointed to the See of York in 732. He received the pallium in 735, thus becoming second Archbishop of York, the title having been lost to that church since the flight of Saint Paulinus to Kent. He was thus placed in a position to carry out many needed reforms in which he proved himself a strict disciplinarian, but was at the same time remarkable for sweetness and gentleness. One of his greatest works was the foundation of the famous School of York and its celebrated library. Alcuin was among his pupils. Eadbert resigned his throne to enter the monastery, and the two men spent their last years in retirement and prayer. Egbert's best known work is a collection of canonical regulations.

St. Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow - Born of a priestly family near Moscow in 1782, he entered seminary at a young age and soon distinguished himself for his piety and his scholarship of ancient languages. He was tonsured a monk, but was made a professor at the seminary in Moscow, where his expositions of the Faith, spoken and written, caused him to be regarded as a Father of the Church in his own time; many called him "the new Chrysostom." In 1817, at the age of thirty-five, he was consecrated

bishop, and in only a few years rose to the rank of Metropolitan of Moscow, the highest office in the Russian Church since Peter the Great abolished the Patriarchate. He remained Metropolitan for the rest of his life. Saint Philaret seemed literally tireless in his labors for the Church: no-one knew when he slept, and his servant, no matter when he came to the Metropolitan's quarters, would always find him working at his desk. He worked to restore moral standards among the clergy, which had fallen into laxity. Whenever he was forced to depose a cleric, he would secretly contribute to the family's needs out of his own resources. Similarly, he used up all of his financial resources in charitable works, always taking care that his donations were kept secret. He funded the building of a large hospice for orphans and children of poor clergy families. St Philaret gave his full support to the fifty-year project of translating the Bible into Russian, and translated several Old Testament books himself, though the project was opposed by the Tsar and by some powerful groups in the Church. He supported the work of the fathers of Optina Monastery to publish translations of the Fathers of the Church; these translations, when they appeared, contributed to a great spiritual awakening in Russia. He reposed in peace in 1867 at the age of eighty-five. The well-loved "Morning Prayer of Philaret of Moscow" which begins "Lord, grant me to greet the coming day in peace..." was brought into Orthodox piety by St Philaret but seems originally to have been written by Francois Fenelon, the French Quietist writer. The prayer also came to be used by the Optina Elders and is sometimes referred to as the "Morning Prayer of the Optina Elders." The prayer appears in several similar versions. O Lord, grant me to greet the coming day in peace. Help me in all things to rely upon Your holy will. In every hour of the day reveal Your will to me. Bless my dealings with all who surround me. Teach me to treat all that comes to me throughout the day with peace of soul, and with the firm conviction that Your will governs all. In all my deeds and words guide my thoughts and feelings. In unforeseen events let me not forget that all are sent by You. Teach me to act firmly and wisely, without embittering or embarrassing others. Give me strength to bear the fatigue of this coming day with all that it will bring. Direct my will, teach me to pray, pray You Yourself in me. Amen.

‡ Scripture Readings - Galatians 3:8-12; Luke 9:57-62 ‡

HYMN OF PRAISE - To the Most-holy Theotokos

O Most-holy Mother of God, Bride of God, Thou wast the Bodily Throne of Christ God, Thou didst bear the King of Glory in thy body, Thou gavest birth to Him Who gavest life to a dead world. By His Blood, His holy Blood, He redeemed the world, Gloriously glorifying Himself and thee, O Virgin. But thy true glory shines in heaven, Where thou sittest on the right hand of Christ Himself. And the rays of thy glory descend to earth, And shine at night on the path of the sojourners. Glory to thee, Mother of God, throughout the ages, The first Temple, the wonderful Temple of the glory of Christ!

REFLECTION

God most often gives victory in battle to the peacemakers. One example of this is the great Emperor Justinian, and another example is the holy King Stefan of Deè< face="AGaramond">ani. Following the death of his father King Milutin, Stefan removed the bandage from his eyes and was joyfully proclaimed as king both by the nobles and by the people. However, Constantine-son of Simonida and Stefan's younger brother on his father's side-raised up an army against Stefan. Stefan then wrote him in the following manner: "You have heard what has happened to me (that is, how I received my sight) by God's providence, that works in all for the good. Shown mercy by God, I have inherited the throne of my parents, to rule over the people in the fear of God and with justice, according to the example of my forefathers. Abandon your undertaking, and come, let us meet with one another; assume the second place in the kingdom as the second son, and do not rise up with foreigners against your fatherland. Our spacious land is sufficient for both you and me. I am not Cain, the slayer of his brother, but a friend of Joseph, the lover of his brethren. In the words of the latter, I say to you: *You intended evil against me but God intended it for good* (Genesis 50:20)." Thus wrote the holy king, but Constantine did not take heed and was defeated in battle by Stefan. Defeated also was Vladislav, Dragutin's son, another pretender to the Serbian throne. However, Michael Shishman, the Bulgarian king, fared worst of all. Stefan wrote to him: "Reflect on the meaning of Christian love, calm your wrath, let there be love between us as there was between our parents. Cease to shed Christian blood. Turn your weapons against the enemies of the name of Christ and not on Christians. Remind yourself of how hard it will be to answer for innocent blood. Know this also, that he who takes what belongs to others loses what is his." Michael scoffed at this letter from the holy king and was utterly defeated at Velbuzd in 1330. "God is with the righteous, not with the mighty."

HOMILY - on the revelation of the wisdom of God to the heavenly powers

...*To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God* (Ephesians 3:10).

Brethren, are the angels all-knowing? They are not; for if they were all-knowing, they would be gods. God is one, brethren, and the angels are God's beautiful servants. The mystery of the Incarnation was not known to the angels before it took place. And all the other mysteries connected with the mystery of the Incarnation were also unknown to the angels until they saw them revealed in the Church. Therefore the Church is a new revelation, even for the holy angels. The Church is a new revelation of the wisdom and power of God

and of His love for man. On the other hand, it is also a new revelation of man's love for God, and man's struggle. Even the angels themselves did not foresee how much God would humble Himself or how much man would be uplifted. This was shown in the Church, and through the Church it was proclaimed to the angels. The Apostle speaks of this to the Ephesians in the words quoted above: *the principalities and powers*-in other words, not even to the chiefs of the angels was everything known beforehand. *The manifold wisdom of God* is that wisdom that was not revealed earlier, and was unknown to the angels and now, in the Church, is shown in countless forms, situations and circumstances.

O my brethren, the two greatest works of God that have been revealed up to now are the creation of the world and the creation of the Church. In both works, brethren, man is the main object of God's love. Let us be thankful with our every breath to the Most-gracious God.

O Gracious God, O Compassionate God, **to Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.**

Words of Wisdom

What then they say- do you not want me to know clearly and believe that God provides for all things? Certainly, I want it and pray for it and desire it exceedingly, but not that you pry and inquire curiously into His providence. If you know and are persuaded, then do not make inquiry. But if you doubt, then ask the earth, the sky, the sun, the moon; ask the various classes of animals, the seeds, the plants, the voiceless fish, the rocks, the mountains, the wooded vales, the hills, the night, and the day.

The providence of God is more evident than the sun and its rays. At every time and in every place you will perceive clear and sufficient reminders, both old and new, of this providence: in the wilderness, in the inhabited land, and in uninhabited places, on land and on the sea, and wherever you go. From every side come voices that are more distinct than our reason-endowed voices and that teach of God's care-to him who is willing to hear.

Therefore, the Prophet made known the extraordinary quality of these voices, saying: There are no tongues nor words in which their voices are not heard (Ps. 18:3). For our language is known only to those who speak the same one and is not known at all to those of another tongue, but the voice of the creation is heard by all the nations throughout the world.

St. John Chrysostom

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