



Gratefulness on the part of the recipient spurs on the giver to bestow gifts larger than before....

The sick one who is acquainted with his sickness is easily to be cured; and he who confesses his pain is near to health.

Many are the pains of the hard heart; and when the sick one resists the physician, his torments will be augmented.

There is no sin which cannot be pardoned except that one which lacks repentance, and there is no gift which is not augmented save that which remains without acknowledgement.

Saint Isaac the Syrian

**Sunday 22 June 2014 is the Second Sunday of Matthew**

**Matins Gospel:** Mark 16:1-8

**Epistle:** Romans 2:10-16

**Gospel:** Matthew 4:18-23

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

**Monday:** Romans 7:1-14; Matthew 9:36-38; 10:1-8  
Martyr Agrippina; Martyr Aristocleus

**Tuesday:** Luke 1:24-25, 57-68, 76, 80; Romans 13:11-14; 14:1-4; Luke 1:1-25, 57-68, 76-80  
Nativity of John the Forerunner; Elizabeth, Mother of the Forerunner

**Wednesday:** Romans 8:2-13; Matthew 10:16-22  
Apodosis of the Forerunner; Prokopios the New Martyr

**Thursday:** Romans 8:22-27; Matthew 10:23-31  
Righteous David; Appearance of the Icon of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos of Tikhvin

**Friday:** Romans 9:6-19; Matthew 10:32-36; 11:1  
Samson the Hospitable; Joanna the Myrrhbearer

**Saturday:** Romans 3:28-31; 4:1-3; Matthew 7:24-29; 8:1-4  
Relics of Unmercenaries Cyril & John; Pappias the Martyr



# ***Evangelion***

***A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith***

22 June 2014

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

## **Follow Me**

Today, on the second Sunday after Pentecost, we begin to hear Gospel readings from Saint Matthew's Gospel that will take us through some of the key incidents in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

In today's Gospel we see how shortly after the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, He calls the first Apostles to follow Him and to participate in His mission. We are not told much about these men, except that they were fishermen. In other words, they were fairly ordinary people, and certainly not from the well-off or educated classes. And yet, we are told that it is these ordinary fishermen who will become co-workers with Christ and that they will in fact become "fishers of men."



We know with hindsight that these humble fishermen were transformed by Christ's teaching, and by the power of His death and resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit, to become great missionaries and, in many cases, martyrs for the faith. Yet at the time, this must have seemed far from obvious.

The call to follow Christ was not only addressed to the Apostles in first century Palestine, but it is addressed to each one of us today. We might feel that we are insignificant or inadequate, yet the history of the Church shows us that God can use ordinary people, if they allow themselves to respond to His call. We are not all called to become wandering preachers, but each of us is called by God. We may not all be asked to leave our fishing nets and families, yet there may be things that we need to be prepared to lay aside, in order to focus our gaze more closely on Jesus Christ.

**Sin makes man a coward;  
but a life in the Truth of Christ makes Him bold.**

Saint John Chrysostom

# A Mercy of Peace, a Sacrifice of Praise

An introduction to the Divine Liturgy (continued)

We saw last week that, when the priest emerges from the altar and holds the Chalice on high, he invites us to receive Holy Communion with the words:

*With fear of God, with faith and love, draw near.*

We saw that faith is the starting point of our life in Christ and needs to be nurtured throughout our lives if we are to be prepared to approach the Holy Gifts. But we also need to approach them with the fear of God and with love.



## Fear of God

Fear of God can be a difficult concept for us to appreciate today, especially if we come from a background that views God as a tyrannical and wrathful judge who seeks only to condemn us. For Orthodox Christians, God is above all the Lover of humankind, who never stops loving us and seeking our salvation. However, the Scriptures and the Fathers do speak of the fear of God, for God's love for us can include things that we may experience as punishment. We cannot tame God to fit into our plans or our ideas of how He should behave. He remains the Lord of heaven and earth and, as such, can inspire fear in those who do not act according to His commandments.

However, there is also another, deeper sort of fear of God – and it is this fear that we seek to nurture. The Fathers teach us that, while we may begin to obey God out of fear of punishment, once we have tasted the goodness of God, we continue to respond to Him not because we fear punishment, but rather out of love for Him and out of awe at who He is and what He has done for us. This leads to another sort of fear of God which is the fear that we should lose this love of God, or that we should do something to offend against it.

In one of the prayers of thanksgiving after receiving Holy Communion we pray: *Establish us in the fear of You.* We ask God for the gift of true fear, that we may become people who are overwhelmed by God's love. In the words of Saint Dorotheus of Gaza:

Such a person possesses true love ... and this perfect love leads him to perfect fear. He fears and keeps God's will, no longer because he fears punishments or to avoid hell, but ... because he has tasted the sweetness of being with God, and he is afraid of losing it and being deprived of that sweetness. So this perfect fear, which arises out of this perfect love, drives out the introductory fear. And for this reason it is said that *perfect love casts out fear*.



When you are about to draw near to this divine and terrible Table in this sacred mystagogy, you should draw near with fear and trembling, with a pure conscience, with fasting and prayer, and without making a noise, without trampling and pushing those around you. Such disorder is a sign of utter madness and contempt for the Holy Mysteries.

Saint John Chrysostom

# The Nativity of Saint John the Forerunner

On Tuesday, the Church commemorates the birth of Saint John the Baptist, the Prophet and Forerunner of the Lord.

We normally commemorate saints by the day of their death (and we also will commemorate his martyrdom on 29 August), so it may seem odd to also commemorate his birth. Indeed, the only other person whose birth we commemorate is that of the Holy Mother of God. And that fact in itself should tell us something, for both St John and the Theotokos are in a sense bridge figures between the Old and the New Testaments, and their births are important because they announce the beginning of something new.

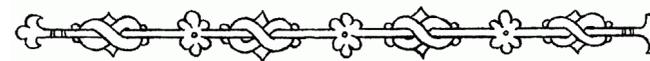
The events of St John's birth are interwoven with St Luke's account of the news of the coming of Jesus Christ. The son who is given to the barren Elizabeth in some ways prefigures the Son who will be born of the Virgin Mary. Yet the Gospel is also very clear on the purpose of this relationship. The Forerunner's sole task is to prepare the way of the Lord. We see this in the events of his birth, and we also see it later in his preaching when he declares about Christ: "He must grow greater; I must grow less." (John 3:30)

Like Saint John, we too are called to prepare the way for the coming of Christ who continually comes to us and seeks to make His home among us. This does not mean drawing attention to ourselves, but should rather mean allowing the Light of Christ to shine through in our lives.



Today the great Forerunner comes from the barren womb of Elizabeth; the great Prophet of Prophets, whom none surpass in greatness. The radiant candlestick of the Light; the voice of the Word...

From Vespers for the Nativity of Saint John the Forerunner



The Kingdom of God has no price tag on it: It is worth as much as you have. For Zacchaeus it was worth half of what he owned, because the other half that he had unjustly pocketed he promised to restore fourfold. For Peter and Andrew it was worth the nets and vessel they had left behind; for the widow it was worth two copper coins; for another it was worth a cup of cold water. So, as we have said, the Kingdom of Heaven is worth as much as you have.

Saint Gregory Dialogos