

To judge sins is the business of one who is sinless, but who is sinless except God? Whoever thinks about the multitude of his own sins in his heart never wants to make the sins of others a topic of conversation. To judge a man who has gone astray is a sign of pride, and God resists the proud. On the other hand, one who every hour prepares himself to give answer for his own sins will not quickly lift up his head to examine the mistakes of others.

Saint Gennadius of Constantinople

If you are remembering evil against someone, then pray for him; and as you remove through prayer the pain of the remembrance of the evil he has done, you will stop the advance of the passion. And when you have attained brotherly love and love for mankind, you will completely cast this passion out of your soul. Then when someone else does evil to you, be affectionate and humble toward him, and treat him kindly, and you will deliver him from this passion.

Saint Maximus the Confessor



**27 September 2015 is the
First Sunday of Luke**

Matins Gospel: Luke 24:36-53

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 6:16-18; 7:1

Gospel: Luke 5:1-11

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

From on high didst Thou descend, O Compassionate One; to burial of three days hast Thou submitted that Thou mightest free us from our passions. O our Life and Resurrection, Lord, 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: 2 Corinthians 4:6-15; Luke 6:17-23
Chariton the Confessor; Alkeisonus of Nicopolis; Prophet Baruch

Tuesday: Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2; Luke 5:12-16
Cyriacus the Anchorite; Martyr Petronius

Wednesday: 1 Corinthians 16:13-24; Matthew 24:42-47
Gregory the Illuminator; Mardonios & Stratonikos the Martyrs

Thursday: Acts 9:10-19; Luke 6:12-19
Holy Protection of the Theotokos; Ananias of the 70

Friday: 1 Timothy 1:12-17; Luke 6:17-23
Martyrs Cyprian and Justina; Martyrs Rusticus & Eleutherius

Saturday: Acts 17:16-34; Luke 5:17-26
Dionysios the Areopagite; John the Chozebite of Caesaria



Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

27 September 2015

Cast Out Your Nets...

Today, on the First Sunday of Luke, we hear Saint Luke's account of the calling of the first disciples. After preaching on the shores of the lake, Jesus Christ approached some fishermen who had been fishing all night but had caught nothing. On hearing this, He challenged them to cast their nets into the deep waters. When they obeyed Him, they caught so many fish that their nets could not contain them.

The call of Christ can often upset our normal ways of looking at things – after all, the fishermen knew that there were no fish around. And yet, when they responded to Christ's initiative new possibilities emerged. Their experience was to prove so overwhelming that it was to reshape their whole lives.

In this incident we see how the disciples came to recognize who Jesus is. From calling Him "Master," a common term of

address for a teacher, the Apostle Peter came to recognize Him as "Lord" as he fell at His knees, saying: "Leave me, Lord; I am a sinful man." He recognized his own sinfulness because he had glimpsed something of Jesus' true identity. And this recognition would reshape his entire life.

Like the Apostle Peter and these first disciples, we too are called to respond to Christ and this may lead to us to entirely unexpected things, for God seeks to use each of us in our own way to carry out His mission in our world.



Just as a little boat holds the dying fish that have been brought up from the deep, so also the vessel of the Church gives life to human beings who have been freed from turmoil. Within itself, I say, the Church gives life to those who were half-dead, as it were.

Saint Maximus of Turin

Ordained to Serve the Church

A series on the meaning of Holy Orders

We have seen the bishop is the overseer of the local Church, providing a focus of unity and linking it to the Church throughout the world. He is assisted by the priests, who are particularly responsible for serving at the altar and administering the sacraments of the Church. However, the bishop and priests are also assisted by deacons.



St Stephen, the first martyr, was one of the first deacons chosen as described in Acts 6. (His martyrdom is described in Acts 6-7).

Dedicated to the Service of God and People

The word deacon means “server” and the word originally referred to those who waited on tables. In the early Church, the task of the deacons was primarily to assist the bishops in providing for the needy and performing charitable works. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read that the Apostles chose the first seven deacons who would be responsible for assisting the needy so that they Apostles could devote themselves to preaching. These deacons were appointed to this task with prayer and the laying on of hands. (Acts 6:1-6)

Just as the New Testament epistles list the qualities required of a bishop, so too they tell us what should be expected of a deacon. The Apostle Paul wrote that:

Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for gain; they must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then if they prove themselves blameless let them serve as deacons. (1 Timothy 3:8-10)

In the second and third centuries, the deacons exercised a prominent ministry in the Church. In a situation in which Christianity was still illegal, and in which the bishops and priests could not be everywhere, they were often responsible for gathering the Christians together for prayer in local houses. And, as the ones responsible for serving those in need, they reminded all Christians of the words of Christ that those who wished to be great should be “the servant of all.” (Mark 9:35)

In later centuries, the role of the deacons lessened in many places. However, deacons continued to provide an important liturgical service, which we shall consider next week.



Everyone should hold the deacon in as great respect as Jesus Christ. For the deacons are fellow ministers or co-ministers in liturgy, in the word, in charity, in administration, and in authority.

Saint Ignatius of Antioch

You may find yourself hampered by someone who sows tares of despondency. He tries to prevent you from climbing to such heights of holiness by discouraging you with various thoughts. For instance, he will tell you that it is impossible for you to be saved and to keep every single one of God’s commandments while you live in this world.

When this happens you should sit down in a solitary place by yourself, collect yourself, concentrate your thoughts and give good counsel to your soul, saying:

Why, my soul, are you dejected, and why do you trouble me? Put your hope in God, for I will give thanks to Him; for my salvation lies not in my actions but in God (cf. Ps. 42:5). Who will be vindicated by actions done according to the law (cf. Gal 2:16)? No living person will be vindicated before God (cf. Ps. 143:2). Yet by virtue of my faith in God I hope that in His ineffable mercy He will give me salvation. Get behind me, Satan (cf. Matt. 16:23). I worship the Lord my God (cf. Matt. 4:10) and serve Him from my youth; for He is able to save me simply through His mercy. Go away from me. The God who created me in His image and likeness will reduce you to impotence.

Saint Symeon the New Theologian



Saint Gregory the Enlightener of Armenia

On Wednesday, we commemorate Saint Gregory the Enlightener of Armenia. He was a nobleman, who was born around 240 and was related to the imperial houses of Persia and Armenia. When these two houses went to war with one another, Gregory, withdrew to Caesarea in Cappadocia, where he heard the Gospel proclaimed and came to faith in Christ. There he also married and had two sons. After his wife's death he returned to his homeland and served in the court of Tiridates, king of Armenia. When the king discovered that Gregory was a Christian, he subjected the Saint to many tortures, finally having him cast into a pit full of mire and poisonous reptiles. But Gregory was miraculously kept alive in the pit for fourteen years, and during this time a widow secretly provided for his needs. King Tiridates, who was still cruelly persecuting the Christians in his land, eventually went mad and became like a wild animal. In a dream, the king's sister was told that her brother would only be restored to sanity when Gregory was freed from the pit. This was done, and Gregory healed and baptised his persecutor. At the king's request, Gregory was made bishop of Armenia. As bishop he brought countless thousands to faith in Christ and is counted as the Enlightener of Armenia. In old age he retired into ascetical life, and reposed in peace in the year 328.

