



This spiritual treasury [of the Holy Gospel] is unassailable; and once it is placed in the treasury of our minds, it becomes immune to any attempt upon it. Unless, that is, we give occasion through our own slothfulness to him who wants to take it from us. For when our enemy, the crafty Devil, sees spiritual treasure amassed, he flies into a fury and gnashes his teeth. He is constantly on the alert to find his chance to take away some of what is stored within us. But there is no opportunity for him other than our own slothfulness. That is why we need to be constantly on the alert, and to repel his assaults.

Saint John Chrysostom

**Sunday 6 October 2013 is the
Third Sunday of Luke**

Matins Gospel: Luke 24:1-12

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 4:6-15

Gospel: Luke 7:11-16

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

Angelic Powers were at your grave,
and those who guarded it became as
dead, and Mary stood by the tomb,
seeking your most pure Body. You
despoiled Hades and emerged
unscathed; You met the Virgin and
granted life. Lord, risen from the
dead, glory to You.

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Readings and saints for this week:

Monday: Galatians 4:28-31; 5:1-10; Luke 7:36-50
Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus; Hieromartyr Polychronus

Tuesday: Galatians 5:11-21; Luke 8:1-3
Righteous Pelagia; Virgin Pelagia

Wednesday: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16; Matthew 9:36-38; 10:1-8
Apostle James, Son of Alphaeus; Andronicus and Athanasia

Thursday: Ephesians 1:1-9; Luke 9:7-11
Martyrs Eulampius & Eulampia; Righteous Theophilus

Friday: Acts 8:26-39; Luke 9:12-18
Philip of the 7 Deacons; Theophanes the Confessor

Saturday: 1 Corinthians 10:23-28; Luke 6:1-10
Simeon the New Theologian; Martyrs Probus, Andronicus, & Tarachus



Archbishopric of Good Hope,
Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa

Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

6 October 2013

The Compassion of Christ

Today we hear Saint Luke's account of the raising of the son of the widow of Nain. The Gospel tells us how, as Jesus was approaching the town, He saw a dead man being carried out, accompanied by his weeping mother. Feeling compassion for her, He approached her, comforted her, and touched the bier, telling the young man to get up. Her son immediately arose and began to talk.

In this Gospel passage, we see how Jesus Christ was sensitive to the suffering of the widow who had lost her only son. We can know something of this empathy for the sufferings of others, but, because of our broken human condition, we easily become overwhelmed by it and shut ourselves off from the suffering of others. We may wish to speak words of comfort but are too often unable to do so. Just as our communion with God is impaired, so too our communion with other people is impaired. We desire to reach out, but feel unable to do so.

Commenting on this passage Saint Cyril of Alexandria tells us that death has brought corruption into the world and that we are all subject to this corruption. However, Jesus Christ "is the Life, and the Life-giver by nature" and is "able again to renew unto incorruption and life." By raising the widow's son, He assures us that He has also prepared for us a resurrection of the dead. But He also shows us that by sharing in His compassion for others, we can begin to share in His victory over death by re-gaining something of the human communion for which we were created.



The Virgin's Son met the widow's son. He became like a sponge for her tears and as life for the death of her son. Death turned about in its den and turned its back on the victorious One.

Saint Ephrem the Syrian

A Mercy of Peace, a Sacrifice of Praise

An introduction to the Divine Liturgy (continued)

The reading of the Holy Gospel is the high point of the first part of the Divine Liturgy. We prepare for it carefully for in it Jesus Christ Himself speaks to us. We prepare to meet Him by singing the Alleluia, which is interspersed with Psalm verses. "Alleluia" literally means "praise God" and is a song of praise and expectation. During the Alleluia, the priest incenses the Gospel book, the icons and all of the people, indicating that God is coming among His people.



The reading of the Holy Gospel

The whole purpose of this preparation is summed up in the prayer that the priest prays before the reading of the Gospel:

Master, Lover of mankind, make the pure light of your divine knowledge shine in our hearts and open the eyes of our mind to understand the message of your Gospel. Implant in us the fear of your blessed commandments, so that, having trampled down all carnal desires, we may pursue a spiritual way of life, thinking and doing all things that are pleasing to you. For you are the illumination of our souls and bodies, Christ God, and to you we give glory, together with your Father who is without beginning, and your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

We do not take the reading of the Holy Gospel lightly. We always stand upright and listen to it with reverence as if Jesus Christ Himself were speaking to us.

The reading of the Gospel is greeted with light as candles are held up to welcome God's Word. Jesus Christ is Himself our Light and when He became incarnate on earth the true Light of God shone forth, dispelling the darkness. As we listen to the Holy Gospel we pray that Christ's Light would illumine our own lives, purifying our vision so that we are able to truly see and hear Christ when He speaks to us. For what He offers to us in His Gospel is true life, the incorruptible life of which He speaks in Saint John's Gospel (17:3):

This is eternal life: to know You who alone are the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.



The candles which you light reveal to you the intelligible light. Just as the church, that house of great beauty, is full of light from many candles, so the house of your soul, which is more precious than that church, should be illumined and full of light in a noetic sense – that is to say, that within you all the spiritual virtues should burn with divine fire... The multitude of burning lamps signify the illumined thoughts which should shine within you like lamps, so that there should be no dark thought in the house of your soul, but that all should be aflame and shining with the light of the Holy Spirit.

Saint Symeon the New Theologian

Tomorrow is the feast of **Saint Sergios and Saint Bacchus** and the name day of our Archbishop. These saints were nobles at the court of the Emperor Maximian who greatly valued them. When the emperor heard that they did not participate in worshipping the idols, he summoned them into his presence and they confessed their faith in the One God. The emperor was furious, had them stripped and paraded them around the streets in women's clothes. When they were urged them to save themselves by denying Christ, they declared: 'Both honour and dishonour, both life and death — all are one to him who seeks the heavenly Kingdom.' They were then scourged and Saint Bacchus died as a result of the scourging. After this Saint Sergios was taken to Resapha in Syria, where he was tortured and beheaded by the sword. The date of his repose is given as either 296 or 303. Resapha was later renamed Sergiopolis in honour of Saint Sergios.



Tomorrow we celebrate the name day of His Eminence Archbishop Sergios and wish him God's blessings and many years!



On Saturday we commemorate **Saint Symeon the New Theologian**, a monk in the Studite Monastery in Constantinople and later the abbot of the Monastery of St Mamas. After a life of great asceticism, including many trials, criticisms and afflictions, he reposed in peace in 1022. His teaching on the soul's ability to enter directly into communion with God in this life aroused some opposition but his teachings are firmly rooted in his doctrine of the Church and his writings contain many powerful affirmations of the centrality of participation in the Holy Mysteries in our struggle for salvation. He is the author of many sublimely beautiful sermons, writings and hymns. With St John the Evangelist and St Gregory, Patriarch of Constantinople, he is one of only three whom the Church has officially called "Theologian."

The only thing God requires of us is that we do not sin. But this is achieved, not by acting according to the law, but by carefully guarding the divine image in us and our supernal dignity. When we thus live in our natural state, wearing the resplendent robe of the Spirit, we dwell in God and God dwells in us. Then we are called gods by adoption and sons of God, sealed by the light of the knowledge of God.

Saint Symeon the New Theologian