

# SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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## FEBRUARY 7, 2010

### THE SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY OF LUKE

Meatfare Sunday

Our Father among the Saints Parthenios

*Saint Parthenios*, Bishop of Lampsacus, was a native of the city of Melitoupolis (in northwestern Asia Minor), where his father Christopher served as deacon. The youth did not receive adequate schooling, but he learned the Holy Scripture by attending church services. He had a good heart, and distributed to the poor the money he earned working as a fisherman.

Filled with the grace of God, St Parthenios from age eighteen healed the sick in the name of Christ, cast out demons and worked other miracles. Learning of the young man's virtuous life, Bishop Philetus of Melitoupolis educated him and ordained him presbyter.

In 325, during the reign of Constantine the Great, Archbishop Achilles of Cyzicus made him bishop of the city of Lampsacus (Asia Minor). In the city were many pagans, and the saint fervently began to spread the faith in Christ, confirming it by through many miracles and by healing the sick.

The people began to turn from their pagan beliefs, and the saint went to the emperor Constantine the Great seeking permission to tear down the pagan temple and build a Christian church in its place. The emperor received the saint with honor, gave him a decree authorizing the destruction of the pagan temple, and provided him with the means to build a church. Returning to Lampsacus, St Parthenios had the pagan temple torn down, and built a beautiful church of God in the city.

In one of the razed temples, he found a large marble slab which he thought would be very suitable as an altar. The saint ordered work to begin on the stone, and to move it to the church. Through the malice of the devil, who became enraged at the removal of the stone from the pagan temple, the cart overturned and killed the driver Eutygian. St Parthenios restored him to life by his prayer and shamed the devil, who wanted to frustrate the work of God.

The saint was so kind that he refused healing to no one who came to him, or who chanced to meet him by the wayside, whether he suffered from bodily illnesses or was tormented by unclean spirits. People even stopped going to physicians, since St Parthenios healed all the sick for free. With the great power of the name of Christ, the saint banished a host of demons from people, from their homes, and from the waters of the sea.

*Continued on page 5...*

# AT THE SMALL ENTRANCE WE SING

## RESURRECTIONAL APOLYT. MODE 2.

**W**hen You descended unto death, O Lord who yourself are immortal Life, then did You mortify Hades by the lightning flash of Your Divinity. Also when You raised the dead from the netherworld, all the Powers of the heavens were crying out: O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory be to You.

## APOLYTIKION FOR THE CHURCH. MODE 5.

**T**he holy Apostle, the All-hymned Luke, \* who is acknowledged by the Church of Christ \* as the recorder of the Acts of the Apostles, \* and the splendid author of the Gospel of Christ. \* Let us praise with sacred hymns as a physician, \* who heals the infirmities of man, \* and the ailments of nature, \* who cleanses spiritual wounds, and prays unceasingly for our souls.

## KONTAKION. MODE 1.

**W**hen You come down to the earth, O God, in Your glory, all things will cower tremulous, and a river of fire will draw before Your Judgment Seat; the books shall be opened up, and public knowledge will things hidden be. Rescue me, then, I pray, from unquenchable fire, and count me worthy to stand at Your right hand, O You, the most righteous Judge.

## ΑΝΑΣΤ. ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ. ΗΧΟΣ Β΄.

**Ο**τε κατήλθες πρὸς τὸν θάνατον, ἢ ζωὴ ἢ ἀθάνατος, τότε τὸν ἄδην ἐνέκρωσας τῇ ἀστραπῇ τῆς θεότητος, ὅτε δὲ καὶ τοὺς τεθνεώτας ἐκ τῶν καταχθονίων ἀνέστησας, πᾶσαι αἱ Δυνάμεις τῶν ἐπουρανίων ἐκραύγαζον, Ζωοδότα Χριστέ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν δόξα σοι.

## ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ ΤΟΥ ΝΑΟΥ. ΠΛ. Α΄.

**Λ**ουκάν τον πανύμνητον καὶ ἅγιον ἀπόστολον, τὸν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας γνωστὸν συνθέτην τῶν Πράξεων τῶν Ἀποστόλων, τὸν τε σεμνὸν τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου Χριστοῦ ὑπομνηματιστήν, ἀξίως τιμήσωμεν ὕμνοις ὁσίοις, ὡς νοσημάτων ἀνθρωπίνων καὶ φυσικῶν ἀσθενειῶν θεραπευτήν, τὸν καθαίροντα πληγὰς τοῦ πνεύματος, καὶ ἀδιαλείπτως πρεσβεύοντα ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν.

## KONTAKION. ΗΧΟΣ Α΄.

**Ο**ταν ἔλθῃς ὁ Θεός, ἐπὶ γῆς μετὰ δόξης, καὶ τρέμωσι τὰ σύμπαντα· ποταμὸς δὲ τοῦ πυρὸς πρὸ τοῦ Βήματος ἔλκη, καὶ βίβλοι ἀνοίγωνται, καὶ τὰ κρυπτὰ δημοσιεύωνται· τότε ῥῦσαι με, ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς τοῦ ἀσβέστου, καὶ ἀξίωσον, ἐκ δεξιῶν σου με στήναι, Κριτὰ δικαιοτάτε.

“*Let us then acquire that height which comes by humility. Let us look into the nature of human things, that we may kindle with the longing desire of the things to come; for in no other way is it possible to become humble, except by the love of what is divine and the contempt of what is present. For just as a man on the point of obtaining a kingdom, if instead of that purple robe one offer him some trivial compliment, will count it to be nothing; so shall we also laugh to scorn all things present, if we desire that other sort of honor.*”

—SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM (347-407)

# THE READINGS OF THE DAY

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## EPISTLE READING

SAINT PAUL'S  
FIRST LETTER TO THE  
CORINTHIANS 8:8-13; 9:1-2

**B**rethren, food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if any one sees you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol's temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall. Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

## MEATFARE SUNDAY

*Today is Meatfare Sunday. According to Orthodox tradition, beginning tomorrow we refrain from eating meat products until Pascha. If you are unsure about how to fast, you should speak to your Spiritual Father.*

## GOSPEL READING

MATTHEW 25:31-46

**T**he Lord said, "When the Son of man comes in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

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## UPCOMING CHURCH SERVICES:

**Saturday, Feb. 13, Saturday of the Souls, Orthros / Div. Lit. , 8:30am**

**Saturday, Feb. 13, Great Vespers, 6pm**

## UPCOMING CLASSES:

**NO Orthodox Catechism Class due to Philoptochos**

**Scripture Study, Thursday, Feb. 11, 7pm**

### GREAT AND HOLY LENT

Our Great and Holy Lenten journey begins on Sunday, Feb. 14 at 7pm with the celebration of the Vespers of Forgiveness. Please be attentive to the Church's call to personal holiness as we begin our preparations for the celebration of our Lord's Pascha. Do not absent yourself with poor excuses, but accept the call to be present at this solemn service so that we begin our journey as one family, with one voice, and with one heart for Christ.

### SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY

Today we will be taking a second collection for Souper Bowl Sunday for those less fortunate. Please give generously.

### CONGRATULATIONS

Yesterday Randy (Nikolai) and Karen (Anna) Sade were received into the Orthodox Church through Holy Baptism. May God grant them many years!

### UPCOMING PHILOPTOCHOS EVENT

The Philoptochos ladies kindly invite all the women of the parish to the Church on Tue. Feb. 9 at 6pm for an hour of fellowship. To celebrate the National Heart Disease Awareness Month and to officially start a new year of activities, Philoptochos is organizing a little party with tea, coffee and cookies. Representatives of the Mid-Missouri Women-

Heart Coalition will give a short presentation on women's heart disease. The monthly Philoptochos meeting will take place at the end of the program. We invite you to come and see; education saves lives. You can wear red in support of the cause.

### NEW LITURGY BOOKS

We have received our new liturgy books. Please do not remove the books from the Church. If you would like to purchase a personal copy, they are available from Presvytera for \$15 each. They are also available on Amazon for \$17.

### DINNER DANCE

Thank you to all who helped make our annual Dinner Dance a success!

### UPCOMING YOUTH EVENT

On Saturday, Feb. 13, join us for our annual Apokreo Party from 3-5pm at Jane Forman Studio, at Columbia College. Please bring a non-meat dish to share. Visit our website to see photos from last year's event.

### FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY

Please see the flyer in the Narthex for an opportunity to help the Church by getting your hair styled or cut by Patricia Kardon.

## SYNAXARION

*Continued*

Once, the saint prepared to cast out a devil from a certain man, who had been possessed by it since childhood. The demon began to implore the saint not to do so. St Parthenios promised to give the evil spirit another man in whom he could dwell. The demon asked, "Who is that man?" The saint replied, "You may dwell in me, if you wish."

The demon fled as if stung by fire, crying out, "If the mere sight of you is a torment to me, how can I dare to enter into you?"

An unclean spirit, cast out of the house where the imperial purple dye was prepared, said that a divine fire was pursuing him with the fire of Gehenna.

Having shown people the great power of faith in Christ, the saint converted a multitude of idol-worshippers to the true God.

St Parthenios died peacefully and was solemnly buried beside the cathedral church of Lampsacus, which he built.

**Saint Luke of Hellas** was a native of the Greek village of Kastorion. The son of poor farmers, the saint from childhood had toiled much, working in the fields and shepherding the sheep. He was very obedient to his parents and very temperate in eating. He often gave his own food and clothing to the poor, for which he suffered reproach from his parents. He once gave away almost all the seed which was needed for planting in the fields. The Lord rewarded him for his charity, and the harvest gathered was greater than ever before.

As a child, he prayed fervently and often. His mother saw him more than once standing not on the ground, but in the air while he prayed.

After the death of his father, he left his mother and went to Athens, where he entered a monastery. But through the prayers of his mother, who was very concerned about him, the Lord returned him to his parental home in a miraculous manner. He spent four

months there, then with his mother's blessing he went to a solitary place on a mountain called Ioannou (or Ioannitsa). Here there was a church dedicated to the holy Unmercenarys Cosmas and Damian, where he lived an ascetical life in constant prayer and fasting. He was tonsured there by some Elders who were on pilgrimage. After this, St Luke redoubled his ascetic efforts, for which the Lord granted him the gift of foresight.

After a seven years on Ioannou, the saint moved to Corinth because of an invasion of the Bulgarian armies. Hearing about the exploits of a certain stylite at Patras, he went to see him, and remained for ten years to serve the ascetic with humility and obedience. Afterwards, the saint returned again to his native land and again began to pursue asceticism on Mount Ioannou.

The throngs of people flocking there disturbed his quietude, so with the blessing of his Elder Theophylactus, St Luke went with his disciple to a still more remote place at Kalamion. After three years, he settled on the desolate and arid island of Ampelon because of an invasion of the Turks. Steiris was another place of his ascetic efforts. Here brethren gathered to the monk, and a small monastery grew up, the church of which was dedicated to the Great Martyr Barbara. Dwelling in the monastery, the saint performed many miracles, healing sicknesses of soul and of body.

Foreseeing his end, the saint confined himself in a cell and for three months prepared for his departure. When asked where he was to be buried, the monk replied, "Throw my body into a ravine to be eaten by wild beasts." When the brethren begged him to change these instructions, he commanded them to bury his body on the spot where he lay. Raising his eyes to heaven, he said, "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit!"

St Luke fell asleep in the Lord on February 7, 946. Later, a church was built over his tomb. Myrrh flowed from his holy relics, and many healings occurred.

# THE SIX WEEKS OF THE GREAT AND HOLY LENT

## UNDERSTANDING THE JOURNEY TO PASCHA

by Rev. Fr. George Dragas

**T**he Great and Holy Lent (Megalé Sarakosté) comprises nearly 6 full weeks, actually 40 days, which precede the Great and Holy Week. It starts on a Monday, known as the Clean Monday (Kathara Deutera) and is terminated on a Saturday, known as Lazarus Saturday (the Saturday before Palm Sunday, which marks the beginning of Holy Week). The 40 days of Lent include the 5 Sundays that precede the Great and Holy Week.

The Western Church counts the 40 days of Lent differently. She includes the Great and Holy Week, and subtracts all the Sundays that precede the Sunday of Pascha. This is why, for Roman Catholics and other Western Christians, Lent begins on a Wednesday, indeed the Wednesday of the 7th Week before Pascha.

*A Period of fasting and prayer*

The first week of Lent, which begins with the Pure Monday and is also called Pure Week, has always been distinguished from the other weeks by its severe fast. Even today, in spite of the tendency that exists among many Orthodox Christians not to observe the Lenten fast, the fast of the first week is largely kept. This is especially the case with the first three days of this week, when people abstain from all kinds of food and some even from wine and oil. As for the meaning of the Fast, the Orthodox Church has always stressed the need that it must not be merely material, but also spiritual, for it should not be just mere fasting from food, but fasting from vices and passions.

The period of Great Lent is primarily a period of intense and fervent prayer. The sacred Services (Acolouthies) are more numerous and lengthier and so are the readings from the Holy Scriptures. At least four Divine Liturgies are celebrated each week: the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts (Proégiasmené) on Wednesdays and Fridays, the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom on Saturdays and the Liturgy of St. Basil on Sundays.

*A Period of special hymns*

The hymns of the Great Lent are richer and have been clearly composed on the basis of a certain plan. This is why they present an inner coherence and unity of themes each week. Thus, during the first two weeks the benefits of fasting are exalted, while the true manner of spiritual exercise (asceticism) and the virtues that should accompany it (i.e., humility, brotherly love, mercy, etc.) are clearly indicated.

During the four weeks that follow, the hymnography borrows its themes from Gospel parables. The third week develops the theme of the return of the Prodigal Son. The fourth week borrows its themes from the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. The fifth week is connected with the parable of the Good Samaritan and the Workers of the Vineyard. The sixth week is based on the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus. This choice reflects the ancient practice of using these Parables as Gospel readings of these Lenten Sundays.

The hymns also reflect the theme of the weekly cycle of the feasts. Thus the hymnody of some of the weeks has a special character; for instance, the hymns of the third week echo the fore-feast of the Feast of the Veneration of the Holy Cross. The hymns of the fourth week echo the post-feast of the same Feast. Those of the sixth week echo the themes of the fore-feasts of the Feasts of the Raising of Lazarus and of the Sunday of the Palms.

#### A Period of special feasts

Special significance among the days of the Great Lent is attached to the Sundays and to some of the Saturdays by dedicating them to important church Events and Persons.

The Saturday of the first week is dedicated to the Great Martyr Theodore of Tyre and to the memory of the miracle he performed with kolyva. According to the tradition he sustained the Christians with kolyva and so prevented them from eating foods, which according to an Edict of the Emperor Julian the Apostate, had been contaminated with the blood of meat offered to idols.

The first Sunday of the Great Lent was originally connected with the memory of the Prophets and especially of Moses and Aaron. This is still reflected in the Bible readings specified for this day: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-40 and John 1:44-52. Since, however, the restoration of the Holy Icons by Queen Theodora in AD 842 took place on this Sunday; a new connection overrode the old one. It was dedicated to the commemoration of the triumph of the Church against the Iconoclasts and generally all heresies and took the new name of *Sunday of Orthodoxy*. On this Sunday a special Litany was celebrated in the Church of Panagia of

Vlachernes in Constantinople, which began there and went on in the Great Church of Hagia Sophia. This Litany is still kept to this day in the form of a procession of the Holy Icons by which Orthodox Christians declare their persistence in and dedication to Orthodoxy.

The second Sunday of the Great Lent was not initially connected with any special commemoration. Since 1368, however, this Sunday was dedicated to the memory of *St. Gregory Palamas* Archbishop of Thessaloniki—the most wise and erudite theologian and fighter against the heresies of his own time. St. Gregory fell asleep on the 14 of November in 1359 and his memory was appointed for this Sunday as a continuation of the Sunday of Orthodoxy on account of his fight for the Orthodox Faith against rationalist scholasticism.

The third Sunday of the Great Lent is called *Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross* (Stavroproskynéseós), because the Church invites the faithful on that day to Venerate the Holy Cross in order to be strengthened by it to continue their exercise of fasting. It is possible, however, that this feast was appointed because it is stated in the Ménaia that on the 6th of March a commemoration is made of the Discovery of the Holy Cross. It should be noted that, according to the Typikon (the Book of the Liturgical Rubrics) of St. Sabas, the veneration of the Holy Cross is observed not only on this Sunday but also on the Monday, Wednesday and Friday of the following week. This is, as it were, a post-feast period of the Feast of the Veneration of the Holy Cross.

The fourth and the fifth Sundays of Great Lent did not, originally, have any sort of festal character. Thus, on these days the acolythy of

the Saint of the day was sung together with the acolouthy of the Resurrection. Later on, however, it was determined that the fourth Sunday should be linked with the memory of **St. John Climacus**, whose book the Ladder (Climax) is read during Great Lent in the monasteries. Similarly, the fifth Sunday was linked with the memory of **St. Mary of Egypt**, who is the most brilliant example of repentance. Both commemorations seem to have been appointed most probably by transference from their original dates (the 30th of March and the 1st of April).

The week before these two Sundays the fifth week of the fasts is further adorned with two exceptional Services. At Matins on Thursday the Great Canon is sung. This wonderful poem of **Andrew of Crete** which presents to us the saintly figures of the Old and New Testaments in order to teach us how to imitate the acts of the righteous and how to avoid the acts of the sinners. At Matins on Saturday the **Acathist Hymn** is sung. This is a hymn dedicated to the Annunciation of the Theotokos and was ordered to be sung, according to the Synaxarion, during this Saturday in memory of the Salvation of Constantinople in 626 from the attack of the Arabs which was attributed to the Theotokos. This hymn was not composed at that time but preexisted and its poet remains unknown to this day. Both the Great Canon and the Acathist Hymn are sung first in parts - the first one during the first week of the Great Lent and the second one on the Fridays of the first four weeks of Lent - but on the fifth week they are both sung in their complete form. Usually, however, they are not sung in the Matins as the Triodion appoints, but in the evening

at Compline in order to facilitate the people to follow them.

The fast of Great Lent ends on the Friday of the sixth week. For this reason on this day we sing: "Having completed the lifesaving Lent ..." It is followed by the fast and celebration of the Great and Holy Week. The Saturday of the sixth week is dedicated to the commemoration of the raising of Lazarus and the Sunday following to the commemoration of the triumphal entry of our Lord into Jerusalem. This is why they are respectively called "Saturday of Lazarus" and "Palm Sunday." This is a fitting arrangement in view of the last events which are commemorated during the Holy Week. On Palm Sunday we use palms (and branches of laurel among the Greeks) which are blessed and distributed to the people.

#### **THE PRAYER OF ST. EPHREM**

*During Great and Holy Lent, it is customary to include the Prayer of St. Ephrem in our daily prayer rule.*

*We make three great metanoias saying with each one a verse of the Prayer of St. Ephrem.*

Lord and Master of my life, do not give me a spirit of sloth, idle curiosity, love of power and useless chatter. **(Prostration)**

Rather accord to me, your servant, a spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love. (Prostration)

Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own faults, and not to condemn my brother; for you are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen. **(Prostration)**

*We then make 12 small metanias, then one further great metania as we repeat the last line of the prayer.*

Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own faults, and not to condemn my brother; for you are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen. **(Prostration)**