

SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH



JANUARY 10, 2010

THE SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Saint Gregory of Nyssa

Saint Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, was a younger brother of St Basil the Great (January 1). His birth and upbringing came at a time when the Arian disputes were at their height. Having received an excellent education, he was at one time a teacher of rhetoric. In the year 372, he was consecrated by St Basil the Great as bishop of the city of Nyssa in Cappadocia.

St Gregory was an ardent advocate for Orthodoxy, and he fought against the Arian heresy with his brother St Basil. Gregory was persecuted by the Arians, by whom he was falsely accused of improper use of church property, and thereby deprived of his See and sent to Ancyra.

In the following year St Gregory was again deposed in absentia by a council of Arian bishops, but he continued to encourage his flock in Orthodoxy, wandering about from place to place. After the death of the emperor Valens (378), St Gregory was restored to his cathedra and was joyously received by his flock. His brother St Basil the Great died in 379.

Only with difficulty did St Gregory survive the loss of his brother and guide. He delivered a funeral oration for him, and completed St Basil's study of the six days of Creation, the Hexaemeron. That same year St Gregory participated in the Council of Antioch against heretics who refused to recognize the perpetual virginity of the Mother of God. Others at the opposite extreme, who worshipped the Mother of God as being God Herself, were also denounced by the Council. He visited the churches of Arabia and Palestine, which were infected with the Arian heresy, to assert the Orthodox teaching about the Most Holy Theotokos. On his return journey St Gregory visited Jerusalem and the Holy Places.

In the year 381 St Gregory was one of the chief figures of the Second Ecumenical Council, convened at Constantinople against the heresy of Macedonius, who incorrectly taught about the Holy Spirit. At this Council, on the initiative of St Gregory, the Nicene Symbol of Faith (the Creed) was completed.

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AT THE SMALL ENTRANCE WE SING

APOLYTIKION OF THE FEAST. MODE 1.

When you were baptized in the Jordan, O Lord, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest. For the Father bore witness unto You, calling You His beloved Son, and the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truth of these words. O Christ our God, who have appeared to us, and enlightened the world, glory be to You.

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION. MODE 6.

When the angelic powers appeared at Your grave, * the soldiers guarding it feared and became as dead. * And standing by the sepulcher was Mary who was seeking Your immaculate body. * You devastated Hades, not afflicted by it. * You went to meet the virgin, and granted eternal life. * You resurrected from the dead. O Lord, glory to You.

APOLYTIKION OF THE FEAST. MODE 1.

When you were baptized in the Jordan ...

APOLYTIKION FOR THE CHURCH. MODE 5.

The 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 4.

You appeared to us on earth* today, O Master,* and Your light was signed on us* who cry aloud to You and say* with understanding, O Christ our God: You came and shone forth, O Light unapproachable.

ΑΠΟΛΥΤ. ΤΗΣ ΕΟΡΤΗΣ. ΗΧΟΣ Α΄.

Εν Ἰορδάνῃ βαπτιζομένου σου Κύριε, ἡ τῆς Τριάδος ἐφανερῶθη προσκύνησις, τοῦ γὰρ Γεννήτορος ἡ φωνὴ προσεμαρτύρει σοι, ἀγαπητόν σε Υἱὸν ὀνομάζουσα, καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα ἐν εἶδει περιστερᾶς, ἐβεβαίον τοῦ λόγου τὸ ἀσφαλές. Ὁ ἐπιφανεὶς Χριστὲ ὁ Θεός, καὶ τὸν κόσμον φωτίσας δόξα σοι.

ΑΝΑΣΤ. ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ. ΗΧΟΣ ΠΛ. Β΄.

Αγγελικαὶ δυνάμεις ἐπὶ τὸ μνήμά σου, καὶ οἱ Ἀφυλάσσοντες ἀπενεκρώθησαν, καὶ ἴστατο Μαρία ἐν τῷ τάφῳ, ζητοῦσα τὸ ἄχραντόν σου σῶμα. Ἐσκύλευσας τὸν ἄδην, μὴ πειρασθεὶς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, ὑπήνησας τῇ παρθένῳ, δωρούμενος τὴν ζωὴν, ὁ ἀναστὰς ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, Κύριε δόξα σοι.

ΑΠΟΛΥΤ. ΤΗΣ ΕΟΡΤΗΣ. ΗΧΟΣ Α΄.

Ἐν Ἰορδάνῃ βαπτιζομένου σου Κύριε ...

KONTAKION. ΗΧΟΣ Δ΄.

Επεφάνης σήμερον τῇ οἰκουμένῃ, καὶ τὸ φῶς σου Κύριε, ἐσημειώθη ἐφ' ἡμᾶς, ἐν ἐπιγνώσει ὑμνοῦντάς σε. Ἦλθες ἐφάνης τὸ Φῶς τὸ ἀπρόσιτον.

THE READINGS OF THE DAY

EPISTLE READING

SAINT PAUL'S

LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS 4:7-13

BRETHREN, grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (in saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

GOSPEL READING

MATTHEW 4:12-17

At that time, Jesus heard that John had been arrested, He withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth He went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned." From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

“A brother questioned Abba Poemen in this way, ‘My thoughts trouble me, making me put my sins aside, and concern myself with my brother’s faults’. The old man told him the following story about Abba Dioscorus (the monk), ‘In his cell he wept over himself, while his disciple was sitting in another cell. When the latter came to see the old man he asked him, “Father, why are you weeping?” “I am weeping over my sins,” the old man answered him. Then his disciple said, “You do not have any sins, Father.” The old man replied, “Truly, my child, if I were allowed to see my sins, three or four men would not be enough to weep for them.”

—FROM THE SAYINGS OF THE DESERT FATHERS”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEMORIAL SERVICE: Konstantinos Godas, 3 years

UPCOMING CHURCH SERVICES:

Fri., Jan. 15, St. John the Merciful, Vesperal Div. Liturgy 6pm

Saturday, Jan. 16, Great Vespers, 6pm

UPCOMING CLASSES:

NO CLASSES THIS WEEK DUE TO HOUSE BLESSINGS

DINNER DANCE

Our annual Dinner Dance will be on January 31st. The cost of prepaid tickets is \$25 / adult and \$15 / child for a dinner of Prime Rib and Chicken. Tickets at the door will be \$30 / adult and \$15 / child. Doors will open for the event at 5:00pm, with dinner at 6pm and dancing to follow. *We also need donations for our silent auction.* Please bring items for the auction to the Church by January 21. This is an important fundraiser for our parish – please plan to attend!

HOUSE BLESSINGS

It is customary for Orthodox Christians to have their homes blessed in order to ask for God's blessings upon themselves and their families during the new year. Since Jan. 6th, Fr. Michael has been bless-

ing homes. If you would like to have your home blessed, please see the sign-up sheet in the Narthex.

CHURCH CALENDARS

Church calendars are available to be picked up in the Narthex. The envelopes are labeled – please be sure to take the calendar labeled with your name.

BAPTISM

The baptism of Randy and Karen Sade has been delayed due to the passing of Julie Kalaitzandonakes' father. A new date will be scheduled and announced as soon as possible.

GREEK SCHOOL

Greek School and Greek dancing will resume again on Tuesday January 12, 2010 at 6 pm.

“It was said of Abba Ammos that when he went to church, he did not allow his disciple to walk beside him but only at a certain distance; and if the latter came to ask him about his thoughts, he would move away from him as soon as he had replied, saying to him, ‘It is for fear that, after edifying words, irrelevant conversation should slip in, that I do not keep you with me.’”

—FROM THE SAYINGS OF THE DESERT FATHERS



SYNAXARION OF THE DAY

Continued from front page...

Together with the other bishops St Gregory affirmed St Gregory the Theologian as Archpastor of Constantinople.

In the year 383, St Gregory of Nyssa participated in a Council at Constantinople, where he preached a sermon on the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit. In 386, he was again at Constantinople, and he was asked to speak the funeral oration in memory of the empress Placilla. Again in 394 St Gregory was present in Constantinople at a local Council, convened to resolve church matters in Arabia.

St Gregory of Nyssa was a fiery defender of Orthodox dogmas and a zealous teacher of his flock, a kind and compassionate father to his spiritual children, and their intercessor before the courts. He was distinguished by his magnanimity, patience and love of peace.

Having reached old age, St Gregory of Nyssa died soon after the Council of Constantinople. Together with his great contemporaries, Sts Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian, St Gregory of Nyssa had a significant influence on the Church life of his time. His sister, St Macrina, wrote to him: "You are renowned both in the cities, and gatherings of people, and throughout entire districts. Churches ask you for help." St Gregory is known in history as one of the most profound Christian thinkers of the fourth century. Endowed with philosophical talent, he saw philosophy as a means for a deeper penetration into the authentic meaning of divine revelation.

St Gregory left behind many remarkable works of dogmatic character, as well as sermons and discourses. He has been called "the Father of Fathers."

Saint Marcian, Presbyter of the Great Church, was born at Rome and in his youth he received a first-rate education in Constantinople. After the death of his parents, St Marcian used his inheritance on the building, renovation and embellishment of churches. Thus, he built a church dedicated to the holy Martyr Anastasia (December 22), richly adorned it, and had the holy relics of the saint transferred to it. He also built a church of the Great Martyr Irene (May 5), and the church of St Isidore.

His moral purity and strict asceticism were resented by those who were slothful and avaricious, for they regarded his life as an unspoken criticism of their own lack of virtue. However, his meekness and silence overcame their slanders and brought him to the attention of the Patriarch, who ordained St Marcian a presbyter and appointed him treasurer of the Church of Constantinople.

From his wealth St Marcian distributed generous alms, and distinguished himself by non-covetousness, denying himself in everything. In accord with the command of the Savior, he did not even have an extra set of clothes, which he might need should he be caught in inclement weather. Having received a gift of wonderworking, St Marcian healed the sick and cast out devils. St Marcian died between 472-474 and was buried at the monastery of St John the Forerunner at Constantinople.

Saint Dometian, Bishop of Melitene, was born and lived during the sixth century, in the time of the emperor Justin the Younger. He was married but was widowed, and thereafter he became a monk and lived a strict and holy life.

At thirty years of age he was chosen bishop of the city of Melitene (in Armenia). Wise and zealous in questions of faith, strong in word and deed, St Dometian quickly gained fame as a good and dedicated pastor. More than once he carried out government commissions in Persia to avoid conflict with the Greeks. Beloved by all, St Dometian often received rich gifts, which he distributed to the poor. Both during his life and after his death in 601, St Dometian was glorified by God with miracles.

Saint Theosebia the Deaconess was the sister of Sts Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Peter, Bishop of Sebaste. She was a virgin and served the Holy Church as a deaconess, caring for the sick, distributing food to vagrants, raising orphans and preparing women for holy Baptism.

When her brother, St Gregory of Nyssa, was in exile for three years, St Theosebia was with him and she shared in all the tribulations of a life of wandering. St Theosebia died in 385, and St Gregory the Theologian praised her in a eulogy.

Saint Antipas was born in Moldavia, Romania in 1816. His father was a deacon in the village church, and his mother ended her life in a women's monastery as a schemanun.

St Antipas came to Valaam Monastery from Mt Athos on November 6, 1865. He spent the rest of his life in the skete at Valaam, living like a hermit.

Blessed with the gift of clairvoyance, St Antipas fell asleep in the Lord on January 10, 1882.

George Govorov, the future St Theophan, was born on January 10, 1815 in the village of Chernavsk in the Orlov province where his father was a priest.

At first, George attended a primary school at Liven, then a military school. From 1837-1841 he studied at the Kiev Theological Academy, and

probably visited the Monastery of the Caves several times. In these surroundings, it was not surprising that he received the monastic tonsure while he was still a student. After graduation Hieromonk Theophan was appointed rector of Kiev's church schools, and later became rector of the seminary in Novgorod. Before he retired from teaching, Fr Theophan served as a professor and Assistant Inspector at the Petersburg Academy.

St Theophan was not completely happy with academic work, so he asked to be relieved of his duties. He was assigned to be a member of the Russian Mission in Jerusalem. After being raised to the rank of Archimandrite, he became Rector of Olnets Seminary. Soon he was assigned as the chief priest of the embassy church in Constantinople. St Theophan was eventually recalled to Russia to become rector of the Petersburg Academy, and supervisor of religious education in the capital's secular schools.

On May 9, 1859 St Theophan was consecrated as Bishop of Tambov, where he established a diocesan school for girls. During his time in Tambov he came to love the secluded Vysha Monastery in his diocese. In 1863 he was transferred to Vladimir and remained there for three years. He also established a diocesan school for girls at Vladimir.

The holy bishop visited parishes throughout his diocese serving, preaching, restoring churches, and sharing the joys and sorrows of his flock. It was very difficult for Bishop Theophan to live in the world and become involved with vain worldly disputes. Many abused his trust, but he could not bring himself to chastise anyone. Instead, he left left such unpleasant tasks to the Archpriest of his cathedral.

He was present at the uncovering of the relics of St Tikhon of Zadonsk in 1861, and this made a tremendous impression on him, for he had much in common with that saint. He had loved St Tikhon

from early childhood, and always spoke about him with great enthusiasm. When St Tikhon was glorified as a saint on August 13, Bishop Theophan's joy knew no bounds.

In 1866 his request to be relieved of his duties as Bishop of Vladimir was granted. He was appointed as Superior of the Vysha Monastery, but soon resigned from that position. He was permitted to live there and to celebrate services whenever he wished. He also received a pension of 1000 rubles.

As he prepared to leave his diocese, he wished to focus on his own salvation, and to concentrate on undisturbed communion with God. On July 24, 1866 he bade his diocese farewell, leaving the world for a life of reclusion, and to devote himself to writing spiritual books. Through these books, St Theophan has become the spiritual benefactor of all Orthodox Christians. Although he sought the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Mt. 6:33), a reputation as a writer of great significance for the whole world was also added to him.

Bishop Theophan wrote many books, but received no profits from their sale. He tried to keep them as inexpensive as possible, and they quickly sold out. He wrote about topics which others before him had not fully treated, such as how to live a Christian life, how to overcome sinful habits, and how to avoid despair. He tried to explain the steps of spiritual perfection systematically, as one who had himself gone through these various steps. Some of his books include *The Spiritual Life And How To Be Attuned To It*, *The Path To Salvation*, and *Letters On The Spiritual Life*. He also translated the *Philokalia* in five volumes, and *The Sermons Of St Simeon The New Theologian*.

For the first six years in the monastery, Bishop Theophan attended all the services, including the early Liturgy. He stood still in church with his eyes

closed so that he would not be distracted. He often celebrated Liturgy on Sundays and Feast Days.

Beginning in 1872, he cut off all relationships with people (except for his confessor) and no longer left his cell to attend church. He built a small chapel in his quarters and dedicated it to the Lord's Baptism. For ten years he served there on Sundays and Feast Days. For the last eleven years of his life he served every day by himself. Sometimes he would sing, and sometimes he kept completely silent.

Whenever anyone visited him on business, Bishop Theophan would reply with as few words as possible, then immerse himself in prayer. If anyone sent him money, he would distribute it to the poor, keeping only a small portion to purchase books.

Whenever he was not occupied with writing or praying, the reclusive bishop worked at carpentry or painting icons. He received from twenty to forty letters each day, and he answered all of them. He was able to discern each writer's spiritual condition, then give detailed answers to the questions of those who were struggling for the salvation of their souls.

His eyesight deteriorated in his latter years, but he did not curtail his work because of it. In the evening, his cell attendant would prepare everything for the bishop to serve Liturgy the next morning. After finishing the Liturgy, Bishop Theophan would knock on the wall to signal the cell attendant to serve him tea. On days when there was no fasting, he would eat lunch at 1:00 P.M. This consisted of one egg and a glass of milk. At four o'clock he would have some tea, and then no more food that day.

Bishop Theophan began to get weaker at the beginning of 1894. He was still writing on the afternoon of January 6, but when the cell attendant

came to check on him at 4:30 he found that the bishop had departed to the Lord.

St Theophan's body lay in the small church in his cell for three days, then three more days in the cathedral. There was no trace of corruption, however. He was laid to rest in the Kazan church of the Vysha Monastery.

Several of St Theophan's books have been translated into English, and are reliable spiritual guides for Orthodox Christians of today. St Theophan's gift was the ability to present the wisdom of the Fathers in terms which modern people can understand. Since he lived close to our own time, many readers find his books "more approachable" than the earlier patristic literature. He treats the life of the soul and the life of the body as a unified whole, not as two separate elements, and reveals to people the path of salvation.

Saint Paul of Obnora, a famed disciple of St Sergius of Radonezh, was born at Moscow in the year 1317. From his youth he distinguished himself by his piety and kindness towards the poor and suffering. His rich parents prepared him for a secular life, but at twenty-two years of age he secretly left his parental home and received tonsure at the Nativity monastery on the Volga (in the Yaroslav diocese).

From there Paul transferred to the Holy Trinity monastery to St Sergius of Radonezh, spending several years with him as his disciple, obeying the holy Elder in all things. With the blessing of St Sergius, he settled a short distance from the monastery in a separate cell, where he spent fifteen years as a hermit. Having asked the blessing of St Sergius to go off into the wilderness for a quiet and solitary life, St Paul wandered about for a long while, seeking a place of solitude. He wandered a great deal in the wilderness. He spent time with St Abraham of

Chukhloma (July 20) and finally, he remained in the Komel forest.

At the Gryazovitsa River, in the hollow of an old linden tree, the monk built a small cell and dwelt there for three years in complete silence, "not giving his body rest, that he might receive future rest." Then he moved on to the River Nurma, where he built a hut and dug a well, spending his days in vigil and prayer.

Five days out of the week he went without food, and only on Saturday and Sunday did he partake of some bread and water. The news about the hermit spread abroad, and those wishing spiritual guidance began coming to him. Despite his love for the solitary life, St Paul never refused anyone spiritual consolation and guidance. He was also visited by St Sergius of Nurma (October 7), who sought solitude with the blessing of St Sergius of Radonezh, and who also spent his ascetic life in these places.

With the blessing of St Sergius and the agreement of Metropolitan Photius, St Paul built the Holy Trinity church in 1414, around which a monastery sprang up (later called the Monastery of St Paul of Obnora). Having written a strict monastic Rule for the brethren, St Paul entrusted the guidance of the new monastery to his disciple Alexis, while he himself continued as before to live in a solitary cell on a hill. He remained a responsive and good counsellor for anyone needing his help. St Paul died at 112 years of age. His final words were, "Brethren, have love one for another and keep to the rule of the monastic community."

The Life of the saint was written in about the year 1546, and his glorification occurred in 1547.