

SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH



JANUARY 24, 2010

THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY OF LUKE

The Venerable Xenia of Rome

The Sunday after the Sunday of Zacchaeus is devoted to the Publican and the Pharisee. At Vespers the night before, the TRIODION (the liturgical book used in the services of Great Lent) begins.

Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee who scrupulously observed the requirements of religion: he prayed, fasted, and contributed money to the Temple. These are very good things, and should be imitated by anyone who loves God. We who may not fulfill these requirements as well as the Pharisee did should not feel entitled to criticize him for being faithful. His sin was in looking down on the Publican and feeling justified because of his external religious observances.

The second man was a Publican, a tax-collector who was despised by the people. He, however, displayed humility, and this humility justified him before God (Luke 18:14).

The lesson to be learned is that we possess neither the Pharisee's religious piety, nor the Publican's repentance, through which we can be saved. We are called to see ourselves as we really are in the light of Christ's teaching, asking Him to be merciful to us, deliver us from sin, and to lead us on the path of salvation.

Saint Xenia of Rome, in the world Eusebia, was the only daughter of an eminent Roman senator. From her youth she loved God, and wished to avoid the marriage arranged for her. She secretly left her parental home with two servants devoted to her, and set sail upon a ship. Through the Providence of God she met the head of the monastery of the holy Apostle Andrew in Milassa, a town of Caria (Asia Minor). She besought him to take her and her companions to Milassa. She also changed her name, calling herself Xenia [which means "stranger" or foreigner" in Greek].

At Milassa she bought land, built a church dedicated to St Stephen, and founded a woman's monastery. Soon after this, Bishop Paul of Milassa made Xenia a deaconess, because of her virtuous life. The saint

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AT THE SMALL ENTRANCE WE SING

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYT. MODE 8.

You descended from on high, O com- passionate One, and condescended to be buried for three days, so that from the passions You might set us free. Our life and resurrection, O Lord, glory be to You.

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 1.

You sanctified the virginal womb by Your birth, O Lord,* and Symeon's hands You blessed, as it ought to be.* O Christ God, and even now You came and saved us.* Now, give peace to the commonwealth in time of war,* and give power to the Rulers, so loved by You,* the only one who loves humanity.

ΑΝΑΣΤ. ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ. ΗΧΟΣ ΠΑ. Δ'.

Ἐξ ὕψους κατήλθες ὁ εὐσπλαγχνος, ταφήν καταδέξω τριήμερον, ἵνα ἡμᾶς ἐλευθερώσης τῶν παθῶν· ἡ ζωὴ καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις ἡμῶν, Κύριε δόξα σοι.

ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ ΤΟΥ ΝΑΟΥ. ΠΑ. Α'.

Λουκάν 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'.

Ομήτραν παρθενικὴν ἀγίαςας τῷ τόκῳ σου, καὶ χεῖρας τοῦ Συμεὼν εὐλογήσας ὡς ἔπρεπε, προφθάσας καὶ νῦν ἔσωσας ἡμᾶς Χριστὲ ὁ Θεός. Ἄλλ' εἰρήνευσον ἐν πολέμοις τὸ πολίτευμα, καὶ κραταίωσον Βασιλεῖς οὓς ἠγάπησας, ὁ μόνος φιλόανθρωπος.

“Let the earth bring forth.” This short command was in a moment a vast nature, an elaborate system. Swifter than thought it produced the countless qualities of plants. It is this command which, still at this day, is imposed on the earth, and in the course of each year displays all the strength of its power to produce herbs, seeds and trees. Like tops, which after the first impulse, continue their evolutions, turning upon themselves when once fixed in their centre; thus nature, receiving the impulse of this first command, follows without interruption the course of ages, until the consummation of all things. Let us all hasten to attain to it, full of fruit and of good works; and thus, planted in the house of the Lord we shall flourish in the court of our God, in our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

THE READINGS OF THE DAY

EPISTLE READING

SAINT PAUL'S

SECOND LETTER TO TIMOTHY 3:10-15

TIMOTHY, my son, you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, my sufferings, what befell me at Antioch, at Iconion, and at Lystra, what persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

GOSPEL READING

LUKE 18:10-14

The Lord said this parable, "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

helped everyone: for the destitute, she was a benefactress; for the grief-stricken, a comforter; for sinners, a guide to repentance. She possessed a deep humility, accounting herself the worst and most sinful of all.

In her ascetic deeds she was guided by the counsels of the Palestinian ascetic, St Euthymius. The sublime life of St Xenia drew many souls to Christ. The holy virgin died in 450 while she was praying. During her funeral, a luminous wreath of stars surrounding a radiant cross appeared over the monastery in the heavens. This sign accompanied the body of the saint when it was carried into the city, and remained until the saint's burial. Many of the sick received healing after touching the relics of the saint.

The Holy Martyrs Babylas of Sicily and his two disciples Timothy and Agapius lived during the third century on the outskirts of Rome. St Babylas was born in the city of Reupolium into a rich family, and he was raised by his parents in the Christian Faith.

While still in his youth he abandoned the world, secretly going from the house of his parents to a mountain, where he spent all his time in fasting, prayer and silence. His two disciples, Timothy and Agapius, labored with him. Fleeing a persecution by the pagans, he went with his disciples to the island of Sicily, where they converted many unbelievers to Christ.

The governor of the island, angered by the missionary activity of St Babylas, ordered that he and his disciples be arrested, and he also had them tortured. The saints patiently endured their sufferings, and all three died by the sword. Their bodies were thrown into a fire, but the flames did not harm the warriors of Christ. They were buried on the island of Sicily by local Christians.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

UPCOMING CHURCH SERVICES:
Saturday, Jan. 30, Great Vespers, 6pm

UPCOMING CLASSES:
Orthodox Catechism, Tuesday, Jan. 26, 6pm
NO SCRIPTURE CLASS DUE TO VIGIL IN SWANSEA, IL

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. *Tickets may be purchased from Georgia Pardalos.* 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. If you need a procurement form to give to business owners, please see Georgia Pardalos. This is an important fundraiser for our parish – please plan to attend!

Tables may be reserved for your group with the purchase of pre-paid tickets.

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. If you are not on our mailing list, there are unlabeled calendar – please take a calendar and put your name and address in the notebook next to the calendars. Greek calendars are also now available.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

John and Jennifer Estes welcomed the arrival of their son Gabriel on January 8. Gabriel and his mother are doing well. We pray that our most merciful Lord grants him many years!

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.

“Wherefore let us give up vain and fruitless cares, and approach to the glorious and venerable rule of our holy calling. Let us attend to what is good, pleasing, and acceptable in the sight of Him who formed us. Let us look steadfastly to the blood of Christ, and see how precious that blood is to God, which, having been shed for our salvation, has set the grace of repentance before the whole world. Let us turn to every age that has passed, and learn that, from generation to generation, the Lord has granted a place of repentance to all such as would be converted unto Him.

—SAINT CLEMENT OF ROME (MARTYRED ~ 101)



On Sunday, February 7th, over 130 million Americans will tune in to the Super Bowl Football Game. There will be parties with abundant food, friendship and fellowship. At the same time, there will be people worrying about staying warm, finding shelter and a warm meal. This fact generated more than 20 years ago the Souper Bowl of Caring Program, a powerful movement that is transforming the Super Bowl weekend into the largest weekend of giving and serving. This year, our church is joining this event.

Philoptochos is organizing a special food collection for the Central Missouri Food Bank. Bring non-perishable food items and place them in the food barrel. They will be picked up on Monday February 8.

The youth of our parish will collect donations from parishioners in soup pots during the Greek Dinner dance and on February 7- the Super Bowl Sunday. Every dollar donated goes to IOCC (International Orthodox Christian Charities) to support their ministries.

Be part of this movement that is sharing God's love with those in need. Please give generously; small efforts can make a huge impact in the fight against hunger and poverty.

JOHN THE BLESSED

by Photios Kontoglou

The Nativity Feast having passed, St. Basil took his staff and traversed all of the towns, in order to see who would celebrate his Feast Day with purity of heart. He passed through regions of every sort and through villages of prominence, yet regardless of where he knocked, no door opened to him, since they took him for a beggar. And he would depart embittered, for, though he needed nothing from men, he felt how much pain the heart of every impecunious person must have endured at the insensitivity that these people showed him. One day, as he was leaving such a merciless village, he went by the graveyard, where he saw that the tombs were in ruins, the headstones broken and turned topsy-turvy, and how the newly dug graves had been turned up by jackals. Saint that he was, he heard the dead speaking and saying: "During the time that we were on the earth, we labored, we were heavy-burdened, leaving behind us children and grandchildren to light just a candle, to burn a little incense on our behalf; but we behold nothing, neither a Priest to read over our heads a parastás [a memorial service] nor kóllyb(v)a [boiled wheat offered in commemoration of the dead], as though we had left behind no one." Thus, St. Basil was once again disquieted, and he said to himself, "These villagers give aid neither to the living nor to the deceased," departing from the cemetery and setting out alone in the midst of the freezing snow.

On the eve of the New Year, he came upon a certain hamlet, which was the poorest of the poor villages in all of Greece. The freezing wind howled through the scrub bush and the rocky cliffs, and not a living soul was to be found in the pitch dark night! Then, he beheld in front of him a small knoll, be-

low which there was secreted away a sheepfold. St. Basil went into the pen and, knocking on the door of the hut with his staff, called out: "Have mercy on me, a poor man, for the sake of your deceased relatives, for even Christ lived as a beggar on this earth." Awakening, the dogs lunged at him. But as they drew near him and sniffed him, they became gentle, wagged their tails, and lay down at his feet, whimpering imploringly and with joy. Thereupon, a shepherd, a young man of twenty-five or so, with a curly black beard, opened the door and stepped out: John Barbákos—a demure and rugged man, a sheepman. Before taking a good look at who was knocking, he had already said, "Enter, come inside. Good day, Happy New Year!"

Inside the hut, a lamp was suspended overhead from a cradle that was attached to two beams. Next to the hearth was their bedding, and John's wife was sleeping. As soon as St. Basil went inside, John, seeing that the old man was a clergyman, took his hand and kissed it, saying, "Your blessing, Elder," as though he had known him previously and as though he were his father. And the Saint said to him: "May you and all of your household be blessed, together with your sheep, and may the peace of God be upon you." The wife then arose, and she, too, revered the Elder and kissed his hand, and he blessed her. St. Basil looked like a mendicant monk, with an old skoúphia [monastic hat], his rása [inner and outer cassocks] worn and patched, and his tsaróuchia [a traditional leather slipper, usually adorned with a pompom at the end of the shoe] full of holes; as well, he had an old emptylooking satchel. John the blessed put wood on the fire. Straightway the hut began to glisten, as though seemingly a palace. The rafters seemed to be gilded with gold, while the hanging cheesecloth bags [filled with curing cheese] looked like vigil lamps, and the wooden containers, cheese presses, and all of the accesso-

ries used by John in making cheese became like silver, as though decorated by diamonds, as did all of the other humble things that John the blessed had in his hut. The wood burning in the hearth crackled and sang like the birds that sing in Paradise, giving off a fragrance wholly delightful. The couple placed St. Basil near the fire, where he sat, and the wife put down pillows on which he could rest. Then the Elder took the satchel from around his neck, placing it next to him, and removed his old ráson (outside cassock), remaining in his zostikó [inner cassock]. Together with his farmhand, John the blessed went out to milk the sheep and to place the newborn lambs in the lambing pen, and afterwards he separated the ewes that were ready to birth and confined them within the enclosure, while his helper put the other sheep out to graze. His flock was sparse and John was poor; yet, he was blessed. And he was possessed of great joy at all times, day and night, for he was a good man and he had a good wife. Anyone who happened to pass by their hut they cared for as though he were a brother. And it is thus that St. Basil found lodging in their home and settled in, as if it were his own, blessing it from top to bottom. On that night, he was awaited, in all of the cities and villages of the known world, by rulers, Hierarchs, and officials; but he went to none of these. Instead, he went to lodge in the hut of John the blessed.

So, John, after pasturing the sheep, came back in and said to the Saint, "Elder, I am greatly joyful. I wish to have you read to us the writings about St. Basil [i.e., the appointed hymns to the Saint]. I am an illiterate man, but I like all of the writings of our religion [once again, the hymns and services of the Church]. In fact, I have a small book from an Hagiogrite Abbot [i.e., from Mt. Athos], and whenever someone who can read and write happens to pass by, I get him to read out of the booklet, since we have no Church near us."

In the East, it was dimly dawning. St Basil rose and stood, facing eastward, making his Cross. He then bent down, took a booklet from his satchel, and said, “Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.” John the blessed went and stood behind him, and his wife, having nursed their baby, also went to stand near him, with her arms crossed [over her chest]. St. Basil then said [the hymn], “God is the Lord...” and the Apolytikion of the Feast of the Circumcision, “Without change, Thou hast assumed human form,” omitting his own Apolytikion, which states, “Thy sound is gone forth unto all the earth.” His voice was sweet and humble, and John and his wife felt great contrition, even though they did not understand all of the words. St. Basil now said the whole of Matins and the Canon of the Feast, “Come, O ye peoples, and let us chant a song unto Christ God,” without reciting his own canon, which goes, “O Basil, we would that thy voice were present....” Thereafter, he said aloud the entire Liturgy, pronounced the dismissal, and blessed the household. As they sat at the table, having eaten and finished their food, the wife brought the B(V)asilopeta [a sweet bread or cake baked in honor of St. Basil on the New Year] and placed it on the serving table. Then St. Basil took a knife and with it traced the sign of the Cross on the Basilopeta, saying, “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” He cut a first piece, saying, “for Christ,” a second, afterwards, saying, “for the Panagia [the Theotokos or Mother of God],” and then “for the master of the house, John the blessed.” John exclaimed, “Elder, you forgot St. Basil!” The Saint replied, “Yes, indeed,” and thus said, “And for the servant of God, Basil.” After this, he resumed: “...and for the master of the house,” “for the mistress of the house,” “for the child,” “for the farmhand,” “for the animals,” and “for the poor.” Thereupon, John the blessed

said, “Elder, why did you not cut a piece for your reverendship?” And the Saint said, “But I did, O blessed one!” But John, this blissful man, did not understand.

Afterwards, St. Basil stood up and said the prayer, “O Lord my God, I know that I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under the roof of the house of my soul.” John the Blessed then said: “I wonder if you can tell me, Elder, since you know many things, to what palaces St. Basil went this evening? And the rulers and monarchs—what sins do they have? We poor people are sinners, since our poverty leads us into sin.” St. Basil said the same prayer, again—with tears—though changing it: “O Lord my God, I have seen that Thy servant John the simple is worthy and that it is meet that Thou shouldest enter into his shelter. He is a babe, and it is to babes that Thy Mysteries are revealed.” And again John the blissful, John the blessed, understood nothing....

** This well-known and charming short story by Phótiós Kóntoglou has appeared in several versions, both in Greek and in what are, unfortunately, largely poor English translations. Kontoglou’s Greek is quite difficult to translate, since he uses many words common to the dialect of Greeks in Asia Minor. Though some of these words are actually derived from ancient Greek, in general they are part of a language spoken today by less literate Greeks. Thus, there is a tendency to render them in English slang, which detracts from the power of Kontoglou’s Greek and his writing and imagery. At other times, translators fail at finding the middle ground between stilted literal translations and translations which add so much to the original Greek texts that Kontoglou’s characteristic literary style is lost. I have used, here, the Greek text published by Harnos Publications (Athens, Greece, 1994) in its collection *Diegémata ton Christougénon*, and have tried to capture in my rendering the style, simple eloquence, and sensitivity of the author’s story as it reads in Greek*
—Archbishop Chrysostomos.

