

SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST

G R E E K O R T H O D O X C H U R C H



JULY 4, 2010

SIXTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW

Saint Andrew, Archbishop of Crete, was born in the city of Damascus into a pious Christian family. Up until seven years of age the boy was mute and did not talk. However, after communing the Holy Mysteries of Christ he found the gift of speech and began to speak. And from that time the lad began earnestly to study Holy Scripture and the discipline of theology.

At fourteen years of age he went off to Jerusalem and there he accepted monastic tonsure at the monastery of St Sava the Sanctified. St Andrew led a strict and chaste life, he was meek and abstinent, such that all were amazed at his virtue and reasoning of mind. As a man of talent and known for his virtuous life, over the passage of time he came to be numbered among the Jerusalem clergy and was appointed a secretary for the Patriarchate -- a writing clerk. In the year 680 the locum tenens of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, Theodore, included archdeacon Andrew among the representatives of the Holy City sent to the Sixth Ecumenical Council, and here the saint contended against heretical teachings, relying upon his profound knowledge of Orthodox doctrine. Shortly after the Council he was summoned back to Constantinople from Jerusalem and he was appointed archdeacon at the church of Hagia Sophia, the Wisdom of God. During the reign of the emperor Justinian II (685-695) St Andrew was ordained bishop of the city of Gortineia on the island of Crete. In his new position he shone forth as a true luminary of the Church, a great hierarch -- a theologian, teacher and hymnographer.

St Andrew wrote many liturgical hymns. He was the originator of a new liturgical form -- the canon. Of the canons composed by him the best known is the Great Penitential Canon, including within its 9 odes the 250 troparia recited during the Great Lent. In the First Week of Lent at the service of Compline it is read in portions (thus called "methymony" [trans. note: from the usage in the service of Compline of the "God is with us", in Slavonic the "S'nami Bog", or in Greek "Meth' Humon ho Theos", from which derives "methymony"]), and again on Thursday of the Fifth Week at the All-night Vigil during Matins.

St Andrew of Crete gained renown with his many praises of the All-Pure Virgin Mary. To him are likewise ascribed: the Canon for the feast of the Nativity of Christ, three odes for the Compline of Palm Sunday and also in the first four days of Holy Passion Week, as well as verses for the feast of the Meeting of the Lord, and many another church-song. His hynographic tradition was continued by the churchly great melodists of following ages: Saints John of Damascus, Cosma of Maium, Joseph the Melodist, Theophan the Written-

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AT THE SMALL ENTRANCE WE SING

ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ. ΜΟΔΕ 5.

Let us worship the Word who is unoriginate* with the Father and the Spirit, and from a Virgin was born* for our salvation, O believers, and let us sing His praise.* For in His goodness He was pleased* to ascend the Cross in the flesh, and to undergo death,* and to raise up those who had died,* by His glorious Resurrection.

ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ FOR THE CHURCH. ΜΟΔΕ 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. ΜΟΔΕ 2.

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 you: Hasten to intercession and speed to make supplication, O you who ever protects, O Theotokos, those that honor you.

ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ. ΗΧΟΣ ΠΛ. Α.

Tὸν συνάναρχον Λόγον Πατρὶ καὶ Πνεύματι, τὸν ἐκ Παρθένου τεχθέντα εἰς σωτηρίαν ἡμῶν, ἀνυμνήσωμεν πιστοὶ καὶ προσκυνήσωμεν· ὅτι ἠδύοκησε σαρκί, ἀνεληθεῖν ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ, καὶ θάνατον ὑπομείναι, καὶ ἐγειραὶ τοὺς τεθνεῶτας, ἐν τῇ ἐνδόξῳ Ἀναστάσει αὐτοῦ.

ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ ΤΟΥ ΝΑΟΥ. ΠΛ. Α'.

Λουκάν τον πανύμνητον καὶ ἅγιον Ἀπόστολον, τὸν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας γνωστὸν συνθέτην τῶν Πράξεων τῶν Ἀποστόλων, τὸν τε σεμνὸν τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου Χριστοῦ ὑπομηματιστήν, 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 Β'.

Προστασία τῶν Χριστιανῶν καταίσχυντε, ἡμεσιτεία πρὸς τὸν Ποιητὴν μετέθετε, μὴ παρίδης ἀμαρτωλῶν δεήσεων φωνάς, ἀλλὰ πρόφθασον, ὡς γαθή, εἰς τὴν βοήθειαν ἡμῶν, τῶν πιστῶς κραυγαζόντων σοι. Τάχυνον εἰς πρεσβείαν, καὶ σπεῦσον εἰς ἰκεσίαν, ἢ προστατεύουσα εἰ, Θεοτόκε, τῶν τιμώντων σε.

“Do not compare those who work signs and wonders and mighty acts in the world with those who practise stillness with knowledge. Love the idleness of stillness above providing for the world’s starving and the conversion of a multitude of heathen to the worship of God. It is better for you to free yourself from the shackles of sin than to free slaves from their slavery. It is better for you to make peace with your soul, causing concord to reign over the trinity within you (I mean the body, soul, and the spirit), than by your teaching to bring peace among men at variance.

THE READINGS OF THE DAY

EPISTLE READING

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE

ROMANS 12:6-14

BRETHREN, having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

GOSPEL READING

MATTHEW 9:1-8

At that time, getting into a boat Jesus crossed over and came to his own city. And behold, they brought to him a paralytic, lying on his bed; and when Jesus saw their faith he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven." And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say 'Rise and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" he then said to the paralytic -- "Rise, take up your bed and go home." And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

“Therefore man cannot have absolute freedom. Only God has freedom in the absolute sense of the word, since God is uncreated. No being which has a beginning and owes its existence to some other being is able to have absolute freedom, but it has freedom in a relative sense. “The authentic person as absolute ontological freedom, must be ‘uncreated’, that is, unbounded by any ‘necessity’, including its own existence. If such a person does not exist in reality, the concept of the person is a presumptuous daydream”.

Thus since man has been created, he does not have absolute freedom. But within his limits he can, as far as possible, acquire absolute freedom, only when he is reborn in Christ, when he becomes a dwelling of the Trinitarian God and a Temple of the Holy Spirit, when, that is to say, he becomes a person. Then, by grace, he becomes uncreated, indeed he becomes fatherless, motherless and without genealogy”.

—METR. HIEROTHEOS VLACHOS (1945 –)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**UPCOMING CHURCH SERVICES:
NO GREAT VESPERS THIS WEEK**

**UPCOMING CLASSES:
CATECHISM CLASS WILL RESUME LATER IN THE SUMMER**

FR. MICHAEL AT CLERGY LAITY

Fr. Michael will be in Atlanta for the Biennial National Clergy Laity Congress. He will return in time for services next Sunday.

DONATIONS REQUESTED

A donation box has been placed in the Narthex for our Long-range planning study - gifts of any amount are greatly appreciated towards the completion of this project.

STEWARDSHIP STATISTICS

We have received 63 pledge cards totalling \$86,840. Thank you to all who have generously committed to the future of our parish!

REMEMBER THE CHURCH THIS SUMMER

If you are planning to travel during the summer months, do not forget the needs of the Church. Our financial obligations continue, even when you are traveling. Prior to leaving town, please remember to send your stewardship offerings to the Church.

FOOD BANK

The Parish always accepts donations on non-perishable food items for distribution by the Mid-Missouri Food Bank. Please place items in the purple barrel in the narthex. We also accept donations of butter / margarine for St. Francis House.

SYNAXARION

Continued

upon. There have also been preserved edifying Sermons of St Andrew for certain of the Church feasts.

The Hieromartyr Theodore, Bishop of Cyrene, lived during the reign of the emperor Diocletian (284-305). Skilled at writing, and having attained great skill in calligraphy, he transcribed many books for the churches. His son Leo denounced him to the district governor, Dignianus, saying that his father possessed Christian books and was turning people away from idol worship, and bringing them instead to faith in Christ the Savior. St Theodore was brought to trial. Many Christians followed after him, including the women Cyprilla, Lucia and Aroa. The holy bishop was ordered to surrender his books and renounce Christ, but he refused this demand. They beat him with rods, but St Theodore was not intimidated. With a fiery zeal for the truth he destroyed the pagan sacrificial offerings. They tortured him for a long while, cut out his tongue, and then threw him in prison where he died. Also put to death were the women Cyprilla, Lucia and Aroa, and all who had accepted holy Baptism from the holy bishop.

DOGMA AND DOGMATICS: ON COGNIZANCE AND FAITH: COGNIZANCE «IN PERSON»

By Metropolitan John of Pergamus

Now let us focus on analyzing what the term “person” means. What is significant is that the person is of course seated within a personal relationship. It cannot be imagined on its own, but solely within a relationship. One person equals no person. However, that which characterizes the person is that it is unique and that it cannot be repeated, subsequently, when defining it, it does not allow for any possibility of comparison, of substitution or incorporation - within the lattice of our experiences - which is the case with all objects. Subsequently, we cannot recognize God based on His attributes, because attributes can also be applied to other objects, to things other than God. As we said, this is the way we can know things, not persons.

You cannot come to know a person based on its attributes. You would essentially be relating it in spite of its attributes, and it is then that you realize it is indeed a person. In other words, someone can be a bad person, but because you love him, you acknowledge him as being unique, without taking this attribute into account. On the contrary, if you relate a good person to his goodness, then you are not relating to the person per se. If you likewise identify God on account of His goodness, you are not identifying Him as a person; you are identifying Him as you would an object, or a thing, which, if tomorrow it proves it is not as you expected from the aspect of His attributes, your faith will instantly be shaken and you will lose your relationship with Him.

God is not recognized by His attributes, the way that objects are; it is precisely because He is a person, that He is recognized without the need to associate His identity with His attributes. This therefore is the basic characteristic of a person. The other characteristic is that the person ontologically comprises an irreplaceable element of our existence; that is, if the

person were to disappear, then our entire existence would collapse. It is then that we perceive the person ontologically, in the profoundest ontological sense: in other words, that He exists, and that we exist thanks to Him; and furthermore, that the interruption or rather the non-existence of the one affects the existence of the other.

Theologically, this means that if the Son ceases to exist, the Father ceases to exist. If the Father ceases to exist, so does the Son. There is a personal relationship here. This loving relationship is ontological because from it, hangs the existence of each of the parties of this relationship. Thus, we do not recognize God simply as a kind Being or whatever else, but instead, as an element from which our existence hangs. And we shall now see the special meaning it carries, in the realm of Christian knowledge.

This personal relationship in Christ – the one between Christ and the Father – is also given to us in Christ, thus enabling us to recognize God as sons of God, and to address Him as Father.

You must be aware that our addressing God as Father originates exclusively, one hundred percent, from this relationship, from the right that Christ bestowed on His disciples, to address God as Father. The concept of God’s paternity was of course also common outside of Christianity, before the Bible. To the ancient Greeks, Zeus was “the father of gods and mankind”. But this concept has nothing in common with the concept of God as Father in the New Testament, in the Bible. In the New Testament, only the Son has the right to address God as Father; only Christ. But He bestowed this right upon His disciples, when He pointed out to them how they should pray; and this was the meaning of the Lord’s Prayer, when Christ says: “... for I instruct you to pray thus, by saying : Our Father... ..”

Addressing God as Father does not involve an inherent religiousness. It involves a personal relationship, which only the Son – the exclusive, only-begotten Son – had. God has no other Son that could address Him as Father; God has only one Son. Well, it is this same Son who bestows this right; not in a judicial way, but, by relating Himself to us, and our relating ourselves to Him, we too become sons of God the Father, thus creating a relationship and subsequently able to know God. What does it mean, to “know God”? As what do we know Him? As someone good? As someone powerful? We could surmise all these, without Christ. What Christ gives us as God’s identity, is that He is the Father. This is what creates a personal affiliation, a filial relationship. This relationship that God has with His Son eternally is the one that is relayed to us, and it is thus that we know the Father; that we know God as Father. This is the basic content in the cognizance of God: it is the paternity of God; that God is the Father. Let us not forget this. We do not learn about God. We do not gather information on Him. We do not create a dossier with God’s attributes, the way that Dogmatics often do. For the Christian, the content of God is that He is the Father; that God relates to Father and that we cannot comprehend this outside a filial relationship. You cannot address someone as “Father” without being a son. In the intellectual sphere, one can state that “God is the Father of His Son”. I know that; I know it from the Bible, from Dogmatics; but, in order to know Him existentially, to acknowledge Him as Father, you must be His son. It cannot be any other way. It is another thing to say: “that is the father of my friend, therefore, I know him to be a father because he is my friend’s father”, and it is another thing to say “existentially I acknowledge him as my father because I am his son”. A son knows his father in a different manner than the one by which he knows his friend’s father. This is different kind of knowledge.

Well, this existential relationship, this loving relationship, is attained only through Christ, because only He is the Son who knows God as Father, eternally. And it is bestowed only to those who acquire

this filial relationship thanks to the Son. We shall see what this means, in more detail.

We shall now make a brief analysis of this cognizance. What does this cognizance contain, which we call “personal”? This is the cognizance “in person” that Paul speaks of, when we know God “in the person of Jesus Christ”. What does it mean, to know someone “in person”? What elements does it contain, which could be compared to the elements by which we recognize things? We shall now make this comparison.

The first basic element that the cognizance of a person entails, as compared to the cognizance of things, we could call the element of liberty. What does this mean? It means that I can never recognize something liberally, neither does that thing have any liberty of its own, during the moment of cognizance. Neither the recognizer nor the recognized behave freely; can you freely ignore, or not recognize this table that is in front of you, or me, who is speaking to you? Of course not. Whoever says that he does not recognize my existence is obviously not in his right mind. He doesn’t have the liberty to not recognize me. The object itself imposes its recognition. Just as I, being something recognizable by you, cannot be considered non-recognizable. Therefore, cognizance contains the element of compulsion. It is somewhat like the compulsion that is used in Apologetics, in its attempt to prove all those things that we say about God and His existence. There is a certain element of compulsion there: we want to convince someone logically that God exists. If you convince someone with logic, then this knowledge (cognizance) will be compulsory by nature, just as you are compelled to acknowledge the existence of the table or any other object. God therefore also becomes a compulsory object of cognizance, both to Himself and to us. This is the way that God is usually recognized by people, by demons and by animals. God is the “supreme power”. This is the way that idolaters and most people recognize God; how they compulsorily see Him. That is so, because they are conscious of their own weakness. It is the almighty Being that they cannot control.... He is known to them, as a “thing”. They refer to a “supreme

power”, and not to a person. Being recognized in this manner, he is recognized compulsorily and therefore lacks the element of liberty. When can we recognize something “in liberty”? And what does it mean, for the element of liberty to exist?

Saint Maximus posed this question (It was also posed by Saint Clement of Alexandria, but he didn't utilize it): How does God recognize things? How does He recognize the world? Does He recognize it in accordance with its nature and the nature of things? His reply is No. God does not recognize the world according to its nature. And we shall explain what this means. What does it mean, to recognize something in accordance with its nature? It means that the thing that you recognize is in fact there and you cannot do anything but recognize it. For example, what is the nature of a tree? This thing that I know to be a tree, I know it on the basis of its nature, just as a scientist knows, in the old sense (as I told you, science today has changed slightly). But, just as the scientist knows something on the basis of the laws of nature, by knowing things that are based on given and objective laws, one could say that God similarly knows - let's say - the tree: that it has this colour, this shape, these laws of growth, etc.. God's omniscience is quite often perceived in this manner, giving rise to tremendous problems.

We must forget this means, this concept of knowledge, when we refer to God. Maximus says: No, God does not recognize things in accordance with their nature; He recognizes them as His “own wills”, for “He created those beings, by His wanting to”. There is a vast difference between the two. For God to recognize things, the nature of those things is not a prerequisite. All things are products of His free will. In order to comprehend this, we must look for similar situations in our own experiences (otherwise all of this might impress you, but it will not enlighten you).

Is it possible to relate to something as a “wanton” or as an “own will”? And not to recognize it as a certain nature, according to its given nature? This can only occur in the case of a person, no matter how many difficulties this issue may contain. The person

is regarded, perceived as an identity, but not on the basis of its nature, which would imply its attributes; perhaps not even because of its physical presence.

There is a delicate issue here. I have to mention it, and I hope it will enlighten you. Sartre mentions an example that is very useful in this instance. He says that someone had an appointment at a café with a person named Peter, at three in the afternoon. This person was a person in the manner that we just described; that is, there was a relationship of existential interdependence between them. He goes to the appointment, but does not find this person at the café. There are other persons who are sitting there, but not Peter. Sartre observes that what is happening at that moment is, that the absent person - that is to say, the physical absence of that person - immediately creates a unique presence: the entire café is engulfed by the presence of an absent person. And he immediately observes: do not think that this is a psychological matter, or a matter of fantasy; because realization comes later, always as a secondary factor. It is an ontological matter. The absentee is present. And the absentee can be present, despite his physical absence, because there is a - let's say (as we did before, between the Father and the Son) - a loving relationship. One's person is not dependent on its physical presence. That is the conclusion: in a personal relationship, you can have a presence, without a physical presence. Or rather, physical absence can assist cognizance, unobstructed by the compelling element of physical presence. What do I mean by this? You cannot deny a physical presence. The person in the example denied the physical presence of all the others. If you asked him, it is only in retrospect that he will tell you that George, Nick and others were there. These physical presences were not the determining elements for his cognizance. And this has immense consequences on the cognizance of God without His physical presence, with all the explanations that must ensue on the matter.

On a somewhat simpler level, we can recognize the person only in liberty, because if the person does not wish to divulge its identity, we cannot recognize it.

Revelation is always a prerequisite for cognizance of a person. The meaning of revelation lies here. What is a revelation of God as a basic element? It means that God is recognized in liberty; He wants to and does, give Himself. Just like a person. You can regard me as much as you like as an object, with all the properties that you can observe thanks to my physical presence. But no-one can actually know anyone, unless there is a willful revelation by the recognized. You cannot forcefully recognize someone. You can get to know him properly, only in a state of liberty. Therefore the element of personal cognizance always contains the element of revelation, and revelation contains the element of liberty in knowledge. This is basic. We must always remember, that God identifies with our knowledge, only if He wants to. Because He reveals Himself freely.

I would now also proceed to another, somewhat provocative conclusion : that God does not want to be recognized by us, unless it is done in a state of liberty. A cognizance that is imposed on us, that is not in a state of liberty on our part, or is in defiance of our liberty, or despite our liberty, is not the cognizance that God wants; that is, if someone were to prove God's existence logically, thus convincing us logically that God exists. If you could ever imagine that we can become convinced logically, as I am logically convinced that this table exists at this very moment (I can also do this visually), for instance, I can be logically convinced of the existence of a constellation that I have never seen, but, a scientist can prove that this constellation could exist, with a series of reasonings, it cannot be otherwise: I would be convinced logically. This is another compulsory knowledge – I am not regarding it in a state of independence. God cannot be regarded, nor does He want to be regarded, under compulsion. Which means that man has the option to deny the existence of God; he can say “I don't know You”. Which essentially means “I don't want to know You – You may exist, but You don't exist for me”. God wants us to know that He exists for us, for me. In essence, He wants that personal relationship. He wants recognition that springs from within

a personal relationship, not just a general knowledge that a God exists. This kind of knowledge does not interest God. When He reveals Himself, He reveals Himself as my Father, your Father, his Father, and not just God in a general and vague sense. Such a knowledge, in a state of liberty, is what gives me the right to say liberally : “Yes, You exist” in agreement, or to say “No, I ignore You, to me You don't exist”. In the cognizance therefore of God, we have the element of liberty, both on the part of God and man. And this what a personal relationship entails: cognizance as we outlined it, and not according to nature; what I would now call “own will”. You can also acquaint yourself with God, because you want to know Him, just as He knows you, because He wants to become acquainted with you. This is why knowledge of God is revealed only to mankind; to Adam who is a person. He does not reveal Himself to nature. He of course also reveals Himself to nature, but in another, compulsory way. Animals also know that God exists, and demons know that God exists “and demons believe and are terrified... ..”. Who would want this kind of knowledge ? This is not the recognition that God wants: an objective recognition. He wants that special recognition. That is why Adam, by saying “no” to God, is displaying the liberty to ignore God in practice. This is a wonderful expression, not only in Greek, but in other languages also: “I ignore You”. It literally signifies “I don't know You”, but that is not the true clout of the word. When we say “I ignore You” it actually signifies that I don't want to know You. “I do not know thee” is the awesome statement that Christ said He would make to certain people.... “I do not know thee”. But is it possible, that God doesn't know these people ? Christ surely knows them on Judgment Day, and yet He will say “I do not know thee”. He will say: “I don't know you”, implying that “I have no personal relationship with you”.

Therefore it is not knowledge of any kind, but knowledge of a personal nature. And that is why it contains the element of liberty.

To Be Continued...