

# SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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## JULY 11, 2010

### SEVENTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW

*The holy Great Martyr Evfymia* (September 16) suffered martyrdom in the city of Chalcedon in the year 304, during the time of the persecution against Christians by the emperor Diocletian (284-305). One and a half centuries later, at a time when the Christian Church had become victorious within the Roman Empire, God deigned that Evfymia the All-Praised should again be a witness and confessor of the purity of the Orthodox teaching.

In the year 451 in the city of Chalcedon, in the very church where the glorified relics of the holy Great Martyr Evfymia rested, the sessions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council (July 16) took place. The Council was convened for determining the precise dogmatic formulae of the Orthodox Church concerning the nature of the God-Man Jesus Christ. This was necessary because of the widespread heresy of the Monophysites [“mono-physis” meaning “one nature”], who opposed the Orthodox teaching of the two natures in Jesus Christ, the Divine and the Human natures (in one Divine Person). The Monophysites falsely affirmed that in Christ was only one nature, the Divine [i.e. that Jesus is God but not man, by nature], causing discord and unrest within the Church. At the Council were present 630 representatives from all the local Christian Churches. On the Orthodox side Anatolius, Patriarch of Constantinople (July 3), Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem (July 2), and representatives of St Leo, Pope of Rome (February 18) participated in the conciliar deliberations. The Monophysites were present in large numbers, headed by Dioscorus, the Patriarch of Alexandria, and the Constantinople archimandrite Eutychius.

After prolonged discussions the two sides could not come to a decisive agreement.

The holy Patriarch Anatolius of Constantinople proposed that the Council submit the decision of the Church dispute to the Holy Spirit, through His undoubted bearer St Evfymia the All-Praised, whose wonderworking relics had been discovered during the Council’s discussions. The Orthodox hierarchs and their opponents wrote down their confessions of faith on separate scrolls and sealed them with their seals. They opened the tomb of the holy Great Martyr Evfymia and placed both scrolls upon her bosom. Then, in the presence of the emperor Marcian (450-457), the participants of the Council sealed the tomb, putting on it the imperial seal and setting a guard to watch over it for three days. During these days both sides imposed upon themselves strict fast and made intense prayer. After three days the patriarch and the emperor in the

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# AT THE SMALL ENTRANCE WE SING

## APOLYTIKION. MODE 6.

**W**hen 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. MODE 3.

**T**o the Orthodox you brought elation, \* the unorthodox, humiliation, \* O Evfymia, the beautiful virgin of Christ. \* For what the Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical \* Synod decreed well as dogma you ratified. \* Pray to Christ our God, O glorious Martyr, fervently, \* entreating Him to grant us His great mercy.

## 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 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. Β.

**Ἀ**γγελικαὶ Δυνάμεις ἐπὶ τὸ μνήμᾳ σου, καὶ οἱ φυλάσσοντες ἀπενεκρώθησαν· καὶ ἴστατο Μαρία ἐν τῷ τάφῳ ζητοῦσα τὸ ἄχραντὸν σου σῶμα. Ἐσκύλευσας τὸν Ἄδην, μὴ πειρασθεὶς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ· ὑπήντησας τῇ Παρθένῳ, δωρούμενος τὴν ζωὴν. Ὁ ἀναστὰς ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, Κύριε δόξα σοι.

## ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ. ΗΧΟΣ Γ.

**Λ**ίαν εὐφρνας τοὺς Ὁρθοδόξους, καὶ Κατήσχυνας τοὺς κακοδόξους, Εὐφημία Χριστοῦ καλλιπάρθενε· τῆς γὰρ Τετάρτης Συνόδου ἐκύρωσας, ἃ οἱ Πατέρες καλῶς ἐδογματίσαν· Μάρτυς ἔνδοξε, Χριστὸν τὸν Θεὸν ἰκέτευε, δωρήσασθαι ἡμῖν τὸ μέγα ἔλεος.

## ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ ΤΟΥ ΝΑΟΥ. ΠΛ. Α'.

**Λ**ουκᾶν τὸν 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.

## ΚΟΝΤΑΚΙΟΝ. ΗΧΟΣ Β'.

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

# THE READINGS OF THE DAY

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## EPISTLE READING

### THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS 6:1-10

**B**RETHREN, working together with him, then, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, “At the acceptable time I have listened to you, and helped you on the day of salvation.” Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We put no obstacle in any one’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watching, hunger; by purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

## GOSPEL READING

### MATTHEW 9:27-35

**A**t that time, as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, “Have mercy on us, Son of David.” When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to him, “Yes, Lord.” Then he touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith be it done to you.” And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly charged them, “See that no one knows it.” But they went away and spread his fame through all that district. As they were going away, behold, a dumb demoniac was brought to him. And when the demon had been cast out, the dumb man spoke; and the crowds marveled, saying, “Never was anything like this seen in Israel.” But the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the prince of demons.” And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.

“*Ultimately, the mystery of Christ becoming man becomes somewhat comprehensible from the saints who attain theosis and come to know the transfiguration of their nature from the uncreated energy of God. Reasonably, nobody can grasp it in its fullness. We accept it and proceed to sanctification.*”

—METR. HIEROTHEOS VLACHOS (1945 –)

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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

## **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***

presence of the Council opened the tomb with its relics: the scroll with the Orthodox confession was held by St Evfymia in her right hand, and the scroll of the heretics lay at her feet. St Evfymia, as though alive, raised her hand and gave the scroll to the patriarch. After this miracle many of the hesitant accepted the Orthodox confession, while those remaining obstinate in the heresy were consigned to the Council's condemnation and excommunication.

After an invasion by the Persians during the seventh century, the relics of St Evfymia were transferred from Chalcedon to Constantinople, into a newly built church dedicated to her. Many years later, during the period of the Iconoclast heresy, the reliquary with the relics of the saint was cast into the sea by order of the Iconoclast emperor Leo the Isaurian (716-741). The reliquary was rescued from the sea by the ship-owning brothers Sergius and Sergonos, who gave it over to the local bishop. The holy bishop ordered that the relics be preserved in secret, beneath a crypt, since the Iconoclast heresy was continuing to rage. A small church was built over the relics, and over the reliquary was put a board with an inscription stating whose relics rested within. When the Iconoclast heresy was finally condemned at the holy Seventh Ecumenical Council (in the year 787), during the time of St Tarasius, Patriarch of Constantinople (784-806) and the emperor Constantine VI (780-797) and his mother St Irene (797-802), the relics of the holy Great Martyr Evfymia were once again solemnly transferred to Constantinople.

**DOGMA AND DOGMATICS:**  
**ON COGNIZANCE AND FAITH: COGNIZANCE «IN PERSON»:**  
**PART 2 : THE ELEMENT OF LOVE**

*By Metropolitan John of Pergamus*

**I**t 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.

Another basic element is the element of love. Once again, we are not referring to an emotion. There are certain words that we must constantly interpret. We are also not referring to a relationship that arises from a compulsory state, with no liberty. And be careful here, because this is so very profound, that it escapes us. Every relationship contains a compelling factor when it is governed by laws, like for instance the laws of biology. Or aesthetic laws for Plato and especially for the Ancient Greeks for whom Eros was a basic element. Sykoutris analyzes this very capably; you should also definitely read Plato's Symposium in your free time – especially its Introduction. It discerns between Christian Love and Platonic Eros. And it proves that in Platonic Love, the attraction to something good - which was understood to be beauty - is irresistible. It wasn't possible to not love a good thing, or not be attracted by good. We therefore have an aesthetic necessity here, which was prevalent in ancient Hellenism. You can furthermore have a moral necessity; one cannot avoid loving a good person. Or even, a biological necessity... Wherever we encounter a

necessity, we cannot acknowledge a case of "love" therein.

And how do we prove that there is no necessity, or that it does indeed exist? Or, how do we prove that in a certain instance I do not have any such necessity? Only when one can reverse the conditions, and this is exactly where the Gospel introduced the greatest revolution. Sykoutris mentions in a footnote that, If Satan asked God "why do You love people? Tell me, give me one reason, knowing how humans are thus and thus and thus... and even though You can see their pitiful state..", he would have put God in a tight corner. What sort of excuse would there be for such a love? Where would you find a reason to justify His love towards a sinner, where everything, simply everything indicates that he is worth despising and not loving? Well, it is exactly then that you have proved that you love, of your own free will. You do not love because you have to love; you love because you willingly want to love. Well, I am saying all this to show that when we speak of knowledge that contains love, we must concede that it also has to contain the element of freedom. We are subsequently speaking of a love that does not arise from any necessity whatsoever, of any kind, even the most delicate kind and the most spiritual, or moral, as we would call it. God loves in exactly this manner, and this is exactly what Christ reveals to us. He reveals a Love of God that is liberal to such an extent, that it is not hampered by man's sinfulness. If you remove the love towards a sinner from the Gospel, the entire notion of the liberty within God's love will fall through. Because, to love a just person and a good person is almost inevitable; however, to love a sinner and to die for a sinner as

Christ did, well that may be sheer madness or foolishness, but it is surely an expression of liberty.

The third element that comprises love – which we are describing as a means of cognizance – and notice carefully how we are slowly reaching the crucial point, that is, that one comes to know God only through a lattice of relationships. If there is no loving relationship, if there is no love, no-one can ever know God. And here we stand at a point so outstandingly obvious in the New Testament. We could examine several verses that mention this curious albeit simple point: that if someone does not love God, he will never know God. Paul, in his 1st Epistle to Corinthians – which, as I have said in the past, deals chiefly with the issue of cognizance, and has been elaborated on with precision – concludes that “...many boast that they have knowledge..” !! And of course, we must examine what it means, to have knowledge. Paul says in chapter 8: “knowledge provides something physical, whereas love provides something constructive”. And he mentions the phrase “if one believes he knows something, he has never known anything whatsoever, in the way that it should be known; if one loves God, he shall be known by Him” (Cor.A’ 8.2-4).

Pay attention to this verse, which is pure gnosiology. “if one believes he knows something, he has never known anything whatsoever.....”. A complete absence of knowledge. Then he goes to the point where “if one loves God, he shall be known by Him...”. Even in the critics’ edition, you might observe that many manuscripts have omitted the word “God”, and they may quite possibly be the most ancient ones. It thus becomes obvious that “... if one loves, he shall be known by God”. That is, love is a prerequisite. As for “known by God”, it basically means (as Paul says elsewhere, in the Galatians Epistle “... having known God...” but afterwards immediately correcting it and saying “... or rather, being known by God.”), that you cannot meet God unless He has acknowledged you; because we - as creatures – do not have the liberty of knowledge that the uncreated God has.

Now, God knows us primarily, and He reveals Himself to us; but this cannot occur if the prerequisite of love is not there. If man cannot love, he cannot meet God. When we go to John Ch.1, it becomes quite clear. He says there “.. he that loveth not, knew not God, for God is love “ (John, 1.4,8). The words “he that loveth not” have a special meaning in this chapter, in this epistle. It denotes the relations within a community, a congregation. One must exist, one must belong in such a lattice of relations, within a congregation. We shall hence examine the significance that ecclesiology has in Gnosiology. It may be quite specific there, in John’s words, but there is also something else that we should also observe.

Immediately after he spoke these words, he continued with an explanation of what “God is love” means; this is something that we have frequently misinterpreted. “... In this, God’s love was made apparent.....”: “.... that God is love...” because “.... He sent forth His only-begotten Son....”.

God’s love is not an emotion, nor is it something that flows from His nature, as we sometimes say “God loves us by nature”. The Fathers were also very careful and retracted all such expressions. Because even the ancient Greeks and Plato used to say that God is love, and that He exudes love from His nature. Gregorios Nazianzenos does not acknowledge this either, and attacks it, because as you may remember, it was the cause of the problems created by Eunomius. He attacks precisely this idea of Plato’s. He refers to “the Greek philosopher”, and states that for us, God’s love is not “an effusion from a crater”. It does not proceed from His nature. God’s love consists of His being a Father and having a Son; just as I mentioned shortly before. And this Son “He gave to us”. The Father’s love is His Son; it is a person, a personal relationship, which henceforth is offered to us also, as a means of knowing God. The conclusion therefore that is reached, is that knowledge springs solely from a love relationship, which God Himself commenced to of-

fer. We cannot begin this relationship ourselves in a state of liberty.

This gives rise to a huge philosophical problem; why don't we as creatures freely know anything?. Why is everything to us a given thing? Well, that is exactly what it means to be a creature, to be something created and not uncreated. In reality, even your very existence is a given thing. Therefore, you are subject to compulsory knowledge. You cannot know anything in absolute liberty. God therefore, who is the only absolutely free Being, is the only One who can love freely. That is why He initially volunteers knowledge of Himself. He acknowledges us as His sons, through His own Son, which is what Paul meant when he said "or rather, being known by God", and through this means, we henceforth know Him as Father.

I will therefore finish off, with the following conclusion. The cognizance of God involves an accession into the love relationship between the Father and the Son in liberty, under our own free will. This relationship is free and not compulsory, because God is not obliged to love us; He does it, of His own free will. Neither are we obliged to love Him. We also enter this relationship voluntarily. Therefore the accession into a loving relationship such as this, contains the potential for the ontological identification of God as existing "in the person of Jesus Christ". Because, for us, God exists within this relationship to such an ontological degree, that if this ceased to be, our very existence would also cease to be.

In reality, this means that if we don't accede into the relationship of love that exists between the Father and the Son, we cannot ever know God. We shall know Him in thousands of philosophical ways, pagan ways or mystic ways, but not as a Father; that is, as the Father of the specific Son - a person - and subsequently as our own Father, because we have related to the person of the Son as being our father...

The second element is that love should be the factor that creates the lattice of these relations, where all those who acknowledge God as the Father in this

manner, through Christ, find themselves in a state of existential inter-dependence amongst themselves. Therefore, one must belong inside the community, inside the body that is formed by these relations. You cannot approach God from outside this body of persons who acknowledge Him in the way the Son does. And this means that God is known fully, only within the Congregation. Only in this way. Otherwise, He will be acknowledged as something else, but not as the Father. But God is the Father. It is how He reveals Himself. It is how He wants to reveal Himself. I don't know what else He is. He may be many other things, but because - as I said - knowledge presupposes willful revelation, this is the way that freely reveals God to us as the Father.

For these things to happen, a cleansing is imperative. You cannot reach this point of knowing God, of knowing Him in this manner, without clearing up your relationship in general; it is because in knowledge, there is interference by all kinds of relationships. In order for me to know about this table, the relationships that I have with the overall physical environment will need to interfere: with colors, with shapes, with everything. We never truly know about an object, without these general empirical relationships. Well, the same thing applies, when attempting to know God. Our entire existence, along with all our empirical relationships, is entangled in the quest to know God. I know God, through all my relationships, through things, through nature, through my senses, through objects. This is not a knowledge that flows only through my mind, nor only through my heart as an emotional center. It is a broader, existential knowledge, which engulfs my entire identity. My identity itself is linked to all the relationships that I have with things, with faces, with objects, with everyone; but especially with my personal relationships, because they can affect my identity. All of these things must therefore undergo a filtering, a cleansing, in order to determine to what extent they can be included in this relationship with God, through which His Son will

reveal Him, and make Him known to us in this way. This is where we shall discover that things are not so easy, and that they truly require cleansing. I would say that this is what ascetic living is all about. What is known as cleansing of passions is exactly this clearing up of our existential relations with everything that is entangled in our personal identity. This clearing up is a necessary prerequisite.

At this point, the words of Saint Gregorios the Theologian acquire immense significance, as I mentioned in the previous lesson: "... .. it is not for everyone.... to philosophize about God..", but "... for those who have undergone scrutiny and have lived in theory of things, and who have previously cleansed or detached both body and soul....". But we should not read the Fathers by isolating quotations. Saint Gregorios himself stressed in another of his speeches the same thing that I have tried to extensively analyze here; that is, in order to know God the prerequisite may be cleansing, but it inevitably relates to loving. He writes: "... God may be the ultimate radiance ..... which becomes imaginable as we incessantly detach ourselves, it becomes loved as we incessantly envisage it, and, by incessantly loving, it becomes self-evident..". Thus, cleansing is not a purpose on its own; An ascetic life will not reveal God to us. Neither do we automatically meet God by cleansing ourselves of our passions. God becomes known, through our communion within the body of Christ; by involving ourselves in the relationships that are created by this body. That is when God reveals Himself, and that is when our relationship with God is an actual relationship between a Father and a Son. And this is what gives a special meaning to what we say (unfortunately only in words most of the time), when we are asked "what is the difference between an ascetic Christian and a guru?". We often hear the response "but we live that way in Christ". What do we mean, "in Christ"? Do we simply respond with a word, a name, and the matter is settled? All the rest of the story is Buddhist, and from that point onwards we insert a name – Christ –and

that's the end of the story? What sort of existential face value does Christ have, that makes Him the determining factor? If we don't set down these elements of Christ's body, of the relations that Christ creates within the community of His body – the Church – we shall not be able to locate this determining factor in all these issues. So what? A Buddhist comes to know God by cleansing himself of his passions; therefore, his ascetic lifestyle is obviously not his ultimate goal. The cognizance of God does not spring from, nor depend on, nor is it accomplished automatically, by cleansing one's passions. There must be the positive element of accession into the body in which Christ reveals Himself as a community of many persons who are inter-connected by love, and can therefore see God's presence, in Christ. And I shall once again reiterate, from another long and tiresome road this time, to something that I mentioned in a previous lesson, with regard to dogmas: That dogmas are interpreted within the Church, and specifically during the Eucharist. It is only here, that God is acknowledged in the fullest possible way that we have. All other ways are provisional, and although I do not disavow their importance and their significance, but, for fear that we are in danger of making them an end in themselves, I am obliged to stress that they are not ends in themselves.

Cognizance, therefore, of God presupposes our willing accession into the loving relationships that God Himself has created with us, in Christ. "If God loves my brother in Christ and I hate my brother, I cannot get to know God." It is imperative that I have the same kind of love for my brother that God has for him. The cognizance of God moves along this crooked path, which is not simply a perpendicular between my heart and God, but something that also has a horizontal dimension to it. That is why "... .. he that loveth not, knew not God, for God is love".

*To Be Continued...*