

SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST

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



JUNE 20, 2010

FOURTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW

The Hieromartyr Methodius, Bishop of Patara (Lycia in Asia Minor), was distinguished for his genuine monastic humility. Calmly and with mildness he instructed his flock, but he firmly defended the purity of Orthodoxy and he energetically contended against heresies, especially the widespread heresy of the Origenists. He left behind him a rich literary legacy: works in defense of Christianity against paganism, explanations of Orthodox dogmas against the heresy of Origen, moral discourses, and explanations of Holy Scripture.

St Methodius was arrested by the pagans, steadfastly confessed before them his faith in Christ, and he was sentenced to death by beheading in the year 312.

Saint Kallistos I, Patriarch of Constantinople, at first struggled on Athos under the spiritual guidance of St Gregory of Sinai (August 8), whose Life he wrote. In 1350, he was elected as Patriarch of Constantinople, serving in that position during the reign of the emperors John Kantakuzenos (1341-1355) and John Paleologos (1341-1376).

In 1354, he withdrew to live in silence at the monastery he had built in honor of St Mamas at Tenedos. Later, he was elevated to the Patriarchal throne once again (1355-1363). The holy Patriarch Kallistos reposed in the year 1363 in Serbia, where he had travelled with an embassy of Emperor John Paleologos. St Callistus is also known as a spiritual writer, and his edifying works appear in the *Philokalia* with the writings of his close friend Ignatius of Xanthopoulos.

Holy Prince Gleb of Vladimir, named George in holy Baptism, was a younger son of the holy Prince Andrew Bogoliubsky (July 4). Under the influence of his pious parents he grew up with a deep faith, and from twelve years of age he led a solitary spiritual life. The parents did not hinder their son and even assisted him in spiritual growth. The prince especially loved the reading of holy books, he esteemed the clergy and he was charitable to all. Despite his young age, he chose for himself the exploit of strict fasting and prayerful vigilance. Prince Gleb died in the year 1174, at age nineteen.

His incorrupt relics were preserved and glorified by miracles. In the year 1238, during the time of the incursion of Batu upon the Russian Land, the Tatars burned the cathedral at Vladimir. In this conflagra-

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AT THE SMALL ENTRANCE WE SING

ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ. ΜΟΔΕ 3.

Let everything in heaven rejoice, * and let everything on earth be glad. * For the Lord has shown strength with His arm. * He trampled on death by death; * and He became the firstborn among the dead. * From the bowels of Hades did He deliver us; * and He granted great mercy unto the world.

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.

ΚΟΝΤΑΚΙΟΝ. ΜΟΔΕ 2.

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 Γ.

Εὐφραινέσθω τὰ οὐράνια, ἀγαλλιάσθω τὰ ἐπίγεια, ὅτι ἐποίησε κράτος, ἐν βραχίονι αὐτοῦ, ὁ Κύριος· ἐπάτησε τῷ θανάτῳ τὸν θάνατον· πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν ἐγένετο· ἐκ κοιλίας ἄδου ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς, καὶ παρέσχε τῷ κόσμῳ τὸ μέγα ἔλεος.

ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ ΤΟΥ ΝΑΟΥ. ΠΛ. Α΄.

Λουκᾶν 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.

ΚΟΝΤΑΚΙΟΝ. ΗΧΟΣ Β΄.

Προστασία τῶν Χριστιανῶν καταίσχυντε, ἡμεσιτεία πρὸς τὸν Ποιητὴν μετάθετε, 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.

“My dear friends, we too have a house for the Lord to dwell in: our heart. Do you remember what the Lord said when he ascended into heaven? ‘I will be with you always’ (Matt. 28:20). And this is why, during the last living act of the Liturgy, the elevation of the sacred Chalice, the priest says, ‘Forever, now and always...’ What does that mean? It is as if Christ is saying: I am going always. I am entering into my dark cloud... but remember that I am always before you, I am always within you. I will remain here unseen, unobserved, in the innermost parts of the sanctuary, to be eaten by the priest, so that you can eat me too, whenever you want.”

THE READINGS OF THE DAY

EPISTLE READING

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE
ROMANS 6:18-23

BRETHREN, having been set free from sin, you have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once yielded your members to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now yield your members to righteousness for sanctification. When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But then what return did you get from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

GOSPEL READING

MATTHEW 8:5-13

At that time, as Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, beseeching him and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, in terrible distress." And he said to him, "I will come and heal him." But the centurion answered him, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard him, he marveled, and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth." And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; be it done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment.

“*The Saints are always careful in their dealings with others. Why? Because they have tasted the sweetness and peace of the Holy Spirit, and they know that, if they are not carefule in their relations with their neighbors, they will lose the gifts of the Spirit. The saints try never to sadden anybody, not even the animals. They see the other person as if he were Christ. And the other person really is Christ, becaue he is an image of God. And thus the saints love all men, for all men are images of God, and in this way Christ and humanity become one in the hearts of the siants, in the inner depths of their being.*”

—ELDER AIMILIANOS (1934 –)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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

FR. MICHAEL ON VACATION

Please welcome Fr. Thomas George who is substituting for Fr. Michael, who will be on vacation from June 7 - July 1. If you have an emergency, please call Fr. Joseph at (314) 705-1468.

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.

SYNTAXARION

Continued

tion perished Bishop Metrophanes, Great-princess Agatha, wife of Great-prince George Vsevolodovich (+ 1238), and many inhabitants of the city of Vladimir, who were locked in the cathedral church. The fire, however, did not even touch the tomb of St Gleb. Years later, in July 1410, Tatars again descended upon Vladimir. In plundering the city, they began to sack the cathedral church treasury, having murdered the door-keeper Patrick. Supposing that treasure was hidden in the saint's tomb, they set about to break it open. Just as the Tatars touched the stone crypt of St Gleb, flames shot forth from it, and the Tatars fled the city in terror.

Through the prayers of the holy prince the city was saved from an incursion of Polish-Lithuanian plunderers in 1613.

The celebration of St Gleb was established in the year 1702, and then also a service was written to him, and somewhat later, a Life. His relics rest in the Dormition cathedral in Vladimir. In the year 1774 the south chapel of the cathedral was dedicated to him. Prince Gleb is revered as the special patron and defender of the city of Vladimir.

The transfer of the relics of Sts Inna, Pinna, and Rimma to Alushta took place during the first-second centuries.

DOGMA AND DOGMATICS: ON COGNIZANCE AND FAITH: OF GOD

By Metropolitan John of Pergamus

I have expanded on this description, in order to pose the following question:

If everything that I said – which is necessary for the cognizance of an object – is applied to the cognizance (knowledge) of God, what will happen straight away?

-An absolute failure to apply it at all, and, for the following reasons:

A. Because first of all, we apply the exclusion method, that “A” is not “B”. This means that in order to know “A”, it is presupposed that there is something else nearby, which I must exclude. Therefore, we are obliged to accept that along with God, something else always co-exists. Even if that something is nothing. Be careful! We are looking at very profound notions here. Notions like ‘creation out of nothing’. It is a huge issue. When we say that God creates something from nothing, what is that ‘nothing’, if it isn’t His self? To many, (Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth) this ‘nothing’ is a thing that God repulses. In other words, it is as though the ‘nothing’ already exists, and God then says: “No, the nothing shall not act. Let the world come into being!” The ‘nothing’ is rejected. So, you are repulsing something – in a certain sense- in order to relate God. If you do apply this method to God, you must suppose that God is that which is not God. And what is that which is not God? It is impossible to compare God to other things, because you lose the meaning of God. In order for God to be God, He must be so unique, that He does not co-exist with anything else. Hence, I can-

not ‘know’ Him, by the method of excluding something else.

B. The second element that we mentioned – description – which has the prerequisites of space and time (remember, I cannot relate something, without describing it within a space and time), again cannot be applied to God. We cannot describe God, because in order to describe God, we must introduce His Existence into time and space. But if you do introduce time and space, then God becomes a creation that has a beginning, just as time and space presuppose a certain beginning; hence the distance between objects, this void. We cannot say that God is describable. Even the Fathers referred to Him as “indescribable”. You cannot describe God. ‘Indescribable’ means that not only is it impossible to say anything about God, but it is also impossible to inscribe limits (boundaries) around Him. You cannot say something about God as you would say of the table, i.e., that the table has this shape. Consequently, we cannot apply this method of cognizance either.

And here we also have a very delicate issue. We are accustomed – mainly from Scholastic Theology onward – to saying that we can ‘know’ God, through His attributes; for example, in every dogmatic area, we have a complete analysis of His attributes: God is Benign, Almighty, Powerful, etc. There is a grave danger here, and I had stressed it, when I said that in order to ‘know’ an object on the basis of its attributes, it is necessary to draw those attributes from an experience of other objects. I am not

supposed to detect them, exclusively within my object. For instance, if I say that this table is strong, and this attribute of strength exists only within my table, I am not truly specifying it. I often give my students the example of the clock. Take a clock, and show it to a native, a primitive person who has never seen a clock, and ask him to relate it to something, as soon as he sees it in motion. He will throw it down and say that it is some kind of animal. You see, it reminds him of something (else): an animal. He cannot 'know' it as a clock, because he has never seen a clock before. He has only seen animals, which are capable of motion. We see how his basic method of cognizance was to use familiar things, in order to recognize the new. This indicates that 'knowing' is always linked to a prior experience; in other words, objects are classified on the basis of existing experience.

For example, I know that a clock is that thing, which has those characteristics. That is when I recognize it as a clock. If I don't recognize it, if I have never seen a clock before, then I can't state that it is a clock. Thus, I reach the conclusion that the attributes that I allocate to an object during the course of cognizance (knowledge) have all been taken from attributes that relate to other objects and are never unique to that, one, single object.

(Imagine someone so unique from the aspect of physical anatomy that one cannot 'know' him by relating him to the experience one has from other people. It will be impossible for a doctor to examine him; in order for the doctor to recognize his ailment, he must be identical to other people. A doctor can never truly 'know' anything, if it is unique. All our knowledge is dependent precisely on the hypothesis that the objects of our knowledge

resemble each other; that they have common characteristics).

So, if this is true, then what can we do about God? From where can we draw the attributes of God? For instance, so that I can say that He is "benevolent". From where did I draw this attribute of benevolence? From experience of course; I know that so-and-so is a benevolent person. I know God's power. I draw this from the experience I have of powerful people. Thus, after this projection of my experience, I can reach God. God is thus a creation of your own imagination, your own experience. But those attributes aren't exclusive to God; others have them also. And that is why so many people replace God with those objects. Why should I be afraid of God and not be afraid of lightning? After all, both of them are 'powerful'.

Attributes - even the most affirmative ones, such as 'benevolent' - are still attributes that we borrow from our knowledge and experience of other things, which God isn't.

I am characteristically underlining the notion of God as Father, which is one of the most difficult meanings, for the reason that anthropomorphism penetrates this theme very profusely. We teach our children from their early years to refer to God as 'our Father', but in what sense? It is on the basis of the children's experience of their father at home. They bestow their father certain attributes, for instance: that he is stronger than them; that he can do things that they can't; that he protects them, etc.. So, with all of these amassed together, the child forms an idea of God, the way that we have given it to the child. The child embraces it, and then what happens? When puberty arrives, and freedom starts to set in, and the child wants to rid itself of the guardianship of the father in

the house, that is when the crisis of its faith in God appears, because all this patronizing that the youth wants to shake off, is entangled in its conscience along with God, and the revolution - the reaction against authority in general - leads the youth towards a revolution against God.

And this is the precise moment that the crisis of atheism appears; whether one views it at a personal level, or at a level of civilization's history. In cultural eras, where we find exactly this emphasis on freedom that opposes authority, that is when the idea of God is discarded. Why? Because we came to 'know' God; we related Him, on the basis of experiences and attributes that we acquired from our family. It is therefore impossible, if you correctly preserve the idea of God and wish to relate God (because this is what it's all about), to avoid all those dangers and not give God any attributes that can be found in other objects.

And that is why this route that I described (which reaches the point of using familiar objects) if applied to God, will have ugly consequences. The cognizance of God is very often confused with the results that this cognizance offers. Do you know how many people lose their faith in God, because He doesn't answer their prayers? Just as I choose to reject this table if it is of no use to me and I ignore it altogether, thus, in the same way, if God is a useless object, I choose to ignore Him. And the word 'ignore' does not simply imply that He doesn't exist, but that He doesn't exist for me; it is I who do not know Him; it is I who ignores Him. There is such a thing as a conscious ignorance - a willed ignorance. You can see what kind of danger the cognizance of God - gnosiology - contains, when it is based on the attributes of God. It can lead to an outright atheism, be-

cause by definition, God cannot be fitted into these molds, neither can He become an object of exploitation. If this were the case, then at any given moment, just as I push a button to start up a machine, I could likewise push the prayer button and wait for the answer to come. This would be an objectification of God, and what is worse, it is the demoting of God, down to the status of an object.

Thus, we cannot speak of God's attributes and then attain cognizance based on these attributes, because that would be dangerous. And of course we cannot also resort to any categorizing that includes place and time, because we already said that time and space came into being during Creation and are therefore not applicable to God. So, the question is raised: "How then can I relate God?" Is there anything to be found in experience that could show me the way?

Is it possible to relate something, without going into all this procedure of objectification, of exclusion, of attributes and of utilization? Can I relate something, without doing all this? If I can, then there is a chance that I can also relate God. If I can't, then one of the following two is happening: either I cannot relate God at all, and consequently I cannot say that I 'know' God, or, I withdraw from this attempt to express Him on the basis of experience, i.e., "I know God, but I cannot express it, I cannot give a meaning to it. Therefore I cannot apply gnosiology; I cannot say anything about God".

These two forms of response to the question posed, have already been expressed, repeated and are still heard in our times. The one reply takes on the name of negation, which signifies that you cannot say anything about God - there is absolute silence; we may have cognizance perhaps, but without any possibility of

actually putting cognizance into words. The other reply is a form of mysticism that allows a phrasing of cognizance of God, provided that we are referring to emotions and experiences which, in an extreme form of mysticism, obliterate the distinction between the one who knows (the recognizer) and the one who is known (the recognized). This is why religions applied these two Gnosologies to a broad extent, and created a certain confusion to us Orthodox; because Negation was developed by the Greek Fathers in a certain way, while mysticism was also present.

This combination of mysticism and negation became the subject of a special expounding, and especially in our times, by a renowned Russian theologian, Vladimir Lossky, who wrote “The Mystic Theology of the Eastern Church”, that caused some confusion. So, the problem indeed arose: if this is the way, if this is gnosiology, i.e., through a negation that claims I do not know God at all, the question eventually remains: “What can I say affirmatively about God, and how can I form an affirmative Gnosiology and not just a negative one? It is easy to say “I can’t say anything about God”. It is easy to say what God is not. But, when we reach the point of asking: “What affirmative thing can I say about God?”, the problem is, not to fall into the trap and say things that I have borrowed from prior experience of other things, because those other things cannot be placed on the same level as God, otherwise they become anthropomorphic projections. I must therefore say something about God, which, however, must not be derived from the method that I use in order to ‘know’ things.

Negation made its appearance in history as a problem of contrast between God and the world. In order to know God, you must go be-

yond the world; you must leave the world behind. This is a method that we find in neo-Platonism: the principle of “beyond the essence”. With Dionysios Areopagitis, this method took on the form of using expressions with the prefix “hyper” (=super, beyond). For example, whatever affirmative thing we say about this world, we should use the prefix “hyper” when we refer to God. We refer to God as ‘benevolent’, but, because this expression is taken from the experience we have of people, this could result in anthropomorphism. In order therefore to avoid anthropomorphism, we say that God is hyper-benevolent. ‘Hyper-benevolent’ does not imply (in this usage) that He is exceedingly benevolent, which is a superficiality of ‘benevolent’; it implies rather a surpassing. It is the same as when we say that God is not ‘essence’, but ‘hyper-essence’ (Greek: yper-ousios) : beyond the essence.

This is why the terminology of Negational Theology – which commences from Dionysios Areopagitis – refers to God as ‘hyper-god’; he means to stress that all the categorizing that we use from our experience of the world, contains the danger of anthropomorphism. That is why we go beyond; and the term ‘hyper’ is precisely that which implies ‘beyond’.

To Be Continued...