

# SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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## JANUARY 8, 2012

### THE SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY

*Saint George the Chozebite* was born on the island of Cyprus toward the end of the sixth century. After the death of his parents, he went to Palestine to worship at the holy places. Here he entered into the monastic community of Chozeba between the River Jordan and Jerusalem, and he later became head of this monastery. St George presented the monks example in fasting, vigil and physical efforts. Having lived as an angel upon the earth, he died in peace.

*Saint Domnica* came from Carthage to Constantinople in the time of the holy Emperor Theodosius the Great. Here she was baptized by Patriarch Nectarius and entered a women's monastery.

Through strict and prolonged ascetic effort she attained to high spiritual perfection. The saint healed the sick, demonstrated power over the natural elements, and predicted the future. By her miracles the saint moved inhabitants of the capital towards concerns about life eternal and the soul. Adorned by virtues, the saint departed this life a spotless virgin in her old age.

*Saint Gregory* was tonsured at the Kiev Caves monastery in the time of St Theodosius (May 3). The saint devoted much time to reading books, which were his sole possession. He had the ability to bring thieves to their senses. Several times robbers broke in on him in his cell or in the garden, but the saint reasoned with them, the thieves repented, and began to lead honest lives.

Once, when the monk went to the Dnieper River for water, some servants of Prince Rostislav caught sight of the Elder and rudely began making fun of him. The saint answered them, "Children, when you should be asking for everyone's prayers, you are displeasing God. Weep, for disaster approaches. Repent and ask God to be merciful to you on the Day of Judgment. All you will find death in the water with your prince." By orders of the enraged Prince Rostislav, the monk was bound hand and foot, and he was drowned in the Dnieper with a stone around his neck. Still, his prediction came true. Rostislav did not return from the campaign. In that same year of 1093 the twenty-year-old prince drowned in sight of his brother, Vladimir Monomakh, trying to save himself as he fled from the Polovetsians.

Several sources identify St Gregory with St Gregory, a composer of Canons in honor of the holy Prince Vladimir, St Theodosius, and the holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb. But St Gregory, compiler of canons, lived later and died in about the year 1120. St Gregory the Wonderworker died in 1093 and was buried in the Near Caves. His memory is celebrated also on September 28 and on the second Sunday of Great Lent.

# AT THE SMALL ENTRANCE WE SING

## ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΕΟΡΤΗΣ. ΗΧΟΣ Α.

**Ε**ν Ἰορδάνῃ βαπτιζομένου σου Κύριε, ἡ τῆς Τριάδος ἐφανερώθη προσκύνησις, τοῦ γὰρ Γεννήτορος ἡ φωνὴ προσεμαρτύρει σοι, ἀγαπητόν σε Υἱὸν ὀνομάζουσα, καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα ἐν εἶδει περιστερᾶς, ἐβεβαίωτο τοῦ λόγου τὸ ἀσφαλές. Ὁ ἐπιφανὴς Χριστὲ ὁ Θεός, καὶ τὸν κόσμον φωτίσας δόξα σοι.

## ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΜΟΝ. ΑΠΟΛΥ. ΗΧΟΣ ΠΑ. Α.

**Τ**ὸν Σταυρὸν τοῦ Κυρίου ἐγκωμιάσωμεν, τὴν ταφὴν τὴν ἁγίαν ἕμνοις τιμήσωμεν, καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν αὐτοῦ ὑπεροξάσωμεν. ὅτι συνήγειρε νεκρούς, ἐκ τῶν μνημάτων ὡς Θεός, σκυλεύσας κράτος θανάτου, καὶ ἰσχὺν διαβόλου, καὶ τοῖς ἐν ἄδῃ φῶς ἀνέτειλε.

## ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ ΤΟΥ ΝΑΟΥ. ΠΑ. 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 ἕμνοις ὁσοῖς, ὡς νοσημάτων ἀνθρωπίνων καὶ φυσικῶν ἀσθενειῶν θεραπευτήν, τὸν καθαίροντα πληγὰς τοῦ πνεύματος, καὶ ἀδιαλείπτως πρεσβεύοντα ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν.

## ΚΟΝΤΑΚΙΟΝ. ΗΧΟΣ Γ.

**Ε**πεφάνης σήμερον \* τῇ οἰκουμένῃ, \* καὶ τὸ φῶς σου, Κύριε, \* ἐσημειώθη ἐφ' ἡμᾶς, \* ἐν ἐπιγνώσει ὑμνοῦντάς σε. \* Ἦλθες, ἐφάνης, \* τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀπρόσιτον.

## ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΕΟΡΤΗΣ. ΜΟΔΕ 1.

**W**hen You were baptized in the Jordan O Lord, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest. For the Father bore witness unto You, calling You His beloved Son. And the Spirit confirmed the truth of these words. O Christ our God, who have appeared to us, and enlightened the world. Glory be to You..

## RESURRECTIONAL ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ. ΜΟΔΕ 5.

**L**et 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 ΓΙΑ ΤΟΝ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣΤΙΚΟΝ. ΜΟΔΕ 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.

## ΚΟΝΤΑΚΙΟΝ. ΜΟΔΕ 3.

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

“Be at peace with your own soul then heaven & earth will be at peace with you. Enter eagerly into the treasure house that is within you, And you will see the things that are in heaven, for there is but one single entry to them both. The ladder that leads to the Kingdom is hidden within your soul. Dive into yourself and in your soul and you will discover the stairs by which to ascend.

— SAINT ISAACE THE SYRIAN (7TH CENTURY) ”

# THE READINGS OF THE DAY

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## EPISTLE READING

### THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS 4:7-13

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

## GOSPEL READING

### MATTHEW 4:12-17

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

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“From the moment I became a monk I believed that death does not exist. That’s how I felt then and how I will always feel – that I am eternal and immortal. How magnificent!

*In the church which possesses the saving sacraments there is no despair. We may be deeply sinful. But we make confessions, the priest reads the prayer, we are forgiven and we progress towards immortality, without any anxiety and without any fear.*

*When we love Christ, we live the life of Christ. If, by the grace of God, we succeed in doing this, we find ourselves in a different state, we live in another, enviable state. For us there is no fear - neither of death, nor of the devil nor of hell. All these things exist for people who are far from Christ, for non-Christians. For us Christians who do His will, as the Gospel says, these things do not exist. That is, they exist, but when one kills the old self 'along with the passions and the desires' (Gal 5:24), one gives no importance to the devil or to evil. It doesn't concern us.*

*What concerns us is love, service to Christ and to our fellow man. If we reach the point of feeling joy, love, worship of God without any fear, we reach the point of saying, 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me' (Gal 2:20). No one can prevent us from entering into this mystery.*

—ELDER PORPHYRIOS (1906–1991)”

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

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**MEMORIAL SERVICE: Constantinos Godas, Syrs.**

## **UPCOMING CHURCH SERVICES:**

**Tuesday, January 10, Divine Liturgy, 9am**

**Saturday, January 14, Great Vespers, 5pm**

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### **HOUSE BLESSINGS**

Fr. Michael will be doing house blessing in the upcoming weeks. If you would like your house blessed, please see the sign-up sheets in the Narthex.

### **SPECIAL FUND RAISING DRIVE**

Thanks to the generosity of our parishioners, we reached our goal of getting at least 10ea. \$1000 donations before the New Year. We received a total of \$11,500 in donations. Those donations will be kindly doubled by George Kritos. Thank you to all who participated in this special drive!

### **PHILOPTOCHOS MEETING**

The next Philoptochos meeting will be on January 10, at 6pm. At the meeting a guest speaker, Summer Collins from Ronald McDonald House Charities of Mid Missouri, will address those present about the organization and show a short DVD about it.

Please help with the supply drive for Ronald McDonald House – drop your supplies off in the Narthex of the Church.

### **UPCOMING MEMORIAL**

The 40 day memorial for Sophia Pardalos will be on Sunday, January 15. Following services, a meal in her honor will be held at Peachtree Banquet Center. All are welcome to attend.

### **STEWARDSHIP MATERIALS**

Have you returned your 2012 Stewardship materials? If not, please do so as soon as possible. Your generous support is what keeps our parish ministries functioning.. Thank you!

### **WINTER / SPRING CATECHISM CLASS**

The next meeting of the Winter / Spring Catechism class will be Thursday January 19, at 6:30pm.

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“*Prayer and asceticism are useless to a man who conceals within himself malice towards his neighbour and the desire for revenge.*

*‘Watch with all your strength that your mouth does not speak one thing and your heart contain something quite different.’ ‘The crown of good works is love; the crown of the passions is the justifying of one’s sins.’*

—**ST. ISAAC THE SYRIAN**  
**(7TH CENTURY)**

## MONASTIC LIFE

*by Elder Aimilianos of Simonos Petra Monastery, Mount Athos*

**F**or every Orthodox Christian the ascetical life lies at the heart of prayerful practice and aspiration. Saints such as Anthony of Egypt and Paul of Thebes were the first to remove themselves to the desert in order to dedicate themselves to God. By the tenth century a number of monks had already founded small hermitages on Mount Athos in Greece, living the hermit life as devised by the first anchorites of Egypt.

Such a life is dedicated to the celebration of God, and of re-establishing the lost purity of the soul. A monk's task is to enter into the life and spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ in an attempt to create a communion of souls wholly dedicated to living a life in Christ. Monastics are those who choose to follow with singular devotion and obedience the call of Christ.

A monk places his life at the service of such an ideal and so becomes a 'lamp that gives light to the world.' Hesychia or holy quiet, is his goal.

Under the care and guidance of Geronta Stephanos, the monks of Pantanassa attempt to live according to traditional Orthodox monastic ideals. Monastics are called upon to gently absent themselves from the world in order to pray for the world. Such is their obligation on behalf of us all.

### *'The Spiritual Father in the Monastery'*

A monastery is not a human society, but a continuous gathering of the brotherhood - in the church, in the refectory, at the various times it meets. It is a gathering which is one with the forward movement of the Church through the course of her history. It is

an expression of the entire gathering of the Church, reproducing the prototype of this brotherhood as it was given to us by Christ and His Apostles. This included not only visible members, but also all those who would take their place beside them to make up the Church of the past and of the future. A monastery is therefore a symbol of the Church in her totality. It is the gathering of the Church herself concentrated and focused in one small place. The spiritual father (gerontas), the hegumen, or abbot, of the monastery, is thus, in some sense, an image of God; he represents Christ, and the rest of the monks form the communion of saints, both the living and the dead.

A monastery is a mystery, a sacrament, and its spiritual father is part of the visible element of this mystery, behind which is hidden the invisible: God and all that is not seen and can only be perceived by the intellect.

The important position of the spiritual father, lying as it does at the very heart of the mystery, means also that he guides these men, that he fashions them with his own hands so as to incorporate them bodily into the life of the Church and of Christ.

The monastic superior, then, is not concerned only with everyday life, with the food and material needs of the community: above all, he is a guide of souls, initiating them into the mysteries, showing them the path to perfect mystical union with God. It must be understood that the monastery is a very special kind of community. It belongs, in fact, to Paradise, to the kingdom of heaven. It is a communion of saints, in which each believer, in this

case each monk, enjoys unlimited right to the life of Christ, and where Christ Himself has the same right to the life of each person. The monastery constitutes, therefore, a very important aspect of reality, since it preserves the rights which man possessed before the Fall, that is, the possibility of possessing God wholly as his own. It is this reality that the hegumen must realize and demonstrate daily to his monks, that is, to the disciples of the Lord Himself.

He is a master, then, who passes on to them what he knows, but who must above all show them, through his own life, a knowledge of the true God - through the fire that he kindles in their hearts and the understanding that he gives them, so that they are aware of Christ as everywhere present and as the Promised One. For, whatever may be his daily activities, the monk's life is nothing other than a zealous and impatient expectation of God.

Gradually, the spiritual father will take the monk and raise him to higher things, so that he is given divine grace. For in the mystical life it is grace which accomplishes everything, and Christ is not only the Promised One, but also a Person to whom one can speak. In this way the monk learns to dedicate himself to his Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, and to have just the same intimacy and friendship with Him as did the circle of the Apostles. And finally, thanks to his daily efforts, and to the attentive care of the Holy Trinity, the hegumen will be able to achieve another result: the monks will perceive God as a living Being, coexisting with them, and accompanying them in everything they do, from the time they awaken, as they walk about the monastery, and in the smallest glance. Then there will be full communion between God and man.

Thus it is the spiritual father who takes his disciple, the monk, by the hand and presents him to the Lord. It is he who makes Christ come down,

who reunites that which was separated - the realms of heaven and of earth - so as to transform them into a single true and unique dance.

Such is the true role of the spiritual father, and this is how the monks see him. And this is why there is this discipline and obedience, this love, this gift of self, this trust, all of which are not directed to the superior as man, but to Christ whom he represents.

All the monks share this sense of the mystery and the mystical reality of which is manifest among them, for the Elder is not a new phenomenon in the monastery: he comes forth from the broad stream of Orthodox Tradition, he springs from the flow of the Holy Spirit.

Although he is only a man, within the framework of the monastic life the perception of his humanity tends to disappear. To be sure, he lives quite like everyone else; but he is also someone who has been taken and set apart by God, and as a result he no longer lives like someone who belongs to this world. For although he walks on the earth, he feels, in a way, that his head is in heaven, that he sees heaven, that he sees God. This is the most important thing that a monastery can offer. What society and modern man most lack is made so perceptible, so powerful, so alive, so intense, and so authentic by the spiritual father.

Therefore the monastic community around its spiritual father is in this way an image of the universal Church in its entirety. Everyday life is very simple in the monastery, but in the silence and tranquility which are brought into being by harmony and mutual love, men stand on tip toe, hoping to discern the gentle sound of Christ's approaching steps.

***The End.***

## FOR PARENTS

An Excerpt from, *Wounded by Love: The Life and the Wisdom of Elder Porphyrios*, trans. by John Raffan  
by Elder Porphyrios (1906–1991)

*The late Elder Porphyrios was a monk from Mt Athos who, for health reasons, had to leave Mt Athos, and ended up living in the heart of Athens for most of his life. In 1926, and at the age of twenty, he was ordained a priest by the Archbishop of Sinai, Porphyrios III, who gave him the name Porphyrios. At the age of twenty-two he became a confessor and spiritual father. Due to his extreme humility and obedience he received early the gift of spiritual discernment i.e. a type of clairvoyance. Below we provide his invaluable and insightful advice to parents on parenting issues.*

**W**hat saves and makes for good children is the life of the parents in the home. The parents need to devote themselves to the love of God. They need to become saints in their relation to their children through their mildness, patience and love. They need to make a new start every day, with a fresh outlook, renewed enthusiasm and love for their children. And the joy that will come to them, the holiness that will visit them, will shower grace on their children. Generally the parents are to blame for the bad behaviour of the children. And their behaviour is not improved by reprimands, disciplining, or strictness. If the parents do not pursue a life of holiness and if they don't engage in spiritual struggle, they make great mistakes and transmit the faults they have within them. If the parents do not live a holy life and do not display love towards each other, the devil torments the parents with the reactions of the children. Love, harmony and understanding between the parents are what are required for the children. This provides a great sense of security and certainty.

The behaviour of the children is directly related to the state of the parents. When the children are hurt by the bad behaviour of the parents towards each other, they lose the strength and desire to progress in their lives. Their lives are constructed shoddily and the edifice of their soul is in constant danger of collapsing. Let me give you two examples.

Two sisters came to see me. One of them had gone through some very distressing experiences and they asked me what was the cause of these. I answered them:

'It's because of your home; it stems from your parents.' And as I looked at the girl I said:

'These are things you've inherited from your mother.'

'But,' she said, 'my parents are such perfect people. They're Christians, they go to confession, they receive Holy Communion and we had a religious upbringing. Unless it is religion that is to blame...'

I said to them:

'I don't believe a word of all that you're telling me. I see one thing only, and that is that your parents don't live with the joy of Christ.'

On hearing this, the other girl said:

'Listen, Maria, the Father's quite right. Our parents go to confession and receive Holy Communion, but did we ever have any peace at home. Our father was constantly complaining about our mother. And every day either the one refused to sit at the table or the other refused to go out somewhere together. So you see what the Father is saying is true.

'What's your father's name?' I asked her,

She told me.

‘What’s your mother’s name?’

She told me.

‘Well,’ I said, ‘the feelings you’ve got inside you towards your mother are not at all good.’

You see, the moment she told me her father’s name I saw his soul, and the moment she told me her mother’s name, I saw her mother and I saw the way her daughter looked at her.

Another day a mother came to visit me with one of her daughters. She was very distressed and broke down in tears.

‘What’s the matter?’ I asked.

‘I’m in total despair over my older daughter. She threw her husband out the house and deceived us all with a pack of lies.’

‘What kind of lies?’ I inquired.

‘She threw her husband out the house ages ago and she didn’t tell us anything. We would ask on the phone, “How’s Stelios doing?”, and she would reply, “Oh, he’s fine. He’s just gone out to buy a newspaper.” Each time she would think up some new excuse so that we wouldn’t suspect anything. And this went on for two whole years. A few days ago we learned the truth from Stelios himself when we bumped into him by chance.’

So I said to her:

‘The fault’s your own. It’s you that’s to blame, you and your husband, but you most of all.’

‘What do you mean!’ she said indignantly. ‘I loved my children to the point that I was never out of the kitchen. I had no life of my own at all. I took them to the church and I was always telling them

the right thing to do. How can you say that I’m to blame?’

I turned to her other daughter who was with her and asked:

‘What do you think about the matter?’

‘The Father’s right, Mum,’ she said. ‘We never ever enjoyed a single day when you weren’t quarrelling with Dad.’

‘Do you see then, how I’m right? It is you that are to blame. You traumatised the children. They are not to blame, but they are suffering the consequences.’

“He used the following example, “Once when I was talking to some brothers on a helpful topic, they were overcome by sleep so deep, that they could not even move their eyelids any longer. Then, wishing to show them the power of the devil, I introduced a trivial subject of conversation. Immediately, they woke up, full of joy. Then I said to them with many sighs, ‘Until now, we were discussing heavenly things and your eyes were heavy with sleep, but when I embarked on a useless discourse, you all woke up with alacrity. Therefore, brothers, I implore you to recognise the power of the evil demon; pay attention to yourselves, and guard yourselves from the desire to sleep when you are doing or listening to something spiritual.’”

—FROM THE SAYINGS OF  
THE DESEERT FATHERS