

SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

APRIL 2, 2017



5TH SUNDAY OF LENT, OUR VENERABLE MOTHER, ST. MARY OF EGYPT

The memory of *St. Mary of Egypt* is celebrated on *April 1*, where her life is recorded. Since the end of the holy Forty Days is drawing near, it has been appointed for this day also, so that if we think it hard to practice a little abstinence forty days, we might be roused by the heroism of her who fasted in the wilderness forty-seven years; and also that the great loving-kindness of God, and His readiness to receive the repentant, might be demonstrated in very deed.

Saint Titus the Wonderworker displayed zeal for the monastic life from his youth. He pursued asceticism in the ninth century at the Studion monastery near Constantinople. By his deeds of fasting, purity of life and mild disposition, Saint Titus gained the love of the brethren, and at their request he was ordained priest.

Fervent of faith, the saint stood up for the Orthodox veneration of icons during the Iconoclast persecution. Because of his virtuous life, God granted him the gift of wonderworking. The saint was translated to the Lord in his old age.

The Holy Martyrs Amphianus and Edesius were brothers. They lived in the city of Patara (province of Lycia) in the family of the pagan governor. They went to the city of Beirut to study the pagan sciences. There they became ardent followers of Christ.

The holy brothers left their pagan parents and went to Alexandrian Caesarea, where they found an instructor, Saint Pamphilius (February 16), and under his guidance they became accomplished in the spiritual life, spending their time in prayer and the study of sacred books.

By decree of the emperor Maximian (305-313), a zealous pagan and cruel persecutor of Christians, all the inhabitants of Caesarea were required to offer public sacrifice. Many Christians, including Saints Amphianus and Edesius, had to hide in order to avoid sacrificing to idols.

When the city prefect of Caesarea was about to offer sacrifice to idols, Saint Amphianus boldly went into the temple, took the prefect's hand, and urged him to abandon his error and believe in Christ.

By order of the governor, soldiers seized Saint Amphianus, fiercely beat him and then threw him in prison. Two days later they led him to trial, where they beat him with iron rods and burned his body with bundles of flax soaked in oil.

The brave youth, steadfastly confessing his faith in Christ, was then thrown into the sea with a stone about his neck. Suddenly a storm arose, and the waves carried the martyr's body to shore, where it was buried by Christians.

AT THE SMALL ENTRANCE WE CHANT



ΑΝΑΣΤ. ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ. ΗΧΟΣ ΠΛ. Δ.

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

ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ. ΗΧΟΣ ΠΛ. Δ.

Ἐν σοὶ Μήτηρ ἀκριβῶς διεσώθη τὸ κατ' εἰκόνα, λαβοῦσα γὰρ τὸν Σταυρόν, ἠκολούθησας τῷ Χριστῷ, καὶ πράττουσα ἐδίδασκες ὑπερορᾶν μὲν σαρκὸς παρέρχεται γάρ, ἐπιμελεῖσθαι δὲ ψυχῆς, πράγματος ἀθανάτου, διὸ καὶ μετὰ Ἀγγέλων συναγάλλεται Ὁσία Μαρία τὸ πνεῦμα σου.

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 ὑπομνηματιστήν, ἀξίως τιμῆσωμεν ὕμνοις ὁσίοις, ὡς νοσημάτων ἀνθρωπίνων καὶ φυσικῶν ἀσθενειῶν θεραπευτήν, τὸν καθαίροντα πληγὰς τοῦ πνεύματος, καὶ ἀδιαλείπτως πρεσβεύοντα ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν.

ΚΟΝΤΑΚΙΟΝ. ΗΧΟΣ ΠΛ. Δ΄.

Τῇ ὑπερμάχῳ στρατηγῷ τὰ νικητήρια, ὡς λυτρωθεῖσα τῶν δεινῶν, εὐχαριστήρια, ἀναγράφω σοὶ ἡ Πόλις σου, Θεοτόκε, ἀλλ' ὡς ἔχουσα τὸ κράτος ἀπροσμάχητον, ἐκ παντοίων με κινδύνων ἐλευθέρωσον ἵνα κράζω σοι, Χαῖρε, Νύμφη ἀνύμφευτε.

RESURR. APOLYTIKION. MODE PL. 4.

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

APOLYTIKION OF THE SAINT. MODE 8.

In you, O Mother is preserved * undistorted what I was made in the image of God; * for taking up the cross you followed Christ and taught by your example, * that we should overlook the flesh, since it passes away, * and instead look after the soul, since it is immortal. * And therefore, O devout Mary, * your spirit rejoices with the angels.

APOLYT. FOR THE CHURCH. MODE PL. 1.

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. MODE 8.

O Champion General, I your City now inscribe to you * triumphant anthems as the tokens of my gratitude, * being rescued from the terrors, O Theotokos. * Inasmuch as you have power unassailable, * from all kinds of perils free me so that unto you * I may cry aloud: Rejoice, O unwedded Bride.

THE READINGS OF THE DAY



EPISTLE READING

THE LETTER OF SAINT PAUL
TO THE HEBREWS 9:11-14

BRETHREN, when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, he entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation. It was not through the blood of goats and calves but through his own blood that he entered into the Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. Indeed, if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer (sprinkling those who have been defiled) could sanctify to restore the purity of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to offer divine service to the living God?

GOSPEL READING

MARK 10:32-45

At that time, Jesus took the Twelve [aside] and began to tell them about the things that were going to happen to him. “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes. They will condemn him to death and deliver him to the Gentiles. They will scourge him, mock him, spit on him, and kill him. On the third day, he will rise again.” James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached Jesus and said, “Teacher, we want you to do for

us whatever we will ask!” He replied, “What do you want me to do for you?” They answered, “Grant to us that we may sit, one at your right hand, and one at your left hand, in your glory.” But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking! Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” They replied, “We are able!” Jesus said to them, “You shall indeed drink the cup that I drink, and you shall be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with! However, to sit at my right hand and at my left hand is not mine to give, but it is for whom it has been prepared.” When the ten heard this, they became upset with James and John. Jesus called them, and told them, “You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the nations lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you! Whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant. Whoever of you wants to become first shall be slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

“Patience over a long period of time engenders humility. Humility leads to the health of the soul. Health of the soul brings knowledge of God. Knowledge of God brings love of God. And, finally, love of God attracts God’s grace, which is the sweetest of all.”

—ST. ISAAC THE SYRIAN

ANNOUNCEMENTS



UPCOMING CHURCH SERVICES:

Monday, April 3, G. Compline, 6pm;

Wed. April 5, Presanctified Liturgy, 5pm

Friday, April 7, Holy Confession (no appointment necessary), 4pm–6pm

**Sat., April 8, The Raising of Lazaros, Othros / Divine Liturgy, 8:30am
5pm, Great Vespers**

SECOND TRAY

We will pass a second tray to help cover the costs of Seminarian John Tsikalas who will be with us for Holy Week and Pascha. Your generosity is appreciated!

CHURCH CLEANUP

Thank you to all who helped to clean the church and prepare it for Holy Week and Pascha.

PALM SUNDAY LUNCHEON TICKETS

Tickets are on sale now for the Luncheon. \$12 for Adults and \$5 for children ages 5-12. Please purchase your tickets early so we know how much food to prepare. Please see Georgia Pardalos.

PASCHA BREAD - ORDER TODAY

Pre-orders for Traditional Pascha bread is on sale now for \$12 per loaf. Please see Georgia Pardalos.

PASCHA CARD

Our local chapter of OCF will be collecting donations for a Community Pascha Card. Proceeds will benefit chapter activities and 50% will be donated to St. Paraskeva Orthodox Charity: providing shoes for Orphans. See Eleni Papadakis or Michael Murphy if you have any questions. **Today is the deadline to participate.**

HOLY WEEK FLOWERS DONATIONS

A complete list of Holy Week needs can be found on the back page of this Sunday Bulletin.

BOOKSTORE

Visit the Bookstore for your Lenten reading.

LAZAROS SATURDAY

Join us next Saturday to help fold palm crosses after Divine Services. Please consider bringing a lenten snack to share.

PHILOPTOCHOS

There will be a Philoptochos Board meeting on Tuesday, April 4 at 5:30pm followed by the General Meeting at 6pm. All are welcome to attend the general meeting.

ADOPT A SOLDIER

Thank you to all who helped to raise money for travel expenses for Wyatt Miller.

IOCC HEALTH KITS

Thank you to all who contributed to the IOCC health kits.

OCMC COIN BOXES

Remember to return your full coin boxes beginning next Sunday. Thank you for your generosity!

TO FULFILL THE WILL OF GOD IS VERY EASY

by St. John of Shanghai

Many people believe that to live according to the faith and to fulfill the will of God is very difficult. Actually – it's very easy. One needs only attend to details, to trifles, and try to avoid evil in the slightest and most trivial things. This is the simplest and surest way to enter the world of the spirit and draw near to God. A man often thinks that the Creator demands great things of him, that the Gospel insists on complete self-sacrifice, the abolition of one's person hood, etc., as a condition of faith. A man is so frightened by this that he begins to be afraid of becoming acquainted with God, of drawing near to God, and hides himself from God, not even wishing to look into God's Word. "If I can't do anything important for God, then I'd just better stay away from things spiritual, stop thinking about eternity, and live 'in a normal way.'"

There exists at the entrance to the spiritual realm a "hypnosis of great deeds": one must either do some big thing or do nothing. And so people do nothing at all for God or for their souls! It is very strange – the more a man is devoted to the little things of life, the less he wishes to be honest or pure or faithful to God in those same little things. And, moreover, each one must adopt a correct attitude toward little things if one wishes to come near to the kingdom of heaven.

"Wishes to come near"... In this is summed up all the difficulties of the religious life. Often one wishes to enter into the kingdom of heaven quite unexpectedly, in some miraculous and magical way, or, by right – through some kind of great feat. But neither the one nor the other is the right way to find the higher world. One does not enter God's presence in some wondrous manner while remaining indifferent on earth to the needs of the kingdom of God and its bright eternity, nor can one purchase the treasures of the kingdom of God by some kind of eternal act, however great that act might be. Yet good deeds, holy deeds are necessary for one to grow into a higher life, a bright will, a good desire, a heavenly psychology, a heart that is both pure and fair...

"...Verily, verily I say unto you that whosoever offers one of the least of these but a cup of cold water, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose his reward." In this say-

ing of the Lord is the highest expression of the smallness of the good. "A glass of water" – this is not much... In every communication between people there must without fail be a good spirit. This spirit is Christ, openly manifest or hidden.

"In the name of a disciple" – this is the first step in communicating with another person in the name of Jesus Christ Himself. Many people, not as yet knowing the Lord and the wondrous fellowship in His Name still have among themselves an unselfish, pure and human fellowship which brings them ever closer to the Spirit of Christ...

... As a matter of fact, the lesser good is more necessary for mankind than the greater. People can get along with their lives without the greater good; without the lesser they can not exist. Mankind perishes not from a lack of the greater good, but from an insufficiency of just this lesser good. The greater good is no more than a roof, erected on the brick walls of the lesser good. The lesser, easier good was left on this earth for man by the Creator Himself, who took all the greater good upon Himself. Whosoever does the lesser, the same creates – and through him the Creator Himself creates – the greater good. Of our little good the Creator makes His Own great good. For as our Lord is the Creator who formed all things from nothingness, so is He more able to create the greater good from the lesser...

Through such lesser, easy work, done with the greatest simplicity, a man is accustomed to the good and begins to serve it with his whole heart, sincerely, and in this way enters into an atmosphere of good, lets down the roots of his life into new soil, the soil of the good. The roots of human life quickly accommodate themselves to this good earth, and soon cannot live without it... Thus is a man saved: from the small comes the great. "Faithful in little things" turns out to be "faithful in the greater."

Lay aside all theoretical considerations that it is forbidden to slaughter millions, women, children, and elderly; be content to manifest your moral sense by in no way killing the human dignity of your neighbor, neither by word, nor by innuendo, nor by gesture. Do not be angry over trifles "against your brother vainly" (Matthew 5:22) or in the daily contacts of life speak untruth

to your neighbor. These are trifles, small change, of no account; but just try to do this and you will see what comes of it.

It is hard to pray at night. But try in the morning. If you can't manage to pray at home than at least as you ride to your place of employment attempt with a clear head the "Our Father" and let the words of this short prayer resound in your heart. And at night commend yourself with complete sincerity into the hands of the Heavenly Father. This indeed is very easy.

And give, give a glass of cold water to everyone who has need of it; give a glass filled to the brim with simple human companionship to everyone that lack it, the very simplest companionship...

O wondrous path of little things, I sing thee a hymn! Surround yourselves, O people, gird up yourselves with little works of good – with a chain of little, simple, easy and good feelings which cost us naught, a chain of bright thoughts, words and deeds. Let us abandon the big and the difficult. That is for them that love it and not for us for whom the Lord in His Mercy, for us who have not yet learned to love the greater, has poured forth the lesser love everywhere, free as water and air.

PREPARING FOR CONFESSION

WHAT IS NECESSARY FOR A SAVING CONFESSION?

by Metropolitan Innocent of Moscow

What is Confession? Confession is the oral avowal of one's sins that lie heavy upon the conscience. Repentance cleanses the soul and makes it ready to receive the Holy Spirit, but confession, so to speak, only empties the soul of sins.

Let us present a simple analogy and comparison to confession. For example, suppose you had only one vessel of some kind, which you through negligence or laziness let reach a stage where little by little it accumulated all sorts of dirt so that your vessel became not only unusable but even unbearable to look at without repugnance.

But what if a king wanted to give you as a gift some sort of fragrant and precious balm, one drop of which could heal all infirmities and protect - what then? Would

you refuse such a valuable gift only because you had no other clean vessel in which to put it? No! It would be very natural for you to accept such a gift and you would try to clean your vessel. How would you begin to clean your vessel? No doubt, before anything else, you would rid it of all uncleanness; you would begin by washing it with water and, perhaps would even burn it out so that it no longer retained any of its former odors. Isn't that so?

Now let the vessel represent the soul given to you by God, which you have brought to such a state that it has been filled with all kinds of transgression and iniquities; let the sweet-smelling balm, given by the king, signify the Holy Spirit, Who heals all infirmities and afflictions, Whom the King of heaven and earth, Jesus Christ, freely bestows upon us.

To examine your vessel signifies feeling your guilt before God and recalling all sins, which have stolen into your heart.

To clean out the vessel typifies the confession of your sins before your spiritual father, and washing with water and burning with fire signifies a sincere and even tearful repentance and a voluntary resolve to endure all unpleasantness, needs, afflictions, misfortunes, and even calamities that befall us.

Now tell me: Is Confession profitable or needful? Certainly it is profitable and even essential; because, just as it is impossible to cleanse a vessel without ridding it of all uncleanness, so it is impossible to purge your soul of sins without confession.

But tell me, is confession alone enough for the reception of the Holy Spirit? Certainly not, because in order to receive the sweet-smelling and precious balm into a defiled vessel it is not enough to just empty it, but it is necessary to wash it with water and refine it with fire. Just so, in order to receive the Holy Spirit, it is not enough just to confess or recite your sins before a spiritual father, but it is necessary together with this to purge your soul with repentance or contrition and grief of soul, and burn it out with voluntary endurance of afflictions. So then, this is what confession and repentance mean!

What does a true and correct confession consist of?

When we wish to cleanse our conscience of sins in the Mystery of Repentance: Before everything else it is necessary to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and firmly hope that He is ready to forgive all sins, no matter of what magnitude, if only the sinner repents open-heartedly; it is necessary to believe and hope that the God of all wants and seeks our return.

Of this He assures us through the prophet thus: "As I live, saith the Lord," i. e., I assure and swear by My life, "In desiring I do not desire", i.e., I do not at all desire, "the death of a sinner, but entirely desire his conversion."

It is necessary to have a broken heart. Who is God? And who are we? God is the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth; He is the awful and righteous Judge. And we? We are weak and insignificant mortals. All people, even the greatest people, are less than dust before God, and we can never imagine how disgusting to God is any sin and how any transgression offends Him.

And we, insignificant and weak, we mortals endlessly benefited by our God, dare to offend Him, the All-Good One? Oh! This is so horrible! We are such debtors before God, such transgressors, that not only should we not dare to call ourselves His children, but are not even worthy of being His lowliest servants.

Therefore, picturing all this, you see what contriteness, what lamentation it is necessary to have then, when we want to purge ourselves of sins. And such a feeling must be had not only before confession and during confession, but also after confession. And even more important, do you want to offer a sacrifice to God such as will be acceptable to Him? Naturally we all gladly want this and as far as possible we offer it. But what can we offer Him really acceptable? A broken heart. A sacrifice unto God is a broken spirit; a heart that is broken and humbled, here is an offering to God more priceless than all offerings and oblations!

It is necessary to forgive all our enemies and offenders all the harmful and offensive things they have done to us. Forgiveness—what does it mean to forgive? To forgive means never to avenge, neither secretly nor openly; never to recall wrongs but rather to forget them and, above all, to love your enemy as a friend, a brother, as a comrade; to protect his honor and to treat him

right-mindedly in all things. This is what it means to forgive.

And who agrees that this is difficult? So, it is a hard matter to forgive wrongs, but he who can forgive wrongs is for this reason great - truly great, both before God and before man. Yes, it is a hard matter to forgive your enemies; but it is necessary to forgive, otherwise

God Himself will not forgive. Jesus Christ said: If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you also your trespasses. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you yours.

On the contrary to this, though you pray to God every hour, though you have such faith that you can move mountains, even though you give away all of your belongings to the needy, and give your body to be burned, if you do not practice forgiveness and do not wish to forgive your enemy, then all is in vain, for in such circumstances neither prayer, nor faith, nor charity, will save you, in short, nothing will save you.

But if it is needful to forgive our enemies, so likewise it is indispensable to ask also forgiveness of those people whom we have offended. Thus, if you have offended anyone by word, ask forgiveness of him, come and bow down at his feet and say, "Forgive me." Have you offended by deed? Endeavor to expiate your guilt and offenses and recompense his damage, then be certain that all of your sins, no matter how heavy they be, will be forgiven you.

It is necessary to reveal your sins properly and without any concealment. Some say, "For what reason should I reveal my sins to Him Who knows all of our secrets?" Certainly God knows all of our sins, but the Church, which has the power from God to forgive and absolve sins, cannot know them, and for this reason She cannot, without confession, pronounce Her absolution.

Finally, it is necessary to set forth a firm intention to live prudently in the future. If you want to be in the kingdom of heaven, if you want God to forgive your sins - then stop sinning! Only on this condition does the Church absolve the penitent of his sins. And he who does not think at all about correcting himself confesses in vain, labors in vain, for even if the priest says, "I forgive and absolve," the Holy Spirit does not forgive and absolve him!



It is a tradition to decorate the interior of Orthodox Churches with fresh flowers for the commemoration of our Lord's dread and fearful passion and the celebration of His Glorious Resurrection. Any offering that will help us defray the cost of flowers this year will be greatly appreciated.

PALM SUNDAY

- Palm Leaves.....\$150
- Decorated icon for Palm Sunday.....\$300

HOLY SUNDAY EVENING

- Decorated icon for Bridegroom Service.....\$300

HOLY WEDNESDAY

- Olive Oil.....\$50
- Decorated icon of the Mystical Supper\$300

HOLY THURSDAY

- Wreath for Crucified Lord,
"Stavromenos"\$200
- Decorated icon of the Crucifixion.....\$300

HOLY FRIDAY

- Flowers for Kouvoukion.....6 @ \$100
- Rose Petals.....\$100
- White Orchids.....6 @ \$15 / ea.

HOLY SATURDAY

- Bay Leaves\$150

PASCHA

- Garland for Icon Screen..... 4 @ \$75, 1 @ \$250
- Icon for Resurrection (stationary)\$300
- Paschal Candle for Holy Altar\$175

- Other Expenses,
including Chanting Assistance\$900

If you would like to donate any of these items (or a part of any item), please see Fr. Michael or send a check to the Church with the item being donated noted in the memo area of your check.

