



# SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST

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

### 12TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW

**S**aint Pimen the Great was born about the year 340 in Egypt. He went to one of the Egyptian monasteries with his two brothers, Anoub and Paisius, and all three received monastic tonsure. The brothers were such strict ascetics that when their mother came to the monastery to see her children, they did not come out to her from their cells. The mother stood there for a long time and wept. Then Saint Pimen said to her through the closed door of the cell, "Do you wish to see us now, or in the future life?" Saint Pimen promised that if she would endure the sorrow of not seeing her children in this life, then surely she would see them in the next. The mother was humbled and returned home.

Fame of Saint Pimen's deeds and virtues spread throughout the land. Once, the governor of the district wanted to see him. Saint Pimen, shunning fame, thought to himself, "If dignitaries start coming to me and show me respect, then many other people will also start coming to me and disturb my quiet, and I shall be deprived of the grace of humility, which I have acquired only with the help of God." So he refused to see the governor, asking him not to come.

For many of the monks, Saint Pimen was a spiritual guide and instructor. They wrote down his answers to serve for the edification of others besides themselves. A certain monk asked, "If I see my brother sinning, should I conceal his fault?" The Elder answered, "If we reproach the sins of brothers, then God will reproach our sins. If you see a brother sinning, do not believe your eyes. Know that your own sin is like a beam of wood, but the sin of your brother is like a splinter (Mt. 7:3-5), and then you will not enter into distress or temptation."

Another monk said to the saint, "I have sinned grievously and I want to spend three years at repentance. Is that enough time?" The Elder replied, "That is a long time." The monk continued to ask how long the saint wished him to repent. Perhaps only a year? Saint Pimen said, "That is a long time." The other brethren asked, "Should he repent for forty days?" The Elder answered, "I think that if a man repents from the depths of his heart and has a firm intention not to return to the sin, then God will accept three days of repentance."

When asked how to get rid of persistent evil thoughts, the saint replied, "This is like a man who has fire on his left side, and a vessel full of water on his right side. If he starts burning from the fire, he takes water from the vessel and extinguishes the fire. The fire represents the evil thoughts placed in the heart of man



# THE HYMNS OF THE THIRD ANTIPHON

*Today is Mode 3*

*Before the Entrance...*

## **Resurrectional Apolytikion.**

**MODE 3.**

**L**et the heavens sing for joy, and let everything on earth be glad. For with His Arm the Lord has worked power. He trampled death under foot by means of death; and He became the firstborn from the dead. From the maw of Hades He delivered us; and He granted the world His great mercy.

*And the same again after the Entrance...*

## **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 4.**

**B**oth Joachim and Anna from their sterility's stigma, and Adam and Eve from their mortality's ruin have been set free, O immaculate Maid, by your holy nativity. For this do your people hold celebration, redeemed from the guilt of transgression as they cry to you, "The barren one bears the Theotokos, the nourisher of our Life."

“Christianity’s a strange life, a weird phenomenon. All the religions of the world are logical. Christianity’s the exception. It’s faith which Christ gave us once and for all, and this is proof that it alone is true. All the other religions are logical, but ours is beyond reason. It has to do with a fact which is revealed to us. We don’t judge that fact, but when we accept it, it informs us. This is why Christianity has always seemed foolish to the sages of this world. And monastic obedience confirms precisely this foolishness. May we be worthy of accepting and implementing Christ’s obedience.”

—ARCH. ZACHARIAS ZACHAROU



## THE READINGS OF THE DAY

### EPISTLE READING

*The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 15:1-11*

**B**rethren, I declare to you, the Good News which I preached to you, which also you accepted, in which you also stand. And you are saved by it, that is if you hold firmly to the word which I preached to you. Otherwise, you believed in vain. For I delivered to you, first of all, what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Kephias, then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to over five hundred brethren at once, most of whom remain [alive] until now, but some have also fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all, as to the child born at the wrong time, he appeared to me also. Indeed, I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God, I am what I am. His grace which was bestowed on me was not in vain, but I worked more than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. It does not matter whether it is I or they: this is what we preach, and so you believed.

### GOSPEL READING

*Matthew 18: 23-35*

**A**t that time, a man came to Jesus, and kneeling before him asked, “Good teacher, what good thing shall I do in order to have eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but one, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.” The man asked him, “Which ones?” Jesus replied, “‘You shall not murder.’ ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ‘You shall not steal.’ ‘You shall not bear false witness.’ ‘Honor your father and mother;’ and, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” The young man then said to him, “All these things I have observed from my youth! What do I still lack?” Jesus replied, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have, give it to the poor, and you will have [a] treasure in heaven. Then come, and follow me!” But when the young man heard these words, he went away sad because he was a person with great possessions. Jesus said to his disciples, “Amen I say to you: it will be hard for someone who is rich to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven! Indeed, I tell you that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God.” When his disciples heard this, they were extremely astonished and said, “Who then can be saved?” Gazing at them, Jesus answered, “By human resources, this is impossible, but with God all things are possible!”



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## UPCOMING CHURCH SERVICES:

**Tuesday, August 29, Beheading of the Forerunner, Orthros / Divine Liturgy, 8:30am**

**Friday, September 1, The Indiction, Orthros / Divine Liturgy, 8:30am**

**Saturday, September 2, Great Vespers, 5pm**

### Community Potluck

Today there will be a community pot luck after Divine Services. All are welcome to stay and share in food and fellowship. If you forgot to bring a dish to share, there will be a basket for donations. Donations will go towards Philoptochos Programs' Committee funding.

### #SoakuptheSon

It's Week 14 in this summer series. See info in Narthex for details. SPF!

### Altar Server Robes

Thank you to all who donated towards the altar boy robes. Donations are still needed for additional sizes. Please see Father if you would like to help.

### Purple Barrel

Don't forget the the purple barrel next time you are at the grocery store. Donations are picked up by the local food bank. Thank you!

### Women's Supply Drive

Philoptochos is sponsoring a Supply Drive for True North, the local women's shelter for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Items for donation include toiletries for women and babies as well as other items. Please see the list of needed supplies in the Narthex. Let's give of our abun-

dance to comfort and support to these women and children in need.

### CHURCH ATTIRE

***There is no allowance for Church "summer-wear."***

An Orthodox Christian should always dress for Church in modest attire (in every season), so as not to draw attention to him/herself, becoming a distraction to others. Traditionally women wear dresses or skirts of at least knee length; dresses, blouses / tops should, at minimum, include short sleeves and cover the shoulder. ***Women should not wear lipstick or lip gloss to Church*** - it leaves a residue on the icons and on the Communion spoon. Men should dress in pants and polo or button-down shirts. Shorts should never be worn in Church. ***Additionally, tight-fitting clothing is not appropriate for women or men.***



by the Enemy of our salvation, which can enkindle sinful desires within man like a spark in a hut. The water is the force of prayer which impels a man toward God."

Saint Pimen was strict in his fasting and sometimes would not partake of food for a week or more. He advised others to eat every day, but without eating their fill. Abba Pimen heard of a certain monk who went for a week without eating, but had lost his temper. The saint lamented that the monk was able to fast for an entire week, but was unable to abstain from anger for even a single day.

To the question of whether it is better to speak or be silent, the Elder said, "Whoever speaks on account of God, does well, and whoever is silent on account of God, that one also does well."

He also said, "If man seems to be silent, but his heart condemns others, then he is always speaking. There may be a man who talks all day long, but he is actually silent, because he says nothing unprofitable."

The saint said, "It is useful to observe three things: to fear God, to pray often, and to do good for one's neighbor."

"Wickedness never eradicates wickedness. If someone does evil to you, do good to them, and your goodness will conquer their wickedness."

Once, after Saint Pimen and his disciples arrived at the monastery of Scetis, he learned that the Elder living there was annoyed at his arrival and was also jealous of him, because monks were leaving the Elder to see Abba Pimen.

In order to console the hermit, the saint went to him with his brethren, taking food with them as a present. The Elder refused to receive them, however. Then Saint Pimen said, "We shall not depart from here until we are permitted to see the holy Elder." He remained standing at the door of the cell in the heat. Seeing Saint Pimen's humility and patience, the Elder received him graciously and said, "Not only is what I have heard about you true, but

I see that your works are a hundred times greater."

He possessed such great humility that he often sighed and said, "I shall be cast down to that place where Satan was cast down!"

Once, a monk from another country came to the saint to receive his guidance. He began to speak about sublime matters difficult to grasp. The saint turned away from him and was silent. They explained to the bewildered monk that the saint did not like to speak of lofty matters. Then the monk began to ask him about the struggle with passions of soul. The saint turned to him with a joyful face, "Now you have spoken well, and I will answer." For a long while he provided instruction on how one ought to struggle with the passions and conquer them.

Saint Pimen died at age 110, about the year 450. Soon after his death, he was acknowledged as a saint pleasing to God. He was called "the Great" as a sign of his great humility, uprightness, ascetic struggles, and self-denying service to God.

**We know nothing for certain about the background of Saint Phanourius**, nor exactly when he lived. Tradition says that when the island of Rhodes had been conquered by Moslems, the new ruler of the island wished to rebuild the walls of the city, which had been damaged in previous wars. Several ruined buildings were near the fortress, and stone from these buildings was used to repair the walls at the end of the fifteenth century, or the beginning of the sixteenth.

While working on the fortress, the Moslems uncovered the ruins of a beautiful church. Several icons, most of them badly damaged, were found on the floor. One icon, of Saint Phanourius, looked as if it had been painted that very day. The local bishop, whose name was Nilus, was called to see the icon. It said, "Saint Phanourius."

The saint is depicted as a young soldier holding a cross in his right hand. On the upper part of the cross is a lighted taper. Twelve scenes from his life

are shown around the border of the icon. These scenes show him being questioned by an official, being beaten with stones by soldiers, stretched out on the ground while soldiers whip him, then having his sides raked with iron hooks. He is also shown locked up in prison, standing before the official again, being burned with candles, tied to a rack, thrown to the wild animals, and being crushed by a large rock. The remaining scenes depict him standing before idols holding burning coals in his hands, while a demon stands by lamenting his defeat by the saint, and finally, the saint stands in the midst of a fire with his arms raised in prayer.

These scenes clearly revealed that the saint was a martyr. Bishop Nilus sent representatives to the Moslem ruler, asking that he be permitted to restore the church. Permission was denied, so the bishop went to Constantinople and there he obtained a decree allowing him to rebuild the church.

At that time, there was no Orthodox bishop on the island of Crete. Since Crete was under the control of Venice, there was a Latin bishop. The Venetians refused to allow a successor to be consecrated when an Orthodox bishop died, or for new priests to be ordained, hoping that in time they would be able to convert the Orthodox population to Catholicism. Those seeking ordination were obliged to go to the island of Kythera.

It so happened that three young deacons had traveled from Crete to Kythera to be ordained to the holy priesthood. On their way back, they were captured at sea by Moslems who brought them to Rhodes to be sold as slaves. Lamenting their fate, the three new priests wept day and night.

While in Rhodes the priests heard of the miracles performed by the holy Great Martyr Phanourius. They began to pray to him with tears, asking to be freed from their captivity. Each of the three had been sold to a different master, and so remained unaware of what the others were doing.

By the mercy of God, each of the priests was allowed by his master to pray at the restored church of Saint Phanourius. All three arrived at the same time and prostrated themselves before the icon of the saint, asking to be delivered from the hands of the Hagarenes (Moslems, descendants of Hagar). Somewhat consoled, the priests left the church and returned to their masters.

That night Saint Phanourius appeared to the three masters and ordered them to set the priests free so that they could serve the Church, or he would punish them. The Moslems ignored the saint's warning, believing the vision to be the result of sorcery. The cruel masters bound the priests with chains and treated them even worse than before.

Then Saint Phanourius went to the priests and freed them from their shackles, promising that they would be freed the next day. Appearing once more to the Moslems, the holy martyr told them severely, "If you do not release your slaves by tomorrow, you shall witness the power of God!"

The next morning, all the inhabitants of the homes where the priests were held awoke to find themselves blind, paralyzed, and in great pain. They considered what they were to do, and so decided to send for the priests. When the three priests arrived, they asked them whether they could heal them. The priests replied, "We will pray to God. May His will be done!"

Once more Saint Phanourius appeared to the Hagarenes, ordering them to send to the church a document granting the priests their freedom. He told them that if they refused to do this, they would never recover their sight or health. All three masters wrote letters releasing the priests, and sent the documents to the church, where they were placed before the icon of Saint Phanourius.

Before the messengers returned from the church, all those who had been blind and paralyzed were healed. The priests joyfully returned to Crete, carry-

ing with them a copy of the icon of Saint Phanourius. Every year they celebrated the Feast of Saint Phanourius with deep gratitude for their miraculous deliverance.

The saint's name sounds similar to the Greek verb "phanerono," which means "to reveal" or "to disclose." For this reason, people pray to Saint Phanourius to help them find lost objects. When the object is recovered, they bake a sweet bread and share it with the poor, offering prayers for the salvation of saint's mother. Her name is not known, but according to tradition, she was a sinful woman during her life. Saint Phanourius has promised to help those who pray for his mother in this way.

## **Converts and Culture**

*by Fr. John Whiteford*

**H**ow can someone best assimilate into the "culture" of Orthodoxy, even picking up other national customs, without losing their own nationality (being from the USA for example)? How do we find that middle balance of taking the good and leaving the bad from our own culture? Fr. John Whiteford talks about the experience of a convert to Orthodoxy in the cultural context.

There is no such thing as a generic Orthodoxy. Our faith is handed to us by particular people, who come from particular cultural expressions of the faith. Consequently I think a convert can only embrace the particular expression of the faith as they receive it, in the context that they have converted in. Some converts have gone so far as to actually try to adopt the ethnic identity of whatever Orthodox Jurisdiction they convert into—I have even heard of cases in which people Russified their surname. This is of course ridiculous, and is neither necessary, nor helpful.

When I first encountered the Orthodox Faith, it was in the Russian Orthodox context. I was never under any illusions that I could become a Russian,

nor did I have any great desire to do so. When the Orthodox Faith was brought to the Slavs, they embraced many aspects of the Orthodox Byzantine culture that brought them the Faith, but they remained Slavs, and with time, they in turn made the Faith their own, and a new Orthodox culture developed. You could go back one step further and talk about the Jewish culture of the Apostles, and the interaction that the Greek converts had with it, which ultimately developed into the Byzantine Greek culture. So while I am not a Russian, nor could I ever become a Russian, my experience of Orthodoxy came in a Russian package, and so I am Russian Orthodox, and love and appreciate the best aspects of Russian culture.

Anything in any culture that is contrary to the Orthodox Christian Faith has to go. But anything that is good or virtuous in a culture can be embraced. The Greeks certainly did not give up the best aspects of their culture when they embraced the Christian Faith, and the Church has been enriched by the Greek Christian culture that came out of that. The same is true of Americans. Anything that is good in the culture that you have when you enter the Church you get to keep.

And while we have to embrace the expression of Orthodoxy as we receive it, since we live in a context where we have many other cultural expressions of Orthodoxy, we should resist the temptation to look down on other practices that are no less authentic, but nevertheless different than what we are familiar with.

Someday, God willing, we will see a distinctly American Orthodox culture, but attempts to force that into existence prematurely have met with bad results, and I think this fails to understand how Orthodoxy changes a culture. The Russians did not decide one day that they were going to toss out Greek culture, and concoct a Russian version of it. It happened naturally, as their national Church matured. The American Church has a very long way to go.

However, none of this means that those of us whose language is English need to have the services in a foreign language. The texts of the services have all been translated into English, and so there is no reason why we should not use them.

What a convert should do is try to learn what they can from the most pious and mature Orthodox Christians they encounter in their parish, and emulate them. You will inevitably find some faults in such people, and so those things you should not follow. And you certainly should not emulate the bad habits of those who have grown up on the Church. For example, many Orthodox Christians have a bad habit of coming to Church late, or coming to Church inconsistently. Ignore the bad example of those people, and imitate the ones that are doing what they should be doing.

One temptation for any convert is to take things to extremes, and so finding the balance is something that you have to work towards. For example, while we can and should learn from monasticism, unless and until you go to a monastery, you should not try to live like you are an Athonite monk. For one thing, it's not going to work, and you are likely to have the wheels of your faith come off at some point. Keep your focus on trying to live like a normal pious layman, and if God leads you to a monastery eventually, you will be a lot more likely to work out your salvation there, if you have learned how to work it out in a balanced way, while living in the world.. We should always remember the wise words of St. Poemen the Great:

“Everything that goes to excess comes from the demons”[1]

### ***When in Pain...***

*by Elder Ephraim*

**P**eople are divided in this world into good and evil, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, noble and ignoble, intelligent and fools. They do however all have one thing in common. And that

is pain. Because all people, without exception, will experience pain during their lifetime. As the saying goes: ‘It’s a marvel, if someone finds happiness during their life’. Therefore, we all live in the realm of pain. We know that pain is something personal, which one has to deal with alone. It’s our cross, which we have a duty to carry, just as the Saviour of the world, Jesus, carried His Cross for our sakes. So find comfort and rest in the paternal hand, which at this time is operating on you with the instrument of pain, and be calm. Accept that it is God who sends it, make peace with it, with pain, so as to be able to deal with it.

I know how difficult that is, but at the same time it’s for your salvation. The saints rejoiced in their sorrows; we ought to at least accept them with patience, and God won’t forget, even this small, voluntary display of patience on our part towards His will, which is what pain represents.

When in pain, muster your spiritual strength, and try to comprehend the purpose of pain, through which God opens the Heavens for you. Do you for a moment think that He who measures the number of hairs on your head isn’t aware of the extent of your pain? He is. So, rest trustingly in our heavenly Father. Don’t not give up. With Christ, you’ll get through everything. Because you’ll become His heir and you’ll inherit the infinite riches of our common Father and God. Amen.

