



# SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST

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

SEPTEMBER 3, 2017—13TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW

**T**he Hieromartyr Anthimos, Bishop of Nicomedia, and those with him suffered during the persecution against Christians under the emperors Diocletian (284-305) and Maximian (305-311). The persecution became particularly intense after a fire at the imperial court at Nicomedia. The pagans accused the Christians of setting the fire and reacted against them with terrible ferocity.

In Nicomedia alone, on the day of the Nativity of Christ, as many as twenty thousand Christians were burned inside a church. However, this monstrous inhumanity did not frighten the Christians, who firmly confessed their faith and endured martyrdom for Christ.

Sts Dorotheus, Mardonius, Migdonius, Peter, Indes and Gorgonius died during this period. One of them was beheaded by the sword, others perished by burning, or being buried alive, or by drowning in the sea. The soldier Zeno boldly denounced the emperor Maximian, for which he was stoned, and then beheaded.

Then the holy Virgin Martyr Domna, a former pagan priestess, perished at the hands of the pagans, and also Saint Euthymius, because of their concern that the bodies of the holy martyrs should be buried. Bishop Anthimos, who headed the Church of Nicomedia, hid himself in a village not far from Nicomedia at the request of his flock. From there he sent letters to the Christians, urging them to cleave firmly to the holy Faith and not to fear tortures.

One of his letters, sent with Deacon Theophilus, was intercepted and given to the emperor Maximian. Theophilus was interrogated and died under torture, without revealing to his torturers the whereabouts of Bishop Anthimos. After a while Maximian managed to learn where Saint Anthimos was, and sent a detachment of soldiers after him.

The bishop met them along the way, but the soldiers did not recognize the saint. He invited them to join him and provided a meal, after which he revealed that he was the one they sought. The soldiers did not know what to do. They wanted to leave him and tell the emperor that they had not found him. Bishop Anthimos was not one to tolerate a lie, and so he would not consent to this.

The soldiers came to believe in Christ and received holy Baptism. The saint ordered them to carry out the emperor's instructions. When Bishop Anthimos was brought before the emperor, the emperor ordered that the instruments of execution be brought out and placed before him. "Do you think, emperor, to frighten



# THE HYMNS OF THE THIRD ANTIPHON

*Today is Mode 4*

*Before the Entrance...*

## **Resurrectional Apolytikion.**

MODE 4.

**W**hen the women Disciples of the Lord had learned from the Angel the joyful message of the Resurrection and rejected the ancestral decision, they cried aloud to the Apostles triumphantly: Death has been despoiled, Christ God has risen, granting His great mercy to the world.

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

## **Apolytikion for the Hieromartyr.**

MODE 4.

**B**ecoming a partner with the Apostles in way of life and successor to their thrones, O God-inspired Saint, in the active life you found an entrance to contemplation. Hence you rightly expounded the word of truth, and you shed your blood in struggling for the faith, O Hieromartyr Anthimos. Intercede with Christ our God, beseeching Him to save our souls.

## **Apolytikion for the Venerable One.**

MODE PL. 4.

**W**ith the rivers of your tears you made the barren desert bloom; and with your sighs from deep within, you made your labors bear their fruits a hundredfold; and you became a star, illuminating the world by your miracles, O Theoktistos our devout father. Intercede with Christ our God, for the salvation of our souls.

## **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."

“You'll obtain Grace through pain and tears. And then, with tears of joy and gratitude, with the fear of God, you'll retain it. It's attracted by warmth and zeal; with coldness and inattention it's lost.”

—ELDER JOSEPH THE HESYCHAST



## THE READINGS OF THE DAY

### EPISTLE READING

*The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 16:13-24*

**B**rethren, Watch! Stand firm in the faith! Be courageous! Be strong! Let all that you do be done in love. Now I beg you, brethren (you know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to serve the saints), that you also be in service to people like this, and to everyone who helps in the work and labors. I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus; for what was lacking on your part, they supplied. They refreshed my spirit and yours; show therefore your appreciation to such people. The Churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you much in the Lord, together with the Church that is in their house. All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss! This greeting is by me, Paul, with my own hand. If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. Maranatha! May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love is with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

### GOSPEL READING

*Matthew 21:33-42*

**T**he Lord said this parable: “There was a man who was the owner of a household. He planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, built a tower, and leased it out to farmers. He then left for another country. When the season for the fruit drew near, he sent his slaves to the farmers, to receive his fruit. But the farmers took his slaves, beat one, killed another, and stoned yet another. Again, the owner sent other slaves, even more than the first time; and they treated them in the same way. Then he sent his son to them, saying: ‘They will respect my son!’ But the farmers, when they saw the son, said to each other, ‘This is the heir! Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ And so they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Therefore, when the lord of the vineyard returns, what will he do with those farmers?” They answered him, “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and he will lease out the vineyard to other farmers who will give him the fruit in its season.” Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The [very] stone which the builders rejected was made the head of the corner. This was from the Lord and it is marvelous in our eyes?’”



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## UPCOMING CHURCH SERVICES:

**Thursday, September 7, Great Vespers for the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos, 5pm**  
**Friday, September 8, Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos, Orthros / Divine Liturgy, 8:30am**  
**Saturday, September 9, Great Vespers, 5pm**

### **Bookstore Grand Re-Opening!**

Come visit the renovated Bookstore! For any purchase of \$50 or more made on Sept 3 or 10, you will receive a \$5 off coupon good for use in the month of October.

### **Exaltation of the Precious Cross**

Basil is needed for the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. If you have basil in your garden, please bring it to the Church on Wednesday, September 13

### **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.

### **Philoptochos**

**Supply Drive:** Thanks to everyone for the generous donations to True North!

**Meeting:** Our Philoptochos chapter will meet on Tuesday, September 12th, at 6pm. We are part of a nation-wide network and perform acts of philanthropy and raise money for others who do so. We typically meet every 2nd Tuesday for an hour. Twice a year we meet at a restaurant for a fun evening. Let's make some positive change! We need you! Every member brings something unique, lightens the load, and makes our efforts more fun. New mem-

bers are always welcome! Ask some of our women if you have questions.

### **September Buddy Pack Supply Drive**

Please join Philoptochos as we bring in donations for the local Buddy Pack Program for at-risk school children to have access to kid-friendly nutritious food on weekends. Please bring non-perishable healthy items from the detailed list found in the narthex. If preferred, checks can be written to Philoptochos and given to Becky Windle or Donna Hoffman.

### **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.***

me with these tools of execution?” asked the saint. “No indeed, you cannot frighten one who wishes to die for Christ! Execution is frightening only for the cowardly, for whom the present life is most precious.” The emperor then directed that the saint be fiercely tortured and beheaded by the sword.

Bishop Anthimos joyfully glorified God with his last breath, and received the crown of martyrdom. (See December 28 for another account of the Nicomedian martyrs.)

**Saint Phoebe the Deaconess** is mentioned by the holy Apostle Paul (Romans 16:1-2).

**Saint Theoctistos of Palestine** was a great ascetic who lived in the Judean wilderness in the Wadi Mukellik. At first, he was the companion of Saint Euthymius the Great (January 20) in the ascetic life. So great was their mutual affection and oneness of mind that they seemed to live as one soul in two bodies. They were persons of similar virtue and holiness, and they encouraged one another in their struggles. Each year after the Leave-taking of Theophany, they would go into the desert to struggle and pray in solitude, returning to their cells on Palm Sunday.

After five years together, Saints Euthymius and Theoctistos went into the desert for Great Lent, and in a wadi they discovered a large cave which later became a church. They decided to remain there, believing that they had been led there by God. They ate wild herbs to sustain themselves, and met with no other people for some time.

The Lord did not wish these great luminaries to remain hidden, however. He wanted their wisdom and holiness of life to become known in order to benefit others. One day, shepherds from Bethany found the ascetics and went back to their village and told others about them. After that, many people came to hear of them, and monks came from other monasteries to visit them. Some even stayed there in order to be instructed by them.

So many monks gathered around them that they

were obliged to build a lavra over the cave church. Saint Euthymius made Theoctistos the igumen of the lavra, while he himself lived in seclusion in the cave. The wise Theoctistos accepted all who came to him, confessing them and treating the infirmities of their wounded souls with appropriate spiritual remedies.

When he had reached an advanced old age, Saint Theoctistos became very ill. Saint Euthymius (who was ninety years old himself) visited him and took care of him. When Saint Theoctistos went to the Lord in 467, Patriarch Anastasius of Jerusalem came and presided at his burial service.

**Blessed John the Merciful of Rostov** (also known as “the Hairy”) struggled at Rostov in the exploit of holy foolishness, enduring much deprivation and sorrow. He did not have a permanent shelter, and at times took his rest at the house of his spiritual Father, a priest at the church of the All-Holy, or with one of the aged widows.

Living in humility, patience and unceasing prayer, he spiritually nourished many people, among them Saint Irenarchus, Hermit of Rostov (January 13). After a long life of pursuing asceticism, he died on September 3, 1580 and was buried, according to his final wishes, beside the church of Saint Blaise beyond the altar.

He had “hair upon his head abundantly,” therefore he was called “Hairy.” The title “Merciful” was given to Blessed John because of the many healings that occurred at his grave, and also in connection with the memory of the holy Patriarch John the Merciful (November 12), whose name he shared.

**Saint Aristion** was the bishop of lesser Alexandria in Cilicia (Asia Minor). He was born in the small town of Aribazo in the eparchy of Apamea, Syria at the beginning of the second century. His parents were pagans, and he spent his early years in an atmosphere of idolatry.

We do not know what sort of early education Saint Aristion received, nor where he studied, but

it did not satisfy his search for the truth. A ten-year-old boy who lived in the same town, the future martyr Anthony, showed him the path which led to the truth. Anthony instructed him in the true Faith, and Aristion increased in piety and zeal for God.

It is significant that Anthony, despite the constant fear of persecution, exile and even danger to his own life, was not just a member of the local church, but also preached the Faith to others. It is certain that Aristion prayed for his young friend and remembered his courage and strength, for Anthony's efforts to bring Aristion to the saving Faith had born fruit and were not in vain. Not only did Anthony give himself to the Church through his martyrdom at the age of twenty, he also gave it another saint and martyr: Saint Aristion

Years later, Saint Aristion was consecrated bishop for Issos in Cilicia, which is found in lesser Alexandria. He was a good shepherd to his flock, and cared diligently for their souls.

One day the ruler of Alexandria had Saint Aristion arrested because he was a Christian. Although he was placed on public trial, the holy bishop was calm and showed no fear. His whole demeanor made the Roman eparch realize that it would not be easy to deal with this man who stood before him. He tried to turn Aristion from Christ through flattery and promises of reward, but the saint stood firm. Seeing that his words had no effect on the bishop, he threatened him with fierce tortures. He was not influenced by these threats, however.

Saint Aristion stood before the eparch and his counselors, gazing at them with love and concern for their salvation. Even in his weakness, this captive was stronger than his captors, and he refused to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods.

Before a multitude of idolaters, Saint Aristion spoke of the Triune God, by Whom all things were created. He also told them about the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, which was accomplished

through God's saving dispensation. He explained that Christ brings salvation to fallen man, thereby giving him another chance to attain the true purpose of his life—theosis.

"How poor these soulless statues of the gods are," the bishop said, "and how helpless the eparch looks in his radiant apparel."

All who heard the saint speak were amazed and asked one another where he got such courage. Aristion invited them to believe in the truth which he was revealing to them. Those who watched understood that this holy man was someone special, and they wanted to hear more about his beliefs.

The Roman eparch could not find any way to resist Aristion except through violence, so he sentenced him to death. He commanded his soldiers to prepare a large furnace and then throw him into the flames. The saint went to his martyrdom without resistance, remaining brave and strong until the end. The few Christians who were present tried not to weep. They whispered prayers for him, and were saddened because their father was leaving them. They knew, however, that their archpastor would not cease praying for them, especially now that he was going to Christ. They could hear Saint Aristion singing hymns in the fire until his last breath.

The eparch did not know what a terrible mistake he had made. He did not realize that death is not the end for men, nor for the truth. Nothing could separate Saint Aristion from the Fountain of Life, and so the Lord bestowed upon him an imperishable crown of glory.

After the flames died down, his spiritual children approached the furnace and collected as many of his bones as they could. With great reverence they put the holy relics in a secret place, which remains unknown to the present day.

## *Can the Dead Repent?*

*by Fr. John Whiteford*

**S**cripture, as explained by the Fathers of the Church, states that this is not possible.

*Psalm 6:5 says:*

“For in death there is none that is mindful of Thee, and in hades who will confess Thee?”

Commenting on this passage,

*St. John Chrysostom says:*

[The Prophet David is] not implying that our existence lasts only as far as this present life: perish the thought! After all, he is aware of the doctrine of the resurrection. Rather, it is that after our departure from here there would be no time for repentance. For the rich man praised God and repented, but in view of its lateness it did him no good [Luke 16:19-31]. The virgins wanted to get some oil, but no one gave any to them [Matthew 25:1-13]. So this is what this man requests, too, for his sins to be washed away in this life so as to enjoy confidence at the tribunal of the fearsome judge (St. John Chrysostom: Commentary on the Psalms, vol. I, trans. Robert C. Hill (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998), p. 102).

*St. Jerome says:*

While you are still in this world, I beg of you to repent. Confess and give thanks to the Lord, for in this world only is he merciful. Here, He is able to be compassionate to the repentant, but because there He is judge, He is not merciful. Here, He is compassionate kindness; there, He is judge. Here, He reaches out His hand to the falling; there, He presides as judge (Homily on Psalm 105[106], quoted in Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament, Vol. VII, Craig A. Blaising and Carmen S. Hardin, eds. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2008) p. 51).

*St. Gregory the Theologian says:*

It is better to be punished and cleansed now than to be transmitted to the torment to come, when it is the time of chastisement, not of cleansing. For as he who remembers God here is conqueror of death (as David has most excellently sung) so the departed have not in the grave confession and restoration; for God has confined life and action to this world, and to the future the scrutiny of what has been done (On His Father's Silence, Oration 16:7).

*St. Basil the Great says:*

In like manner they which have grieved the Holy Spirit by the wickedness of their ways, or have not wrought for Him that gave to them, shall be deprived of what they have received, their grace being transferred to others; or, according to one of the evangelists, they shall even be wholly cut asunder—the cutting asunder meaning complete separation from the Spirit. The body is not divided, part being delivered to chastisement, and part let off; for when a whole has sinned it were like the old fables, and unworthy of a righteous judge, for only the half to suffer chastisement. Nor is the soul cut in two—that soul the whole of which possesses the sinful affection throughout, and works the wickedness in co-operation with the body. The cutting asunder, as I have observed, is the eternal separation of the soul from the Spirit. For now, although the Spirit does not suffer admixture with the unworthy, He nevertheless does seem in a manner to be present with them that have once been sealed, awaiting the salvation which follows on their conversion; but then He will be wholly cut off from the soul that has defiled His grace. For this reason “In Hades there is none that maketh confession; in death none that remembereth God,” because the help of the Spirit is no longer present (Treatise on the Holy Spirit, 40).

*St. Augustine says:*

For in death there is no one that is mindful of Thee. He knows too that now is the time for turning

unto God: for when this life shall have passed away, there remaineth but a retribution of our deserts. "But in hell who shall confess to Thee?" That rich man, of whom the Lord speaks, who saw Lazarus in rest, but bewailed himself in torments, confessed in hell, yea so as to wish even to have his brethren warned, that they might keep themselves from sin, because of the punishment which is not believed to be in hell. Although therefore to no purpose, yet he confessed that those torments had deservedly lighted upon him; since he even wished his brethren to be instructed, lest they should fall into the same (Commentary on the Psalms 6:6).

*Cassiodorus says:*

This may elicit the question, why does he say that in death no one is mindful of God, whereas then we can be made to tremble more by the imminent anger of God? But when we speak of those unmindful of God, this properly refers to the unfaithful. Isaiah said of them: For those in hell will not praise thee, nor will those who are dead bless thee. When Paul says: In the name of of Jesus let every knee bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, the statement should be taken as referring only to the faithless and obstinate, who deserve to have no trust placed in their confession. So the psalmist rightly hastens to gain acquittal here, since once the sun has set nothing remains except deserved retribution. Who shall confess to thee in hell? We must mentally add "to win pardon." Compare Solomon's words on impious men: For they will say among themselves, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, and the rest. Then too we know that the rich man who saw Lazarus settled in peace confessed his evil plight, but he was not heard praying for help because it is in this world that confession connotes also obtaining pardon. To help us realize that some distinction is being made in the words of the verse, in death means passing from life, whereas in hell means hugging the place where souls are known to endure what they have

deserved. There is total denial that a confession can be made in each of these situations (Cassiodorus: Explanation of the Psalms, Vol. 1, trans. P. G. Walsh, (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), p. 94f).

We find a very similar passage in Isaiah 38:18-19, which Cassiodorus references:

For they that are in the grave shall not praise thee, neither shall the dead bless thee, neither shall they that are in Hades hope for thy mercy. The living shall bless thee, as I also do: for from this day shall I beget children, who shall declare thy righteousness.

*St. Cyril of Alexandria says:*

What is said in the psalm verse contains sentiments similar to this passage, What value is there in my death if I descend into corruption? Dust will not praise you or proclaim your marvels [Psalm 29[30]:9]. In other words, once dead, and enclosed in the gates of Hades, they will cease giving praise. Nothing further could be added to what has been achieved; instead, they will remain in the condition in which they were left, and will await the time of the general judgment. So he is saying that it is the living, with the power of doing good on receipt of benefits who will bless you, as I do (Cyril of Alexandria: Commentary on Isaiah, Vol. II, trans. Robert C. Hill (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2008), p. 300).

So here you have all of the Three Great Hierarchs, along with two great Latin Saints, St. Cyril of Alexandria (the preeminent Father of the Third Ecumenical Council), and others all saying essentially the same thing: the time for repentance is in this life. If you have not repented before death, it will then be too late.

