



# SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST

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

OCTOBER 15, 2017—THE FATHERS OF THE 7TH EC. SYNOD

**T**oday the Church remembers the 350 holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council under the holy Patriarch Tarasius (February 25).

The Synod of 787, the second to meet at Nicea, refuted the Iconoclast heresy during the reign of Empress Irene and her son Constantine VI.

The Council decreed that the veneration of icons was not idolatry (Exodus 20:4-5), because the honor shown to them is not directed to the wood or paint, but passes to the prototype (the person depicted). It also upheld the possibility of depicting Christ, Who became man and took flesh at His Incarnation. The Father, on the other hand, cannot be represented in His eternal nature, because “no man has seen God at any time” (John 1:18).

In Greek practice, the holy God-bearing Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council are commemorated on October 11 (if it is a Sunday), or on the Sunday which follows October 11. According to the Slavic MENAION, however, if the eleventh falls on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday, the service is moved to the preceding Sunday.

**Saint Euthymius the New of Thessalonica and Mt Athos**, in the world was named Nicetas, and he was a native of the city of Ancyra in Galatia. His parents, Epiphanius and Anna, led virtuous Christian lives, and from childhood their son was meek, pious and obedient. At age seven he was left fatherless and he soon became the sole support of his mother in all matters. Having entered military service, Nicetas married, on the insistence of his mother. After the birth of a daughter, he secretly left home in order to enter a monastery. For fifteen years the venerable Euthymius lived the ascetic life on Mount Olympus, where he learned monastic deeds from the Elders.

The monk went to resettle on Mount Athos. On the way he learned that his mother and wife were in good health. He informed them that he had become a monk, and he sent them a cross, calling on them to follow his example. On Mt Athos he was tonsured into the Great Schema and lived for three years in a cave in total silence, struggling with temptations. Saint Euthymius also lived for a long time as a stylite, not far from Thessalonica, instructing those coming to him for advice and healing the sick.

The monk cleansed his mind and heart to such an extent that he was granted divine visions and revelations. At the command of the Lord, Saint Euthymius founded two monasteries in 863 on Mount Peristeros,



# THE HYMNS OF THE THIRD ANTIPHON

*Today is Mode 1*

*Before the Entrance...*

## **Resurrectional Apolytikion.**

**MODE 2.**

**W**hen You descended unto death, O Lord who yourself are immortal Life, then did You mortify Hades by the lightning flash of Your Divinity. Also when You raised the dead from the netherworld, all the Powers of the heavens were crying out: O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You. (x2)

*After the Entrance...*

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## **Apolytikion for the Holy Fathers.**

**MODE PL. 4.**

**S**upremely blessed are You, O Christ our God. You established the holy Fathers upon the earth as beacons, and through them You have guided us all to the true Faith, O greatly merciful One, glory be to You.

## **Apolytikion for the Church.**

**MODE PL. 1.**

**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 2.**

**O** Protection of Christians unshamable, mediation with the Creator immovable, we sinners beg you, do not despise the voices of our prayers, but anticipate, since you are good, and swiftly come unto our aid as we cry out to you with faith: Hurry to intercession, and hasten to supplication, O Theotokos who defend now and ever those who honor you.





## THE READINGS OF THE DAY

### EPISTLE READING

*The Letter of Paul to Titus (3:8-15)*

**B**rethren, this saying is sure. Concerning these things, I desire that you teach with confidence, so that those who have believed God may be careful to persevere in good works. These things are good and profitable to all. Avoid foolish questions, genealogies, dissensions, and disputes about the law. These things are unprofitable and vain. After a first and second admonition, have nothing more to do with anyone who causes divisions, knowing that such a person is perverted, sinful and self-condemned. When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, do your utmost to meet me at Nicopolis, for I have determined to spend the winter there. Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey speedily and see that they lack nothing. Make sure that our people also learn to maintain good works to meet urgent needs, so that they may not be unfruitful. All who are with me greet you! Greet those who love us in faith. Grace be with you all! Amen.

### GOSPEL READING

*Luke (8: 5-15)*

**T**he Lord said this parable: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was sowing, some [seed] fell along the wayside; it was trampled under foot, and the birds of the sky devoured it. Other seed fell on the rock, and as soon as it grew, it withered away because it had no moisture. Other fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew with it, and choked it. Other fell into the good ground, grew, and brought forth fruit a hundred times.” Then his disciples asked him, “What does this parable mean?” Jesus replied, “To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but to the rest, [it is given] in parables, so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’ Now this is what the parable means: The seed is the word of God. Those along the wayside are those who have heard. Then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved. Those on the rock are those who receive the word with joy when they hear. But they have no root; they believe for a while, then fall away in time of temptation. What fell among the thorns is those who have heard, and as they go on their way, they are choked with worries, wealth, and the pleasures of life; and they bring no fruit to maturity. As for the seed that fell in the rich soil, this is those who have heard the word with an honest and good heart, who retain it and bring forth fruit with endurance. As he said this, he exclaimed, “Let anyone with ears to hear listen!”



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## UPCOMING CHURCH SERVICES:

Tuesday, October 17, Vigil for St. Luke the Evangelist, 7pm

Saturday, October 14, Great Vespers, 5pm

### Feastday of St. Luke — Vigil

This Tuesday, October 17, we will celebrate a Vigil in honor of our patron, St. Luke the Evangelist. Services will begin at 7pm with Great Vespers, followed by Orthros and Divine Liturgy. Please make every effort to attend at least part of the vigil as we ask for St. Luke's intercession before His Master and our Lord for the protection and growth of our parish.

**Flower Donations:** We need 3x \$100 donations to decorate the icon of St. Luke for the feastday. Please see Fr. Michael if you would like to make a donation.

### Parish Feast Day Pot Luck

There will be a Parish Feast day Pot Luck held **TODAY**. Please join us as we celebrate our upcoming parish feast day. All are welcome to stay.

### Bookstore - Christmas Orders

If you are interested in ordering icons for Christmas, please place your order by October 31. Special orders placed after that date will be subject to additional shipping charges.

### Philoptochos

Thank you to all who participated in the following drives: Women's Shelter, Hurricane Harvey Relief Fund (IOCC), Buddy Pack Drive.

### Hope and Joy

Hope and Joy children are invited to go Lazer Bowling on Saturday, October 21 at 3pm. Please see Calin Chindris to register.

### Breast Cancer Awareness

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Philoptochos has information about Breast Cancer in the Narthex.

### 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.***



not far from Thessalonica, which he guided for 14 years, with the rank of deacon. In one of these his wife and mother received monastic tonsure. Before his death he settled on Hiera, an island of Mt Athos, where he reposed in 898. His relics were transferred to Thessalonica. Saint Euthymius is called “the New” to distinguish him from Saint Euthymius the Great (January 20).

**The Hieromartyr Lucian, Presbyter of Antioch,** was born in the Syrian city of Samosata. At twelve years of age he was left orphaned. Lucian distributed his possessions to the poor, and went to the city of Edessa to the confessor Macarius, under the guidance of whom he diligently read Holy Scripture and learned the ascetic life. For his pious and zealous spreading of Christianity among the Jews and pagans, Lucian was made a presbyter.

In Antioch Saint Lucian opened a school where many students gathered. He taught them how to understand the Holy Scriptures, and how to live a virtuous life. Saint Lucian occupied himself with teaching, and he corrected the Greek text of the Septuagint, which had been corrupted in many places by copyists and by heretics who deliberately distorted it in order to support their false teachings. The entire Greek text of the Bible which he corrected was hidden in a wall at the time of his confession of Christ, and it was found during the lifetime of Saint Constantine the Great.

During the persecution of Diocletian, Saint Lucian was arrested and was sent to prison in Nicomedia, where for nine years he encouraged other Christians with him to remain steadfast in their confession of Christ, urging them not to fear tortures or death.

Saint Lucian died in prison from many terrible tortures and from hunger. Before his death, he wished to partake of the Holy Mysteries of Christ on the Feast of Theophany. Certain Christians who visited him brought bread and wine for the Eucharist. The hieromartyr, bound by chains and lying on

a bed of sharp potsherds, was compelled to offer the Bloodless Sacrifice upon his chest, and all the Christians there in prison received Communion. The next day the emperor sent people to see if the saint was still alive. Saint Lucian said three times, “I am a Christian,” then surrendered his soul to God. The body of the holy martyr was thrown into the sea, but after thirty days dolphins brought it to shore. Believers reverently buried the body of the much-suffering Saint Lucian.

Saint Lucian was originally commemorated on January 7, the day of his death. Later, when the celebration of the Synaxis of Saint John the Baptist was appointed for this day, the feast of Saint Lucian was transferred to October 15.

The October date may be associated with the dedication of a church which was built in Antioch by Saint Helen (May 21) over Saint Lucian’s holy relics.

Although he was only a priest, sometimes Saint Lucian is depicted in the vestments of a bishop. The Stroganov Guide for Iconographers was published in Russia in 1869, based on a 1606 manuscript. There Saint Lucian is depicted wearing a phelonion and holding a Gospel. He does not wear the omophorion of a bishop, however. Another handbook, the Litsevoy Podlunnik, states that Saint Lucian is to be depicted with the omophorion.

It may be that the Russians thought of Saint Lucian as a bishop because of his importance to the Church, and so that is how they depicted him. Similarly, Saint Charalampus (February 10) is depicted as a priest in Greek icons, and as a bishop in Russian icons.

**Saint John, Bishop of Suzdal,** entered one of the monasteries of Suzdal while a youth. For his virtuous and humble life, the saint was made the first Bishop of Suzdal and Nizhegorod in 1350. Bishop John merited a great mercy of God: Prince Boris of Suzdal saw how an angel of God attended the saint during the Divine Liturgy.

Saint John was known for his love towards the destitute and the sick; he interceded for the poor

before the princes to lower their taxes. He also built poor houses and hospices for the sick. The saint was very concerned about enlightening the pagan Mordvians with the Christian Faith. After the annexation of Suzdal to the Moscow Diocese, Saint John took the monastic schema and withdrew to the Bogoliub monastery. He lived there in seclusion and died in peace. Numerous miracles were took place at his grave.

**The Holy Martyrs Sarbelus and Bebaia of Edessa** were brother and sister, suffering in the second century under the emperor Trajan for confessing Christianity. Saint Sarbelus was a priest of the idols at Edessa, but was converted to Christ by a certain bishop, then he and his sister were baptized. Pagans tortured the saints for a long while, and then beheaded them.

## *The God who is no God*

*by Fr. Stephen Freeman*

**B**elief in a true and living God is a very difficult thing, fraught with consequence. Belief in the idea of God can be tokenism at its very worst. This distinction between the true and living God and the idea of God goes to the very heart of the secular crisis of the modern world. There is no room in the secular world for a true and living God – while the idea of God is perfectly suited to the emptiness of the secular mind.

For the individual Christian this distinction is the great crisis of the believing life. There is a divide in our culture between the ideas we think and the lives we live – and the division is often accepted as normal. This is more than mere hypocrisy – our problem is not that we fail to live up to our ideas – our ideas frequently fail to have anything to do with the life we live.

In secularized culture, religion is not eliminated – it is placed at a remove. The remove in which religion is placed is anywhere that does not matter, anywhere that does not touch our daily lives. The

secular genius of the modern world (including America) was its contention that religion and belief are the same thing. The acquiescence of believers to this arrangement was, in effect, an agreement to render their faith impotent.

The fatal flaw in this agreement can be summed up simply: true religion is not a set of beliefs – it is a set of practices.

We believe in prayer – but we do not pray. We believe in forgiveness – but we do not forgive. We believe in generosity – but we do not give. We believe in truth – but we lie.

Again, the manner of our failures goes beyond mere hypocrisy. The divorce between belief and practice is a cultural habit reaching far beyond religion. There is a radical division between thought and action throughout most of our culture. The frequently indistinguishable character of the contemporary Christian from the contemporary unbeliever bears witness to a deeper problem.

The practice of Christianity has been increasingly banned from the public square. We have agreed to privatize our faith. What we believe has become a matter of “conscience,” rather than the offensive matter of practice. The Reformation largely erased the outward forms of the Christian life: feast days; pilgrimages; vestments, etc. The Reformers were correct that the inward life of the Spirit was far more important than the ephemeral forms in which it was exhibited. However, they failed to notice that with the disappearance of the outward forms, the disappearance of the inward life would pass without notice. Today, the outward debauchery of Mardi Gras is the legacy of an abandoned Ash Wednesday. Christian practice is reduced to drunkenness (no American city seeks to ban Mardi Gras for its religious content – the practice of drunkenness is not as offensive as a Christmas Creche).

The closest thing to danger presented by Christians in the modern world is the insistence by some that the unborn actually have a right to life and should be protected against the actions of those

who would destroy them. However, many Christians (including some who claim to be “pro-life”), accept the secular fiction of the separation of Church and state, and offer that their private beliefs should not determine the actions of others. Their private beliefs are useless – before God and man.

The American theologian, Stanley Hauerwas, commonly states that “there is no such thing as private morality.” It is inherently the case that morality is a matter of behavior between people. A “private morality” is no morality at all. To believe that the unborn have a right to life but to refuse to insist that such a right be observed by all, is, in fact, to declare that there is no such right. If there is a “right,” then it is immoral not to demand that everyone accept such a right.

Whatever we profess as Christians can be acted upon and practiced – or it is a useless profession. Christ’s parable of the Last Judgment in Matthew 25 confronts Christians with their practices: feeding the hungry; visiting the prisoners; clothing the naked; giving drink to the thirsty. No mention is made of Creed. It is not that belief is unimportant – but the dogma of the faith undergirds and informs our practice of the faith. “Faith without works is dead,” because it is no faith at all.

The heart of the Orthodox faith (both dogma and practice) is found in its proclamation of union with Christ. “God became man so that man could become god,” in the words of St. Athanasius. Human life was intended to be lived in union with God. In the Genesis story of the fall we learn the essential character of our brokenness: we severed our communion with God and turned towards the path of death and destruction. The nature of sin lies precisely in its movement away from union with God. The path of salvation is precisely the path of union with God. This is made possible by Christ’s union with humanity. He took our broken condition upon Himself – trampling down death by death in His crucifixion and descent into Hades – He raises us

up in His resurrection to the path for which we were created. From glory to glory we are changed into His image as we live in union with Him.

This is more than a doctrinal story – it is also a description of the practice of the Christian faith. We love because we live in union with Christ, “who loved us and gave Himself for us.” We feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the prisoner because in doing so we do this to Christ. Every practice of kindness and mercy is an act of union with Christ. The Church’s life of feasts and fasts, sacraments and services are the practice of worship – the life of union with Christ. They are not religious entertainment nor mere educational events: they are the visible manifestation of the inner life of God in man.

Christians in this world are “as the soul is to the body,” in the words of a second-century Christian writer (Epistle to Diognetus). As such, they are the life of this world. The presence of practicing Christians is properly the presence of the Kingdom of God. The in-breaking of the Kingdom in this world is a disruption of the culture of death initiated in the fall. The world’s love affair with death is and should be threatened by the manifestation of the Kingdom. This is only true as Christianity is practiced. That Christians “believe” something is no threat whatsoever unless that belief is made manifest in practice.

The proposed constitution of the European Union (to give an example) offers religious freedom to individuals. Orthodox Christians have complained that such “freedom” was guaranteed under Communism – but that in the name of protecting individuals, parents were forbidden to teach the faith to their children. The Christian faith is practiced as a community. An agreement to define the faith as an individual matter is an agreement to destroy Orthodoxy. The world’s onslaught of Christian practice is subtle and relentless. Christians would do well to practice their faith and refuse devil’s bargain offered by modern states.

We are called to a life in union with the true and living God. That life infuses every action of the day – every breath we take. Anything less is an agreement with the enemy to place our God at arms length and to serve a god who is no God.

## **Hieromonk Neofytos from Vatopedi**

*(1876-3 April 1967)*

**A**gathangelos Theokharoudis, as he was known before becoming a monk, was born in 1876 to his parents, Dimitrios and Anastasia, in Gomati, Halkidiki. In 1892, he arrived at the ancient and beautiful Vatopedan Kelli of the Great Martyr Prokopios, whose hand was kept there as a treasured relic. Agathangelos was given his monastic tonsure in 1899 by the Elder Neofytos the First. He was ordained deacon in 1907 and then priest in 1909.

He was an excellent and well-known spiritual father of great discernment. He was regularly invited to Halkidiki to confess the faithful. Indeed, no other spiritual father had so many people coming to him for confession. Elder Gavriil of Dionisiou wrote the following regarding him: “The well-disposed and devout spiritual guide, Hieromonk Neofytos, presided as Elder, invited each year into neighbouring Halkidiki, where he came from. He was succeeded in this task by another renowned spiritual guide from the Vatopedan kellia, also called Neofytos, the “memory of the just” Athonite fathers remaining in these neighbouring parts”. Deacon Dionisios Firfiris (†1999) said that at one time a dejected young man was going to kill himself because a spiritual guide had given him the penance of not taking Holy Communion until he was about to die. He was sent to Elder Neofytos who received him with compassion and kindness. “Repent, son”, he said to him, “I’ll take all your sins on me. Take communion this Sunday”. He did and was saved.

Elder Neofytos also had good fellow-monks at the kelli. The monks Sofronios and Panteleïmon, from Thasos and the monk Pankratos († 1999), whom we

knew well. Elder Neofytos had gone to the Mountain as a ten-year-old. When he was twelve, he took his nephew, in a basket on a donkey from their village, Gomati. This nephew later became the Monk Pankratos, who was to die at the kelli of the Iosafei in Karyes, in dreadful pain from cancer, having first made his confession with tears and received Holy Communion.

The celebrated spiritual guide, Father Neofytos, went to his rest in the Lord on 3/4/1967.

“*When you feel a persistent weight or you’re tormented by lack of faith, you should know that the enemy has taken his seat in your heart and is making the most of your ignorance, weakness and instability in the faith. You must condemn your foolishness, blindness and lack of faith immediately. Then the Lord will have mercy on you, the weight in your heart will disappear and you’ll find peace.*”

—**ST. JOHN OF KRONSTADT**

