



# SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST

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

NOVEMBER 19, 2017—9TH SUNDAY OF LUKE

**T**he Holy Prophet Obadiah [or Abdia] is the fourth of the Twelve Minor Prophets, and he lived during the ninth century B.C. He was from the village of Betharam, near Sichem, and he served as steward of the impious Israelite King Ahab. In those days the whole of Israel had turned away from the true God and had begun to offer sacrifice to Baal, but Obadiah faithfully served the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in secret.

When Ahab's wife, the impious and dissolute Jezebel, hunted down all the prophets of the Lord (because of her quarrel with the Prophet Elias), Obadiah gave them shelter and food (3/1 Kgs 18:3 ff). Ahab's successor King Okhoziah [Ahaziah] sent three detachments of soldiers to arrest the holy Prophet Elias (July 20). One of these detachments was headed by Saint Obadiah. Through the prayer of Saint Elias, two of the detachments were consumed by heavenly fire, but Saint Obadiah and his detachment were spared by the Lord (4/2 Kgs 1).

From that moment Saint Obadiah resigned from military service and became a follower of the Prophet Elias. Afterwards, he himself received the gift of prophecy. The God-inspired work of Saint Obadiah is the fourth of the Books of the Twelve Minor Prophets in the Bible, and contains predictions about the New Testament Church. The holy Prophet Obadiah was buried in Samaria.

**The Holy Martyr Barlaam** lived in Antioch of Syria. During Diocletian's persecution against Christians, the aged Saint Barlaam was arrested and brought to trial, where he confessed himself a Christian.

The judge, wanting to compel the saint to renounce Christ, ordered that Saint Barlaam be brought to the pagan altar. His right hand was placed over it, and a red-hot censer burning with incense was put into his hand. The torturer thought that a physically weak old man could not endure the pain and would drop it on the altar. In this way he would involuntarily be offering sacrifice to the idol. However, the saint held on to the censer until his hand fell off. After this, the holy Martyr Barlaam surrendered his soul to the Lord.

**Saint Barlaam, Igumen of the Kiev Caves**, lived during the eleventh century at Kiev, and was the son of an illustrious noble. From his youth, he yearned for the monastic life and he went to Saint Anthony of the Caves (July 10), who accepted the pious youth so firmly determined to become a monk, and he bade Saint Nikon (March 23) to tonsure him.

Saint Barlaam's father tried to return him home by force, but finally became convinced that his son would never return to the world, so he gave up. When the number of monks at the Caves began to increase, Saint



# THE HYMNS OF THE THIRD ANTIPHON

*Today is Mode Varys*

*Before the Entrance...*

## **Resurrectional Apolytikion.**

**MODE VARYS.**

**B**y means of Your Cross, O Lord, You abolished death. To the robber You opened Paradise. The lamentation of the myrrh-bearing women You transformed, and You gave Your Apostles the order to proclaim to all that You had risen, O Christ our God, and granted the world Your great mercy. **(x2)**

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## **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 4.**

**T**he Savior's most pure and immaculate temple, the very precious bridal chamber and Virgin, who is the sacred treasure of the glory of God, on this day is introduced into the House of the Lord, and with herself she brings the grace in the divine Spirit. She is extolled by the Angels of God. A heavenly tabernacle is she.

“*God can't be described and is not finite. Neither can His properties be. If, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, people enter into the bosom of glorification, they experience all these endless, imperceptible, untraceable and boundless properties. This is why I said that there's no end to repentance.*”

—ELDER IOSIF THE HESYCHAST



## THE READINGS OF THE DAY

### EPISTLE READING

*The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians (2:14-22)*

**B**rethren, Christ is our peace, he who made both [groups to be] one and tore down the wall of separation. He abolished in his flesh the enmity which is the law of commandments with its decrees, so that he might create in himself one new humanity instead of two, making peace. He reconciled both [groups] to God in one body, through the cross, by which he destroyed that enmity. He came and preached peace to you who were far off and also to those who were near. Through him, we both have access to the Father in one Spirit. And so, you are no longer strangers and foreigners! Instead, [you are] fellow citizens with the saints, and members of God's household, being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Jesus Christ himself is the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, fitted together, grows into a holy sanctuary in the Lord. In him, you too are built up into a dwelling place of God in [the] Spirit.

### GOSPEL READING

*Luke (12:16-21)*

**T**he Lord said this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced in abundance. He thought to himself, 'What will I do? I do not have room to store my crops!' Then the man said, 'This is what I will do: I will pull down my barns, build bigger ones, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. Then I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods stored up for many years. Take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry!'" But God said to him, 'You fool! Tonight your soul is demanded of you. The things which you have prepared, to whom will they belong?' This is how it is when someone amasses treasure for himself but is not rich toward God." As he said this, he exclaimed, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!"

“*Whatever difficulties and temptations you face, just remember that they're nothing compared to the trials experienced by the Lord as a human being here on earth.*”

— ELDER GAVRIIL TSAFOS ”



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## UPCOMING CHURCH SERVICES:

**Tuesday, Nov. 21, The Presentation of the Theotokos into the Temple, Orthros / Div. Lit., 8:30am**

**Friday, Nov. 24, Great Vespers for St. Katherine, 5pm**

**Saturday Nov. 25, Morning: St. Katherine the Great Martyr, Orthros / Div. Lit., 8:30am**

**Evening: Great Vespers for St. Katherine, 5pm**

## Welcome Fr. Anastasios!

Fr. Anastasios is substituting for Fr. Michael today, who is attending the ordination of his spiritual son, George Mastakas.

## Scripture Study

Fr. Michael is teaching a course on St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians. The second class will be on Thursday, November 30 at 6pm. This is not a catechism class, and as such is *only intended for Orthodox Christians*. The EOB translation is required for the class and can be purchased from the Bookstore.

## Philoptochos

Thank you to all who participated in making cards for our local veterans on Make a Difference Day last week.

**CHRISTMAS CARD:** If you would like to be included in our Community Christmas card, please see Elly Aslanidis or Rebecca Windle to sign up. A suggested minimum \$15 donation is requested. Proceeds benefit Philoptochos in their charitable work. Extra forms are in the narthex. Deadline is December 10.

**ANGEL WREATH:** We are once again participating in the Voluntary Action Center Christmas Program, and are sponsoring three single parent families with up to three children each. If you would like to participate, take one or more angel cards from the wreath in the Narthex, buy the specific gift listed on the back and bring the gifts back to church unwrapped with the angel tag attached by Dec. 3. Thank you for your generosity! Please give gift cards for the Angel wreath to Karen Sade. Do not place in the box.

**Cooking Class and Recipe Swap:** Philoptochos is sponsoring a Cooking Class on December 16 at 10:00am. Please see registration form for details. See Rebecca Windle if you have any questions.

Anthony made Saint Barlaam igumen, while he himself moved to another cave and again began to live in solitude.

Saint Barlaam became the first igumen of the Kiev Caves monastery. In the year 1058, after asking Saint Anthony's blessing, Saint Barlaam built a wooden church in honor of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos. Afterwards, Saint Barlaam became igumen of the newly-formed monastery in honor of the Great Martyr Demetrius.

Saint Barlaam twice went on pilgrimage to the holy places in Jerusalem and Constantinople. After he returned from his second journey, he died in the Vladimir Holy Mountain monastery at Volhynia in 1065 and was buried, in accord with his final wishes, at the Caves monastery in the Near Caves. His memory is celebrated September 28 and on the second Sunday of Great Lent.

**The Holy Martyr Azes and with him 150 Soldiers suffered at Isauria**, in Asia Minor, under the emperor Diocletian (284-305). For his confession of the Christian Faith, the saint was arrested and brought to trial before the eparch, Aquilinus.

One hundred and fifty soldiers had been sent to arrest the saint, but they were converted to the path of salvation and they accepted holy Baptism with water that sprang forth through the prayer of Saint Azes. The martyr persuaded them to fulfill the commandment to obey those in authority, and therefore to bring him before the eparch.

The soldiers and the saint confessed their Christian faith before Aquilinus, and for this they were all beheaded. With them the eparch executed his own wife and daughter, who had come to believe in Christ, seeing the steadfastness of Saint Azes under torture.

## **The life of Saint Arsenios the Cappadocian**

*by St. Paisios the Athonite*

### *Part 1*

**T**he most Blessed Father Arsenios was born around 1840 in Pharasa or Varasio, the most important of the six Christian villages in the Pharasa region of Cappadocia.

His parents were rich in virtues, and rather modest in material possessions. His father was a teacher whose name was Eleftherios (or Hadjilefteris). His surname was Annitsalichos and his nickname Artzidis. His mother was called Varvara, her maiden name was Frangou or Frangopoulou and the nick-name of her family was Tsaparis.

They had two sons, Vlasios and Theodoros (Father Arsenios), who were left orphans at an early age when both of their parents passed away, first the father and shortly thereafter the mother. The orphans were then cared for by their mother's sister, who lived in Pharasa.

One day, Vlasios persuaded his younger brother, Theodoros, to go with him to a field which belonged to their father, which lay close to a torrent called the Evkasis. As they were crossing this torrent, the water carried Theodoros away, and Vlasios, in tears, called on Saint George, whose Chapel was close by. While Vlasios was crying and asking the Saint to help, because his conscience was troubled for having put his brother in danger, he suddenly saw Theodoros next to him, joyfully telling him how a horseman, dressed like a monk, had hauled him out of the water, set him on his horse and brought him out of the torrent. From then on, Theodoros maintained that he, too, was going to become a monk. In this way God saw to it that he would take the right road from an early age. This event had its effect on Vlasios, as well, who in his own way, also gave himself to God, by glorifying Him as a teacher of Byzantine Music. He later came to live in

Constantinople.

When Theodoros was a bit older, he was sent by his aunt in Pharasa to be educated in Nigde. His father's sister, a teacher, was also living there and she was to look after him. When Theodoros had completed his studies in Nigde, his aunt, the teacher, seeing how intelligent he was, arranged with relatives in Smyrna to help him continue his higher education there.

Whenever Theodoros came back to Pharasa during school breaks, he would gather the children in his father's house and teach them what he himself knew of reading and writing. He was strict with them so they would not misbehave. The children were rather disorderly, because the only time they ever saw a teacher was once in a blue moon. Whereas Theodoros came back home during the school break to rest, he found his "rest" teaching the children to read and write using the Church texts.

Once, however, on his return to Pharasa, he stayed for only a few days unfortunately, because his aunt wanted to keep him in the village and get him married. She had, in fact, been match-making, without his knowledge.

One day, his aunt said to him: "I suggested to Ambaroglis' daughter, Vasiliki, that you and she get married, but she rejected the idea. She responded, 'Theodoros is all right, from a good family and well-educated, but he's a monk! Do you want me to marry a monk?'"

When Theodoros heard this, he was very upset with his aunt and said to her with a hurt tone of voice: "Look here, Aunt, even strangers have realised that I'm going to be a monk. Why haven't you yet?"

Theodoros lost no time and left for Smyrna the next day. In Smyrna, apart from Greek and Church Studies, he also learned Armenian, Turkish and a little French. After completing his studies in Smyrna, he returned to Pharasa, said farewell to his aunt there and to the other in Nigde and then went off to

Caesarea. He was about twenty-six years old when he entered the Holy Monastery of the Flavians (Zindzi-Dere), dedicated to Saint John the Baptist, where he was tonsured and given his new name, Arsenios.

Father Arsenios, unfortunately, did not enjoy his tranquillity for long, because there was a great need for teachers at that time, and the Metropolitan of Caesarea, Paisios II, who was still alive, according to Kortsinoglou, ordained him deacon and sent him to Pharasa, to teach reading and writing to the abandoned children.

So Deacon Arsenios returned to his home village and began with divine zeal the work of dispelling the darkness of illiteracy. The cause of this darkness was, of course, the ever present pressure of the Turks, who looked upon these six Christian villages of Pharasa, constituting a small Greek enclave, with an envious and evil eye.

The Church in Pharasa where Saint Arsenios used to serve

For this reason he went about his work in an unassuming fashion and with great discernment, despite the fact that he was so young. He had prepared a room as a school and, instead of desks, had longhaired goatskins or sheepskins, for the children to kneel on and to follow the lessons.

In this rather sagacious manner he avoided provoking the Turks, and even when they happened to see the children, they simply assumed they were praying. Many times Father Arsenios would gather the children in the Chapel of Panaghia (so Kantzi, meaning on the Crag in the Pharasiotic dialect), which was located high up on a cliff in a cave and was used as a Secret School.

Deacon Arsenios continued this practice later on as well, always remaining wary of the Turks, despite the fact that Christians had been given some relative freedom then because of the pressure which Orthodox Russia was able to bring to bear on the

Turks. But there was always this same fear in Pharsa, because of its remote location in the depths of Cappadocia.

Until about the thirtieth year of his life, he taught as a deacon. He was then ordained a priest in Caesarea, with the title of archimandrite and the blessing to act as spiritual Father. After his ordination, he first went from Caesarea on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and then returned to Pharsa. From then on, the Pharsiotes called him Hadjiophentis.

His spiritual activity now began to intensify and spread. He even went about seeking contributions in nearby villages and distant towns. His main purpose for money collections, however, was to come into contact with the Greek Christians who lived in villages alongside Turks, and to boost their morale in those difficult times.

What was of greater help in giving the frightened Christians the strength to remain firm in their faith, was not only his encouraging words, but also the wondrous works which they saw Father Arsenios performing, because he had an abundance of God's Grace with which to heal the souls and bodies of the suffering people. When the Christians saw these things, they believed more strongly, because they saw the great power of our faith. As for the Turks, who also saw these works, while they did not actually become Christians they did at least become rather less harsh in their treatment of the Christians.

It is true that, wherever Father Arsenios went and sick people were brought to him for prayers to be read over them, he never asked whether they were Christian or Turk, but only what they were suffering from so that he could find the appropriate prayer. When he cured the sick, by the Grace of God, Father Arsenios helped the Turks understand the enormous value of our Orthodox faith and to revere it.....

Hadjiophentis would naturally become very tired by these many difficult responsibilities which he

had undertaken: teaching the children the sacred writings of the Church, going on pastoral journeys near and far, without neglecting to perform his on-going clerical and monastic duties. He felt consoled and rested, however, whenever he saw others being comforted and helped. He had great love for God and for His image, Man, but not for himself. For whenever he saw a lot of pain and Turkish oppression, his love would lead him out of himself and out of his village to embrace even the surrounding villages....

Father Arsenios was most sensitive to the spirit of Orthodoxy and was profoundly aware of his great responsibility towards his flock and was vigilant in protecting the people. This included saving them from those wolves in sheep's clothing, the Protestants, who were at that time spreading propaganda in the East through the teachers sent to proselytize. For this reason, Father Arsenios found it necessary to select three assistant teachers for the school from among those who were the best educated in the village, and not to accept anyone from outside. While the great fear initially was of the Turks, and the school functioned as a Secret School, later on, there was more reason to fear the Protestants, for they sought to taint the Orthodox faith of the children....

Father Arsenios taught the boys in the manner of those times. He also introduced certain spiritual exercises to the boys to increase their manly virtues of courage and strength, but at the same time to humble their passions. Sometimes he was also forced to expel some boys from the school, who were much older than the others and who carried weapons and were disobedient. This is why he was obliged not to accept girls at the school and would say, "Let the girls learn the lessons to do with the home" ...

The Pharsiotes, and even those from the surrounding villages, all adored Hadjiophentis, except for a few drunkards and idlers, because he

never wanted to see the able-bodied sitting around. In Pharasa, moreover, besides the fact that they carried weapons, they also had access to plenty of wine, and this occasionally caused serious incidents with misunderstandings and broken heads which often required medical attention. In Pharasa, however, and in the entire region, there was no doctor to be found, except Father Arsenios himself, who was both teacher and doctor of souls and bodies. He did not, of course, give medical prescriptions to the sick, but he would read an appropriate prayer for them and they would recover.

Whenever someone was sick and could not be brought to the Father's cell, either because he was very seriously ill or because the distance was too great, they would send him an article of clothing belonging to the sick person. Hadjiephentis would read the appropriate prayer over it and return it. The sick person would then wear it with faith and reverence and be healed. Very often, to set their minds at rest, he would also send them the prayer, written on a piece of paper, which they would then wear folded as a phylakton.

Since the illnesses were many and varied, and Hadjiephentis could not always find a corresponding prayer for each, he would take the book of Psalms and use those as well. He would read the Gospel usually in only very serious cases, such as for the blind, the mute, the paralysed and the possessed. When he saw someone physically ill, who was also spiritually sick, he did not heal him at once, but gradually, that is, he told him to come again and again, until he had healed him spiritually, and only then did he also miraculously make him physically well with the final prayer. Naturally, Father Arsenios never accepted money; neither would he lay his hands on it. He used to say, "Our faith is not for sale" ...

He would also not accept gifts...

Naturally, Father Arsenios was very pleased when people blamed him unfairly. This helped him great-

ly, since he himself often deliberately pretended to be idiosyncratic and strange so that he could avoid being praised by people...

While he was always charitable towards others, Father Arsenios was very hard on himself, and, out of his great love, made prostrations and fasted for others, who were unable to do so themselves.

As a spiritual Father, he did not usually impose a canon on people, but would simply try to bring them to the point of awareness, so out of philotimo, they themselves would ask to do some ascetic act (of prayer, prostrations, fasting,) or charity work or whatever kind of good deed they felt moved to perform.

Whenever he saw a small child possessed or paralysed and determined that the parents were the cause, he would give the parents a canon, once he had cured their child. On one occasion, for example, a paralysed child was brought to Hadjiephentis, who first read prayers over him. After he had healed the child, he imposed a canon on the parents of the child, as he had the gift of discernment and knew that the parents were the reason the child had been born paralysed...

Although his monastic cell was in the world, he managed to live out of the world. In this, as well as in his divine works and achievements, he benefited greatly from the two days he spent in retreat, praying in his cell. These days proved even more productive spiritually, because they not only sanctified his work of the following days, but we too, to this day, are nourished by the blessed fruit of this Father's labours.

“Don't open your mouth  
and heart to all and sun-  
dry. Only one in a thou-  
sand will understand you.”

—ST. SERAPHIM OF SAROV