



SUNDAY, MARCH 4, 2018

SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT (SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS); THE HOLY APOSTLES ARCHIPPUS AND PHILEMON OF THE SEVENTY, AND MARTYR APPHIA

DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT BASIL THE GREAT

RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION - TONE SIX:

The angelic powers were at Thy tomb; and the guards became as dead men; and Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure Body. Thou didst capture hell, not being tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life. O Lord who rose from the dead: Glory to Thee!

TROPARION TO SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS - TONE EIGHT:

O light of Orthodoxy, teacher of the Church, its confirmation, O ideal of monks and invincible champion of theologians, O wonder-working Gregory, glory of Thessalonica and preacher of grace, always intercede before the Lord that our souls may be saved!

TROPARION TO SAINTS ARCHIPPUS, PHILEMON, APPHIA – TONE THREE:

O Holy Apostle Archippus, intercede to our merciful God, that He may grant our souls forgiveness of sins.

RESURRECTIONAL KONTAKION - TONE SIX:

When Christ God, the Giver of Life, raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand, He bestowed resurrection on the human race. He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and God of all.

KONTAKION TO SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS - TONE EIGHT:

Holy and divine instrument of wisdom, joyful trumpet of theology, together we sing your praises, O God-inspired Gregory. Since you now stand before the Original Mind, guide our minds to Him, O father, so that we may sing to you: 'Rejoice, O preacher of grace.'

KONTAKION TO SAINTS ARCHIPPUS, PHILEMON, APPHIA – TONE FOUR:

Having thee, O Archippus, as her own great star, and enlightened with the rays of thy most wondrous miracles, the Church now cries aloud to thee: 'Save them that faithfully honor thy memory.'

KONTAKION FROM THE LENTEN TRIODION - TONE FOUR:

Now is the time for action! Judgment is at the doors! So let us rise and fast, offering alms with tears of compunction and crying: 'Our sins are more in number than the sands of the sea; but forgive us, O Master of all, so that we may receive the incorruptible crowns.'

KONTAKION OF THE FIVE SUNDAYS OF GREAT LENT

To thee, the Champion Leader, do I offer thanks of victory, O Theotokos, thou who hast delivered me from terror; but as thou that hast that power invincible, O Theotokos, thou alone can set me free: from all forms of danger free me and deliver me, that I may cry unto thee: ‘Rejoice, O Bride without Bridegroom!’

EPISTLE READINGS

THE PROKEIMENON IN TONE FIVE:

Thou, O Lord, shall protect us and preserve us from this generation forever.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT: HEBREWS 1: 10 – 2: 3

Brethren: “You, Lord in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail.” But to which of the angels has He ever said: “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool”? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him?

SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS: HEBREWS 7: 26 – 8: 2

Brethren, such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people’s, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever. Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: we have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

THE ALLELUIA VERSES:

The Lord answer you in the day of trouble! The name of the God of Jacob protect you! Save the king, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call!

GOSPEL READINGS

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT: MARK 2: 1-12

At that time, Jesus entered Capernaum and it was heard that He was in the house. Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on

which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.” And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, “Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, “Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins” - He said to the paralytic, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed and go to your house.” Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS: JOHN 10: 9-16

Jesus said, “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”

FROM THE PROLOGUE:

FEBRUARY 19/MARCH 4, BY SAINT NIKOLAI VELIMIROVIC:

The Holy Apostles Archippus and Philemon, of the Seventy, and Martyr Apphia (1st c.)

Archippus was one of the Seventy Apostles. The Apostle Paul mentions him in his Epistle to the Colossians (Colossians 4:17) as well as in his letter to Philemon, calling him our fellow soldier (Philemon 1:2). The center of Christianity in the town of Colossae was in the home of Philemon. Here Christians gathered for prayer. In writing to Philemon, the Apostle Paul called this the church in thy house (Philemon 1:2). At that time the apostles consecrated their disciples to the bishopric, some of them in permanent dioceses and others as missionaries traveling to various places. Philemon was one of the latter. Apphia, Philemon's wife, hosted and served in the domestic church. At the time of a pagan feast to the goddess Artemis, all the faithful in Colossae, according to their custom, gathered in the home of Philemon for prayer. Learning of this gathering, the pagans rushed in and apprehended all the Christians. As the leaders, Philemon, Apphia and Archippus were first whipped and afterward buried up to their waists and stoned. Thus, they slew Philemon and Apphia. Archippus they removed from the pit barely alive and left him to the amusement of the children. The children stabbed him all over with knives. In such a manner did this “fellow soldier” in battle finish well the course of his earthly path.

The Venerable Dositheus of Gaza (7th c.)

Dositheus was a disciple of the glorious Abba Dorotheus, who lived in the cenobitic monastic community of the Venerable Seridus, John and Barsanuphius the Great. Dositheus was the kinsman of a general, and he came to Jerusalem to visit the Holy Shrines. Once, while he was

gazing upon an icon of the Dread Judgment in a church, a woman clothed in purple attire approached him and began explaining the icon to him. Before parting, she said that if he desired to be saved, he should fast, abstain from meat and pray to God often. This was the All-holy Virgin Theotokos. The heart of the young Dositheus became inflamed, and he desired the life of a monk. Dorotheus received him as his novice and ordered him to completely abandon his will and obey his spiritual father. For a few days, he gave him as much as he wanted to eat. After a period of time, Dorotheus cut down his rations by a quarter, and after another period of time again by a quarter, until Dositheus became accustomed to subsisting on the least amount of food. Dorotheus constantly repeated to Dositheus: "Eating is a habit, and as much as a person is accustomed to eat, that much he will eat." Dositheus was saved and glorified by total obedience. He has remained forever an example of monastic obedience and dedication to one's spiritual father. This young saint lived in the sixth century.

Martyrs Maximus, Theodotus, Hesychius, and Asclepiodota, of Adrianople (305-11).

Sts. Eugene and Macarius, priests, confessors at Antioch (363).

St. Mesrop the Translator, of Armenia (439).

St. Rabulas of Samosata (ca. 530).

St. Conon, abbot, in Palestine (555).

New Nun-martyr Philothea of Athens (1589).

St. Theodore, abbot, of Sanaxar Monastery (1791).

New Hieromartyr Nicetas, hieromonk, of Epirus and Mt. Athos, at Serres (1809).

New Hieromartyr Vladimir (Terentiev), abbot, of Zosima Hermitage (Smolensk) (1933).

HYMN OF PRAISE: Obedience

Obedience without murmuring, salvation complete:

Among the spiritual this is the first pearl, the most precious stone. This pearl slipped from Eve's necklace,

And after it followed all the goods bestowed by God.

The devil says both then and now: "Do not listen to God, But live only according to the thoughts of your mind!"

Thus says the devil, who from time immemorial has detested the light. Thus saying, he fitted the disobedient with his noose.

Christ came, and to the people He cried out; the obedient He summoned. To every call, the disobedient did not respond.

The scene of Paradise has repeated itself from Christ's time until now: The obedient are raised to Paradise, the disobedient fall.

The true monk is obedient to his spiritual father;

His father, to the Church; the Church, to Christ, her Lord. Obedience, the reliable path toward salvation,

Is the first light, the first pearl of the spiritual necklace.

REFLECTION

St. Anthony teaches: "Just as a man comes forth naked from his mother's womb, so the soul comes forth naked from the body. One soul is pure and bright, a second is soiled by sin, and a third is blackened by many sins. If a body comes forth from a mother's womb unhealthy, it

cannot live. Likewise, a soul, if it does not attain the knowledge of God through good behavior, cannot be saved, neither can it be in communion with God. The organ of bodily sight is the eye; the organ of spiritual sight is the mind. Just as the body is blind without eyes, so the soul is blind without a correct mind and a correct life.”

HOMILY

on testing

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.... If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? (Luke 16: 10, 12).

This is how the Householder of both the material and spiritual world speaks. Material wealth He calls “least” and the spiritual wealth He calls “much.” If material wealth is given to a person and he proves himself to be selfish, hardhearted, arrogant, unmerciful and godless, then spiritual wealth cannot be given to him. For if he is unfaithful in small things, he will be unfaithful in great things. When he is unfaithful in the physical, he will be unfaithful in the spiritual.

Man undergoes a test in a foreign world, and if he passes the test he will gain his own world. If, however, he fails the test, who will give him his world? Man's true world, his homeland, is the heavenly, sublime, divine world. The earthly world, however, is the world of coarseness and corruption: a foreign world for man. But man is sent into this foreign world to complete a test for the sake of his true world, his heavenly homeland.

These two statements of the Savior are similar in meaning. Oh, how profound and true is their meaning! Just as light disperses darkness, so do these words of the Savior disperse our confusion in relation to these questions: Why are we sent into this life? And what should we do? To whom- ever is able to read with a pure understanding, everything is said in these two sentences.

Therefore, let us know that God will not bestow the spiritual gifts— the gifts of understanding, faith, love, purity, prophecy, miracle-working, power over demons, discernment, or the vision of the heavenly world—on him who has gambled and used for evil, like the Prodigal Son, the gifts of bodily health, earthly riches, glory and position among men, or knowledge of the material world.

O Lord most gentle, sustain our fidelity toward Thee in that which Thou hast entrusted to us.
To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

