

SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 2019

SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT (MEAT-FARE); SAINT LEO THE GREAT OF ROME; SAINT FLAVIAN, PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE

RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION - TONE SEVEN:
By Thy Cross, Thou didst destroy death! To the thief, Thou didst open Paradise! For the myrrh bearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy! And Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God, to proclaim that Thou art risen, granting the world great mercy!

TROPARION TO SAINT LEO THE GREAT – TONE FOUR:
A model of faith and the image of gentleness, the example of your life has shown you forth to your sheep-fold to be a master of temperance. You obtained thus through being lowly, gifts from on high, and riches through poverty. Leo, our father and priest of priests, intercede with Christ our God that He may save our souls.

RESURRECTIONAL KONTAKION - TONE SEVEN:
The dominion of death can no longer hold man captive, for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers! Hell is bound, while the prophets rejoice and cry: 'The Savior has come to those in faith! Enter you faithful into the Resurrection!'

KONTAKION TO SAINT LEO THE GREAT – TONE THREE:
Seated on the priestly throne, O great and glorious Leo, with the Holy Trinity's inspired and God-given doctrines thou didst stop the gaping mouths of spiritual lions and didst shine upon thy flock the light of God-knowledge, and art glorified now as a divine initiate of the sublime grace of God.

SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT KONTAKION - TONE ONE:
When You, O God, shall come to earth with glory, all things shall tremble and the river of fire shall flow before Your judgment seat; the books shall be opened and the hidden things disclosed. Deliver me then from the unquenchable fire and make me worthy to stand at Your right hand, O Righteous Judge.

EPISTLE READING

THE PROKEIMENON IN TONE THREE:
Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.

SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT: 1 CORINTHIANS 8: 8 – 9: 2
Brethren, food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will

never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble. Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

THE ALLELUIA VERSES:
Come let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior! Let us come before His face with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with psalms!

GOSPEL READING

SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT: MATTHEW 25: 31-46
Jesus said, "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me'. Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me'. Then they will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me'. And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

FROM THE PROLOGUE:

FEBRUARY 18/MARCH 3, BY SAINT NIKOLAI VELIMIROVIC:
Saint Leo I the Great, Pope of Rome (461)
Leo was born in Italy of devout parents. He first served as archdeacon under Pope Sixtus III, and following the death of Sixtus he was elevated against his will to the throne of the Pope of Rome. When Attila, with his Huns, drew near to Rome and was prepared to destroy and burn the city, Leo came out before him in his episcopal vestments. He subdued the wrath of the leader of the Huns and averted the destruction of Rome. Attila allowed himself to be counseled by this holy man, but was also frightened by a vision of the Apostles Peter and Paul, who stood alongside Leo and threatened him with flaming swords. Not only did St. Leo save Rome, but he also contributed much to save Orthodoxy from the heresy of Eutyches and Dioscorus. This heresy consisted in the merging of the divine and human natures of Christ into one and, consequently, the denial of the two wills in the Person of the Lord Savior. Because of this, the Fourth Ecumenical Council [Chalcedon, 451] was convened, at which time the epistle of St. Leo was read. St. Leo had written this epistle and placed it on the tomb of St. Peter, who corrected it. Before his death, Leo spent forty days in fasting and prayer at the tomb of St. Peter, beseeching him to tell him whether his sins were forgiven. The Apostle Peter appeared to him and said that all of his sins were forgiven except sins committed in the ordination of priests (whence it is evident how grave a sin it is to

ordain one who is unworthy). The saint again fell to prayer until he was told that even those sins were forgiven. He peacefully gave up his soul to the Lord. St. Leo reposed in the year 461.

Saint Flavian the Confessor, Archbishop of Constantinople (ca. 449)

Flavian became Patriarch of Constantinople following St. Proclus. He was a contemporary of Pope Leo. He fought resolutely against Eutyches and Dioscorus, but did not live to see the triumph of Orthodoxy at the Fourth Ecumenical Council, for, prior to that, he was so mercilessly beaten and trampled upon at a heretical council in Ephesus that he died there. Flavian was a faithful soldier of Christ—a courageous defender and confessor of the Orthodox Faith. He reposed in the year 449.

Martyrs Leo and Parigorius of Patara in Lycia (ca. 258).
St. Agapitus, bishop of Synnada in Phrygia, and Martyrs Victor, Dorotheus, Theodulus, and Agrippa, who suffered under Licinius (308-324).
St. Helladius, archbishop of Toledo (632).
St. Colman, bishop of Lindisfarne (676).
St. Blaise of Amorium and Mt. Athos (ca. 908).
St. Cosmas, founder of Yakhromsk Monastery (Vladimir) (1492).
St. Nicholas, Catholicos of Georgia (1591).
Commemoration of the New Martyrs who suffered during the "Holy Night" in St. Petersburg (1932).
Finding of the relics (1961) of New Martyr Irene of Mytilene (1463).

HYMN OF PRAISE: Saint Flavian

"When pride comes, then comes shame."
That is the word of God, the lesson of life.
Heretics, who were they? The children of pride.
What did they want? To bring shame.
That is why they had to endure shame.
Eutyches hoped in the help of the eunuch;
Flavian hoped in the help of the Spirit of God.
Pride always precedes a fall:
Eutyches perished and Flavian conquered.
Dioscorus' hope was his fist;
That is why all generations despise him.
Flavian, beaten and trodden underfoot,
Now is glorified on earth and blessed in heaven.
He defended the truth without fear and without stop.
The truth stood firm, and he was not afraid of anything.
Leo the Roman extended to him the assistance of a lion
In defense of the radiant face of Christ.
These two hierarchs, and Eulogius the third one,
Guided the Church to victory and joy.
Without such spirits, what would the Church be?
A wounded bird with broken wings.

REFLECTION

With great difficulty and with even greater effort and sacrifice, the tares of heresy were sifted from the wheat of the truth of Orthodoxy. The heretics have always made use of lower means and base persons in undermining Orthodoxy. Archimandrite Eutyches of Constantinople and Patriarch Dioscorus of Alexandria—who spread the heretical teaching that there were not two natures in Christ, divine and

human, but rather one nature—had as their ally in the imperial court the vile eunuch Chrysaphius. Empress Eudoxia was secretly aligned with them. Patriarch Flavian, like a lion, fearlessly defended Orthodoxy. In this he was assisted by Pulcheria, the sister of the emperor. The eunuch Chrysaphius presented to Emperor Theodosius the most disgusting slanders against Flavian, so that the emperor would remove him from the throne and replace him with the heretic Eutyches. When this and all else failed, the heretics plotted to kill Flavian. At the Robber Council in Ephesus, they beat him and trampled upon him so badly that St. Flavian gave up his soul to God on the third day. What happened in the end? At the Fourth Ecumenical Council [Chalcedon, 451], Eutyches and Dioscorus were anathematized. The eunuch was ousted from the court and shamefully ended his life. The Empress Eudoxia was banished from Constantinople to Palestine. Flavian and Pulcheria were proclaimed saints, and the Orthodox Faith was victoriously confirmed.

HOMILY
on the struggle of the weak with the Almighty

But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death (John 12:10).

They agreed among themselves to first kill the Maker and then kill His work. For the risen Lazarus was the work of Christ. What is the use, they inquitously thought, to kill the Miracle-worker and to leave a living witness of His greatest miracle? For then the people would be inflamed at them as evildoers! But, nevertheless, it happened that they killed Christ and missed Lazarus. And then? And then they and those of like mind killed scores of His apostles and overlooked hundreds. Then they killed thousands and overlooked hundreds of thousands. Then they killed hundreds of thousands and overlooked millions. Finally it became clear that, behind their backs, the slain were resurrecting to life like mown grass and those designated to be killed grew as sown grass before the faces of the murderers. In vain, from their point of view, did the wise Gamaliel say: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it (Acts 5:39). Those who have waged war against God throughout the centuries have sharpened their feebleness in vain to mow down the crop of God. The more they cut down, the more the crops of God grew luxuriantly.

O demented combatants against Christ, those of that time and the present! Your bludgeon rebounds from the city of Christ and strikes your own hovel, crushing it into dust and ashes. Throughout the ages, you have had enough allies: besides the devil, with you were heretics, idolaters, fanatics, soothsayers, divinators, depraved princes and wealthy men, tyrants and all insensitive sinners. Up to now you have been defeated, and without any doubt all of your allies together with you will be defeated, to the end of time.

For this, O almighty and irresistible Lord, glory and praise be to Thee forever. Amen.