



Nativity of Our Lord Orthodox Church

<http://nativityorthodox.com/>

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*Let all who enter our Holy Church heed the words of the Cherubic Hymn:
“Let us now lay aside all earthy cares”*

*The reason why God has accorded us this present life is to give us a place for repentance.
Were this not the case,
a person who sinned would at once be deprived of this life.
For otherwise of what use would it be to him?
St. Gregory Palamas*

DAILY SCRIPTURE READING &
LIVES OF THE SAINTS
SAINTS AND FEASTS
12th Sunday of Matthew
Pimen the Great
Holy Martyr Phanurius
Anthousa the Martyr

ΑΩ

Prayers & Readings

Prayer Before Reading Holy Scripture

O Master Who loves mankind, illuminate our hearts with the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our mind to understand the teachings of Your Gospel. Instill in us also the fear of Your blessed commandments, that we may overcome all carnal desires, entering upon a spiritual life and understanding and acting in all things according to Your holy will. For You are the enlightenment of our

souls and bodies, O Christ God, and to You we give glory together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, gracious and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Epistle Reading

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 6:10-17

Brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Gospel Reading

The Gospel According to Matthew 19:16-26

At that time, a young man came up to Jesus, kneeling and saying, "Good Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" And he said to him, "Why do you call me good? One there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments." He said to him, "Which?" And Jesus said, "You shall not kill, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young man said to him, "All these I have observed; what do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.

And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

1. VENERABLE PIMEN [POEMEN] THE GREAT

Pimen was an Egyptian by birth and a great ascetic of Egypt. As a boy, he visited the most renowned spiritual men and, from them, gathered tangible knowledge as a bee gathers honey from flowers. Pimen once begged the elder Paul to take him to St. Paisius. Seeing Pimen, Paisius said to Paul: "This child will save many; the hand of God is with him." In time, Pimen was tonsured a monk and attracted two of his brothers to the monastic life as well. Once his mother came to see her sons but Pimen did not permit her to enter but through the door asked her: "Do you desire more to see us here or there in eternity?" The mother withdrew with joy saying: "Since I will surely see you there, then I do not desire to see you here." In the monastery of these three brothers, governed by Abba Anubis, Pimen's eldest brother, this was their Rule [Typikon]: at night, they spent four hours of working with their hands, four hours of sleep and four hours of reading the Psalter. During the day, from morning until noon, they spent in alternating work and prayer; from noon until Vespers they spent reading and, in the afternoon, they prepared supper for themselves the only meal in twenty-four hours and that usually consisted of some vegetables. Concerning

their life, Pimen himself speaks: "We ate that which was given to us. No one ever said: 'Give me something else or I do not want that.' In this manner, we spent our entire life in silence and peace." Pimen lived a life of mortification as an ascetic in the fifth century and died peacefully at an old age.

2. VENERABLE PIMEN [POEMEN] OF PALESTINE

Pimen lived a life of asceticism in Rouba, in the wilderness of Palestine during the time of Emperor Maurice (582-602 A.D.). In his youth, he was a shepherd. Once his dogs attacked a man and tore him to pieces and he, out of mischievousness, did not defend the man. As a result of that, it was revealed to him that he, in the end, would die from wild beasts. And thus it happened. He was devoured by wild beasts and gave up his soul to his Lord.

3. SAINT HOSIUS BISHOP OF CORDOVA

As the Bishop of Cordova, Hosius governed the Church in Spain for over sixty years. He prominently participated at the First Ecumenical Council in Nicea [325 A.D.] and presided at the local Council in Sardica in 347 A.D. So zealous was he for Orthodoxy that, before his death, he again issued an anathema against the Arian heresy.

4. THE PRIESTLY-MARTYR KUKSHA AND PIMEN [POEMEN] THE FASTER

Kuksha and Pimen were both monks in the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev. Kuksha, with success, preached the Gospel to the Wallachians and baptized them. One day, pagans attacked him and slew him along with his disciple. At that moment, Pimen the Faster was standing during the church service in the Monastery of the Caves and, seeing in the spirit the death of Kuksha his disciple and companion, cried out: "Today, our brother Kuksha was slain for the Holy Gospel." Saying this, he himself gave up the spirit in the year 1113 A.D.

HYMN OF PRAISE

VENERABLE PIMEN [POEMEN] THE GREAT OF PALESTINE

Venerable Pimen, depth of wisdom,
And a great torch of Christ's light,
From the time when he put the world of vanity behind him
No one does he reprimand, no one does he reproach
Once, before Pimen, the brethren quarreled
But Pimen remained silent. Some reprimanded him:
How do you listen to the quarreling and, to you, everything is the same?
Pimen replied: I have died a long time ago. -
How can I be saved someone asked of him
That my mind, after devilish slander, does not wander?
Upon boiling water, flies do not land -
And, from a warm soul, the devils flee. -
Someone else said: What is more certain:
The speech of your brethren or silence?
By one and the other, God is glorified,
For the sake of the glory of God choose one for yourself.
How can one defend himself from evil?

Evil does not permit itself to be defeated by evil
To one who is evil, strive to do something good,
That will inflame even his heart.
One does not build his home by destroying someone else's home.
There, the third one benefits, and the third one is the devil.
Two wicked passions, poison our souls,
Freedom we do not have while they suffocate us:
Pleasures of the flesh and worldly vanity,
Free from them is only the holy soul.

REFLECTION

One who crawls up a steep mountain and scrapes with both hands and feet to take one step forward, not thinking to look back, such were the great Orthodox ascetics in the difficult climb to the Kingdom of God. Their labor and their detachment is indeed for amazement. St. Pimen did not want to see his mother when she came to visit him. A prince wanted to see Pimen but he refused. Then the prince thought of a cunning way, to force the elder to meet with him; he arrested the son of Pimen's sister and said to her that he would release her son only if Pimen himself comes to speak with him. The sister went into the wilderness and, knocking at the door, begged her brother to come out and save her son. But Pimen did not come out. Then sister began to scold and curse him. Hearing of this, the prince ordered that a letter be written to Pimen saying that if he, Pimen, would at least put in writing, (since he did not do so orally) implore the prince to release his nephew, the prince would do so. Pimen replied: "O mighty prince, command to probe well the guilt of the young man and if the guilt is such that he deserves death, let him die, so that by temporal punishment, he will escape the torments in eternity but if the guilt does not merit the penalty of death then castigate him according to the law and then release him." Reading this just and impartial judgment, the prince was greatly astonished, released the youth and his respect for Pimen increased two-fold.

CONTEMPLATION

To contemplate Saul's total apostasy from the one God (1 Samuel 28-31 1 Kings 28-31):

1. How he [Saul] frightened by the Philistines, turned to a pagan sorceress [the witch of Endor] to prognosticate for him;
2. How the sorceress, through prognostication, evoked a spirit who called himself Samuel and who prophesied Saul's death;
3. How Saul with his sons perished at the hands of the Philistines.

HOMILY

About the Day of Christ and how Isaiah prophesied it

"Therefore My people shall know in that day that I am He that does speak: behold, it is I" (Isaiah 52:6).

Brethren, our God is the God of Truth. Even on the sun there are spots of darkness but on our God, there is not a spot of untruth. Every word spoken by God through the prophets came true. When the Word [Logos] of God became incarnate in Jesus Christ our Lord, then all the prophecies which referred to Him and which, for the Jews until then were dark enigmas, were revealed as clear as the sun. In the Holy Gospel it is said: "And the Word was made flesh" (St. John 1:14), the Pre-eternal word of God, the eternal Wisdom of God and the Son of God, the Word of God made flesh, every word of prophesy is revealed in

bodily form. Until the Lord Christ came in the flesh to visit mankind, the scribes and readers of Holy Scripture could think of many words of the prophets, long and long unfulfilled, that those are only the words of the prophets as men and not words from God. But God did not permit anyone to think lowly of His prophets, that is why He said that men shall know "...in that day that I am He that does speak". Therefore, God wanted to give importance to every word of the prophets and wanted to teach men patience, to patiently await "that day", that wondrous day when the manifestation of the Lord on earth in the flesh will clearly cry out in every ear: "Behold, it is I!" He who recognized the Lord Jesus as God in the flesh, that one recognized in Him, simultaneously, that one Who spoke through the prophets.

"Behold, it is I!" thus speaks Christ today. "I am He" Who speaks through all the created universe. "I am He" Who spoke through the prophets. "I am He" Who, through the lips of the body spoke the words of eternal salvation. "I am He" Who spoke through the apostles, saints and teachers. "I am He" Who speaks and Who will continue to speak through My Holy Church until the end of time. "I am He" Who speaks and "I am He" about Whom it is spoken.

O Lord, to You be glory and thanks always. Amen.

Post-Communion Prayer

Prayer Of Saint Basil

I thank you, Christ and Master our God, King of the ages and Creator of all things, for all the good gifts you have given me, and especially for the participation in your pure and life-giving mysteries. I, therefore, pray to you, good and loving Lord: keep me under your protection and under the shadow of your wings. Grant that to my last breath I may with a pure conscience partake worthily of your gifts for the forgiveness of sins and for eternal life. For you are the bread of life, the source of holiness, the giver of all good things, and to you we give glory, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Sixth Hour Prayers

O You Who on the sixth day and hour nailed to the cross the sin which rebellious Adam committed in Paradise, Tear asunder also the bond of our iniquities, O Christ our God, and save us.

Prayer of St. Basil

God, Lord of hosts and Maker of all creation, who in Your great compassion and mercy sent down Your Only-Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, for the redemption of mankind and by His precious Cross destroyed the record of our sins, triumphing over the source and power of darkness: O Lord and Lover of mankind, accept also the thanksgiving and fervent prayers of us sinners. Deliver us from every dark and harmful transgression and from all the visible and invisible enemies that seek to destroy us. Nail our flesh to the fear of You, and do not incline our hearts to deceitful words or thoughts, but wound our souls with love for You, that always looking to You, guided by Your light, and seeing You, the eternal and ineffable Light, we may give You unceasing praise and thanksgiving: to the Father without beginning, with Your Only-Begotten Son and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*O LORD, SAVE THY PEOPLE AND BLESS THINE INHERITANCE.
GRANT VICTORY OVER THEIR ENEMIES TO ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS,
AND PROTECT THY PEOPLE WITH THY CROSS.*

DIVINE LITURGIES

Wednesday – 10:00 A.M.

Spanish Liturgy – Saturday – 6:30 P.M.

Sunday Matins – 9:00 A.M.

Sunday English Divine Liturgy – 10:00 A.M.

VESPERS

Saturday – 5:00 P.M.

CONFESSIONS

Monday-Friday, 4:00-6:00 P.M.

By appointment

Before Sunday Divine Liturgy (during Matins)

ORTHODOX WORKER MEALS

FRIDAYS – 11:30 A.M TO 1:00

P.M

Either the demons tempt us themselves or they equip those who do not fear the Lord to act against us: themselves, when we are alone, away from others, just as they tempted the Lord in the desert; through others, when we associate with them, as they tempted the Lord through the Pharisees.

It is for us to look to our model and beat them back on both fronts.

St. Maximus the Confessor

Λ Ω

For all that we have –
That so many nations and people do not have...

We should all say...

GOD BLESS AMERICA

&

GOD BLESS HIS GRACE BISHOP GREGORY

Λ Ω

MIND THE SPIRITUAL GAP!

WHEN DID YOU LAST
INITIATE THE HOLY MYSTERY
OF REPENTANCE?

*

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW
WHAT IS OCCURRING IN
GOD'S CHURCH, ATTEND AND
PARTICIPATE IN HIS CHURCH.

“Only two kinds of men publicly admit to doing evil: those who repent of their deeds and are willing to accept the consequences for having acted wrongly, and those who are comfortable with their conduct and believe that no serious consequences will come from divulging it”