



Nativity of Our Lord Orthodox Church

<http://nativityorthodox.com/>

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September 03, 2017

*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
13th Sunday of Matthew
Anthimus, Bishop of Nicomedia
Holy Father Theoctistus and his fellow struggler Euthymius the Great
Polydorus the Martyr of New Ephesus

ΛΩ

"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."

"Rise, take up your pallet, and walk."

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 First Letter to the Corinthians 16:13-24

Brethren, be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love. Now, brethren, you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; I urge you to be subject to such men and to every fellow worker and laborer. I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicos, because they have made up for your absence; for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such men. The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. All the brethren send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. If any one has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Gospel Reading

The Gospel According to Matthew 21:33-42

The Lord said this parable, "There was a householder who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to tenants, and went into another country. When the season of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants, to get his fruit; and the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first; and they did the same to them. Afterward he sent his son to them, saying 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' And they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons." Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'"

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.

1. The Hieromartyr Anthimus

He was born in Nicomedia, and was raised from childhood as a true Christian. "His body was mortified, his spirit humbled, his envy uprooted, his anger subdued, his sloth banished.... He had love for all and peace with all; he was prudent with all, had zeal for the glory of God and was forthright with all." It is no wonder that a man with such virtues was appointed bishop. St. Anthimus governed as Bishop of Nicomedia during the cruel persecution of Christians under the villainous Emperors Diocletian and Maximian. Streams of Christian blood were shed, especially in Nicomedia. One year, on the Feast of Christ's Nativity, twenty thousand martyrs were burned to death in one church (see December 28). This took place during the time of Anthimus's episcopacy. Even so, the persecution did not end with this, but continued, and many Christians were cast into prison and kept there for torture and death. St. Anthimus withdrew to the village of Semana, not because he was fleeing from death, but in order to continue encouraging his flock in the feat of martyrdom, so that no one would fall away out of fear. One of his letters to the Christians in prison was intercepted and turned over to Emperor Maximian. The emperor dispatched twenty soldiers to find Anthimus and bring him to him. The gray-haired and clairvoyant elder came out to meet the soldiers, brought them to his house, and treated them as guests-and only then revealed that he was Anthimus, whom they were seeking. The soldiers, astonished by Anthimus's kindness, suggested that he hide, saying they would tell the emperor that they could not find him. But Anthimus replied that he could not let himself transgress God's commandment against falsehood to save his life, and he went with the soldiers. Along the way, all the soldiers came to believe in Christ and were baptized by Anthimus. The emperor had Anthimus harshly tortured for a long time, and then had him beheaded with an axe. He glorified the Lord and went to his rest at the beginning of the fourth century.

2. The Holy Martyr Basilissa

Basilissa was a nine-year-old girl. She was martyred in Nicomedia not long after the death of St. Anthimus. The torturers covered her whole body with wounds, but she remained faithful to Christ. God preserved her unharmed from fire and wild beasts, which caused her torturer, Alexander, to repent and

embrace the Christian Faith. Basilissa then went out into a field, fell to her knees, and prayed thankfully to God that she had endured the tortures, and with that she gave up her spirit to God, in about the year 309.

3. Saint Joanikije, Archbishop and First Patriarch of Serbia

Joanikije was born in Prizren, and initially served as secretary to King Du an. He became archbishop in 1339, and was elevated to the rank of patriarch in 1346. Joanikije was a zealous archpastor and organizer of the Serbian Church, ``a great upholder of the laws of the Church." He entered into rest on September 3, 1349. His relics repose in the Patriarchate of Peè.

4. The Venerable Theoctistus

He was a faster and fellow ascetic of St. Euthymius the Great. Theoctistus was abbot of Euthymius's Lavra, located some six miles from Jerusalem on the road to Jericho. In all things he was a disciple of St. Euthymius under whose spiritual guidance he governed the monastery until the age of ninety. He pleased God by his life, and reposed in the middle of the fifth century during the reign of Anastasius, Patriarch of Jerusalem.

HYMN OF PRAISE

The Hieromartyr Anthimus

Holy Anthimus encouraged his flock:
"My children, my beloved children,
Bearers of Christ's yoke,
Now is the time for great renunciation,
O soldiers of the Crucified Christ,
Who gloriously resurrected from the dead!
Now is the time of cruel persecution;
Now is the time of struggle and patience;
For the harvest of heroes is prepared.
The brilliant wreath is radiant above you:
Fear not the dark executioners
For the power of man does not last forever,
But the power of God lasts unto ages of ages.
Blessed is he who fears God!
Your tears will be wiped away
In heaven by the hands of angels;
Your wounds will be healed
In heaven with paradisaal balm.
Death will be transformed into life!
The despised will be crowned with a wreath!
Brief torture, but eternal blessings.
My dear children, do not fear."

REFLECTION

He who desires to be saved must be absolutely obedient to spiritual authority. Without this obedience, a

man can perish even with the greatest desire for salvation. The great saints, who prescribed obedience as the condition for salvation, also fulfilled the act of obedience to perfection. When St. Simeon chose the pillar for his asceticism, it struck the other ascetics as some kind of novelty. Because they did not know if this form of asceticism was of the Spirit of God or of the spirit of pride, the desert fathers sent spiritual men to determine the answer. The monks were to command Simeon in their name to come down from the pillar. If he did not want to come down, it would have meant that his elevation on the pillar was from the spirit of pride. But if he obeyed the command and began to descend, they were to leave him as he was, for his readiness to obey would show that his asceticism was from the Holy Spirit. When those sent arrived and told Simeon that the council of the holy fathers of the desert commanded him to descend from the pillar, Simeon immediately began to climb down the ladder. Seeing his obedience, they cried out to him rejoicing: "Do not come down, holy Father, but remain where you are. We see now that your asceticism is of God."

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate God's punishment of David for his sins (II Samuel 13):

1. How Amnon, David's son, defiled David's daughter, Tamara;
2. How Absalom, David's son, slew Amnon his brother because of this;
3. How David wept bitterly.

HOMILY

on the Word of God revealed in the flesh

And the Word was made flesh (John 1:14).

Here, brethren, is a new, blessed and salvific beginning for us-the beginning of our salvation. Adam was in the flesh when he fell under the authority of sin and death. Now the Creator of Adam has appeared in the flesh, to deliver Adam and Adam's posterity from the power of sin and death. The Son of God-the Word, Wisdom, Light and Life-descended among men in human flesh and with a human soul. He was incarnate but not divided from His Divinity. He descended without being separated from His Father. He retained all that He had been and would be for all eternity, and yet He received something new: human nature. His eternal attributes were not diminished by the Incarnation, neither was His relationship to the Father and the Spirit changed. Lo, the Father testified to this, both on the Jordan and on Mount Tabor: This is my beloved Son! He did not say: "This was my Son," but "This is my Son." The Holy Spirit was with Him at His bodily conception and throughout His mission on earth. The divine and human nature were united in Him, but not intermingled. How? Do not ask, you who do not even know how to explain yourself to yourself, and cannot say how your soul and body are united in you. Only know this: God came to visit the earth, bringing unspeakably rich treasures for mankind-royal gifts, incorruptible, eternal, priceless and irreplaceable gifts. Know this and let your heart dance for joy. Strive to cleanse your hands, purify your senses, wash your soul, whiten your heart, and set your mind straight, that you may receive the royal gifts. For they are not given to the unclean.

O Lord Jesus Christ, help us to cleanse and wash ourselves by Thy blood and Thy Spirit, that we may be made worthy of Thy royal gifts.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. 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.

MATINS

Sunday – 9:00 A.M.

DIVINE LITURGIES

Wednesday – 10:00 A.M.

Spanish Liturgy – Saturday – 6:30 P.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

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.
AND YOU MAY ASK!

“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.”