



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**

Sunday of the Forefathers (Ancestors) of Christ

11th Sunday of Luke

Daniel the Prophet & Ananias, Azarias, & Misail, the Three Holy Youths
Dionysius of Zakynthos

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 Colossians 3:4-11

Brethren, when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

Gospel Reading

11th Sunday of Luke

The Gospel According to Luke 14:16-24

The Lord said this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time of the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and there is still room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet. For many are called, but few are chosen.'"

1. The Holy Prophet Daniel and the Three Children: Ananias, Azarias and Misael

All four were of the royal tribe of Judah. When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed and plundered Jerusalem, Daniel, as a boy, was carried away into slavery together with the Jewish King Jehoiachim and countless other Israelites. An account of his life, sufferings and prophecies can be found in detail in his book. Completely devoted to God, St. Daniel from his early youth received from God the gift of great discernment. His fame among the Jews in Babylon began when he denounced two lecherous and unrighteous elders, Jewish judges, and saved the chaste Susanna from an unjust death. But his fame among the Babylonians began from the day he deciphered and interpreted the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar. For this, the king made him a prince at his court. When the king made a golden idol on the Plain of Dura, the Three Children refused to worship it, and for this they were cast into a fiery furnace. But an angel of God appeared in the furnace and cooled the fire so that the children walked around the furnace unharmed by the fire, singing: Blessed art Thou, Lord God of our fathers (Daniel 3:26). The king saw this miracle and was amazed. He then brought the children out of the furnace and bestowed upon them great honors.

In the time of King Belshazzar, when the king was eating and drinking with his guests at a banquet from

consecrated vessels taken from the Temple in Jerusalem, an invisible hand wrote three words on the wall: Mene, Tekel, Upharsin (Daniel 5:25-28). No one was able to interpret these words except Daniel. That night, King Belshazzar was killed. Daniel was twice thrown into the lions' den because of his faith in the One, Living God, and both times the Lord saved him and he remained alive. Daniel beheld God on a throne with the heavenly hosts; saw angels; discerned the future of certain people, of kingdoms, and of the whole human race; and prophesied the time of the coming of the Savior on earth. According to St. Cyril of Alexandria, Daniel and the three children lived to old age in Babylon and were beheaded for the true Faith. When they beheaded Ananias, Azarias stretched out his cloak and caught his head; following this, Misael caught Azarias's head and Daniel caught Misael's head. An angel of the God translated their bodies to Judea, to Mount Gebal, and placed them under a rock. According to tradition, these four God-pleasers arose at the time of the death of the Lord Christ, appeared to many and again fell asleep. Daniel is numbered among the four great prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel). He lived and prophesied five hundred years before Christ.

2. The Venerable Daniel (Dunale)

Daniel was a nobleman and governor of the island of Nivertum near Cadiz in Spain. Realizing the vanity of this world, he renounced both honors and riches and went to Rome, where he was tonsured a monk. After this, he went to Constantinople, where he spoke with the Emperors Constantine and Romanus Porphyrogenitus, and then he set off for Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, he received the great schema at the hands of Patriarch Christodoulos, who gave him the name Stephen. Mistreated by the Saracens, who forced him to shave off his beard, he withdrew to Egypt, where he endured much suffering and finally died for the name of Christ. He took up his habitation in the Kingdom of Christ toward the end of the tenth century.

3. The Venerable New Martyrs Paisius and Habakkuk

Paisius was abbot of the Travna Monastery near Èaèak in Serbia, and Habakkuk was his companion and deacon. As Christians, both were impaled on stakes by the Turks on Kalemegdan in Belgrade on December 17, 1814. Carrying his stake through the streets of Belgrade, the courageous Habakkuk sang. When his mother begged him with tears to embrace Islam in order to save his life, this wonderful soldier of Christ replied to her:

My mother, thank you for your milk,
But for your counsel I thank you not:
A Serb is Christ's; he rejoices in death.

HYMN OF PRAISE

The Holy Prophet Daniel and the Three Children

Whoever fears the true God
Is not afraid of men or demons.
The Lord rewards faithful servants
And guards them from every evil.
Among the lions,
Holy Daniel remained unharmed;
In the fiery furnace,
The Three Children remained alive;

In the midst of the fire, they glorified God,
With an angel, God's messenger.
Like Noah in the evil world,
Like holy Lot in wild Sodom,
And like Joseph in decadent Egypt,
So Daniel in the middle of Babylon
Remained faithful and righteous
With three of his young friends:
Ananias and Azarias
And the faithful young Misael.
The tortures came and the tortures passed.
The martyred were gloriously glorified
In the Immortal Kingdom of Christ.

REFLECTION

Bodily purity is primarily attained by fasting, and, through bodily purity, spiritual purity is also attained. Abstinence from food, according to the words of that son of grace, St. Ephraim the Syrian, means: "Not to desire or ask for various foods, either sweet or costly; not to eat anything outside the designated time; not to succumb to the spirit of gluttony; not to excite hunger in oneself by looking at good food; and not to desire at one moment one kind of food and at another moment another kind of food." Great is the fallacy that fasting and Lenten food harm the health of the body. It is a known fact that the ascetics lived the longest and were the least prone to illness. St. Daniel and the Three Children in Babylon offer us an example of this. When the king ordered his eunuch to feed these young men food from the royal table and to give them good wine to drink, Daniel told the eunuch that they did not want to accept the royal food and wine but wanted only vegetables for food (for Daniel did not want to eat the food sprinkled with the blood of the idolatrous sacrifices). The eunuch, fearing that the youths would be weakened by the fasting foods, related his fear to Daniel. Then the prophet suggested that he make a test and convince himself that the fasting food would not weaken them: to nourish the other youths at the royal court with food from the king's table, and to feed the four of them only on pulse for the course of ten days, and then make a comparison. The eunuch heeded Daniel and did what he suggested. After ten days, the faces of the four ascetic youths were more radiant and their bodies were stronger than the bodies of the Babylonian youths who ate and drank from the king's table.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the hospitality and confession of Abraham (Genesis 18):

1. How Abraham saw three men (angels) approaching and ran out to meet them, invited them to his home and entertained them;
2. How he prayed to God to spare Sodom for the sake of the righteous who were in that city.

HOMILY

on Joshua the son of Nun

Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left ... be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest (Joshua 1:7, 9).
Joshua the son of Nun obeyed the Lord in everything to the end, not turning either to the right or to the

left of the Lord's commandments. He was surrounded by great horrors and fears while leading the people through an unknown land and through thick ranks of enemies, but he was neither afraid nor dismayed. He considered himself the weapon of God, and knew that his battles were God's battles. As a faithful soldier obeys the commands of his commander, so Joshua listened for and hearkened to the will of the Living God. He did not ascribe any good thing, any power, any merit to himself, but he ascribed all to God and only to God. He did not depend in the least on his own army, his own weapons and his own wisdom, but he depended on God and only on God, the Almighty and All-wise. See, brethren, with what sort of men God walks. Oh, if only Christian rulers and commanders could see this and learn from God's servant Joshua how to serve God! Oh, if they would understand, once and for all, that the people are best served when God is served; and that the people cannot be served if God is not served! The Lord God fulfilled His promise and was with Joshua the son of Nun to the end of his labors and life. And that the Lord was with him is shown by the great and awesome miracles that He manifested through His faithful servant. God divided the river Jordan so that the people crossed over on dry land without a bridge; God made the walls of Jericho fall at the sound of the trumpet; God delivered powerful enemies into the hands of the Israelites; God caused the sun to stand still over Gibeon and the moon to stand still over the valley of Ajalon. Truly, never and nowhere did God forsake His servant Joshua, for Joshua did not leave unfulfilled a single commandment of God. A witness of the Living God and a type of the Savior of the world, when he was old and stricken in years, he instructed his people as God had taught him in the beginning: Turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left ... but cleave unto the Lord your God (Joshua 23:6, 8).

O Lord Jesus, Son of God, Who showed most glorious wonders through Joshua, the son of Nun, Thy faithful servant, strengthen and encourage us that we not turn away from Thee, either to the right or to the left, for the sake of Thy glory and our salvation.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. 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 – 8:50 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*

Α 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**

Α 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”