



**Nativity of Our Lord Orthodox Church**

<http://nativityorthodox.com/>

8911 Weems Road  
Manassas, Virginia 20110

Fr. Nectarios Trevino  
[opriest@gmail.com](mailto:opriest@gmail.com)  
703.629.0414

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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 Blind Man  
The Holy Martyr Glyceria  
Sergios the Confessor  
Alexandros the Martyr

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**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

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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 Acts of the Apostles 16:16-34

IN THOSE DAYS, as we apostles were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by soothsaying. She followed Paul and us, crying, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." And this she did for many days. But Paul was annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour. But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the rulers; and when they had brought them to the magistrates they said, "These men are Jews and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs which it is not lawful for us Romans to accept or practice." The crowd joined in attacking them; and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and every one's fetters were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out and said, "Men, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their wounds, and he was baptized at once, with all his family. Then he brought them up into his house, and set food before them; and he rejoiced with all his household that he had believed in God.

### **Gospel Reading**

The Gospel According to John 9:1-38

At that time, as Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar, said, "Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?" Some said, "It is he"; others said, "No, but he is like him." He said, "I am the man." They said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash'; so I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. The Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight.

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And he said to them, "He put clay on my eyes and I washed, and I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" There was a division among them. So they again said to the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight, and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself." His parents said this because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess him to be Christ he was to be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age, ask him."

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "Whether he is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you too want to become his disciples?" And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Why, this is a marvel! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you." He said, "Lord, I believe"; and he worshiped him.

## 1. THE HOLY FEMALE MARTYR GLYCERIA

Glyceria was the daughter of a Roman governor. Becoming impoverished after her father's death, Glyceria settled in Trajanopolis in Thrace. During the reign of the nefarious Emperor Antoninus, Glyceria was taken to offer sacrifices to the idol of Jupiter [Zeus]. She traced the sign of the cross on her forehead and when the Prefect Sabinus questioned her concerning her lamp, (for all of them carried lamps in their hands), Glyceria pointed to the cross on her forehead and said: "This is my lamp." As a result of her prayer lightning struck the idol and smashed it to pieces. The prefect became angry and ordered her flogged and thrown into prison. The prefect sealed the doors to the prison, determined to starve the virgin to death. However, an angel of God appeared to Glyceria and administered heavenly food to her. After a period of time, when the prefect thought that the virgin must have died from hunger, he opened the doors of the prison and was astonished when he saw her healthy, radiant and joyful. Witnessing this miracle, Laodicius, the jailer confessed Christ the Lord and was immediately beheaded. After that Glyceria was thrown into a fiery furnace but remained unharmed by the fire. Standing in the midst of the fire and, remembering the miracle of the three youths in the Babylonian furnace, Glyceria praised the Lord. Finally, she was thrown to the lions and, praying to God, this holy virgin gave up her soul to the Lord for Whom she bravely endured many tortures. She suffered honorably in the year 177 A.D. A healing oil [myrrh] emitted from her relics which healed the sick of the gravest diseases.

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## 2. THE HOLY MARTYR ALEXANDER

Alexander was a Slav. As an eighteen year old soldier in the army of Emperor Maximilian, he refused the order of the emperor to give honor to the Roman idols and for that which he was handed over to Captain Tiberian, to either counsel Alexander to deny Christ or else torture and kill him. Since all the counseling was in vain, Tiberian took Alexander with him across Macedonia to Constantinople where he traveled for duty. In every town along the way, the young Alexander was cruelly tortured but, in every town, Christians came out before him and begged him for a blessing and they encouraged him in his mortification. Pimonia, his mother, followed after him. During the course of this travel, an angel of God appeared many times to Alexander soothing his pains and encouraging him. In one place, Carasura, the martyr performed a miracle through prayer: when thirst overcame him and the soldiers who escorted him, he brought forth a well of cold water from an arid place. On the shore of the Ergina river, Tiberian ordered the executioner to behead Alexander and to toss his body into the water. When the executioner swung at the martyr's head, he saw radiant angels of God around Alexander and became frightened and his hand dropped. Alexander asked him why his hand dropped and the executioner replied that he sees some radiant young men around him. Yearning death and union with the Lord, Alexander prayed to God to withdraw the angels from him so that the executioner would not be frightened. And thus, the executioner carried out his work in the year 298 A.D. Pimonia removed the body of her son and honorably buried him. Many healings occurred at the grave of the martyr. After death, the martyr appeared to his mother and informed her of her imminent translation to the other world.

## 3. THE VENERABLES JOHN, EUTHYMIUS, GEORGE AND GABRIEL OF THE MONASTERY IVIRON [MT. ATHOS]

All four venerables were the founders of the famous Iberian [Georgian] monastery on the Holy Mt. Athos. At first, St. John lived a life of asceticism in the Lavra [Monastery] of Athanasius and, after that, founded his monastery, Iviron. John died in the year 998 A.D. Euthymius and George translated the Holy Scripture into the Georgian language. Euthymius died in the year 1029 A.D. and George died in 1066 A.D. Gabriel was found worthy to receive the miracle-performing Icon of the Mother of God which arrived at the monastery by way of the sea.

### HYMN OF PRAISE SAINT GLYCERIA

Glyceria: sacrifice to the gods!  
Orders the mindless judge,  
Or into the fire, to be consumed you must -  
Glyceria ridicules the judge  
God is one; "the gods" are demons  
Who confuse your mind.  
What kind of sacrifice, O mindless man?  
One sacrifice, was it not on Golgotha,  
Awesome sacrifice, divine and bloody,  
That abolished all bloody sacrifices?  
One sacrifice, after that sacrifice,  
One sacrifice, the Lord seeks from us:  
A pure heart; a prayerful altar,  
Clean hands; works of mercy,

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Faith, hope and charity [love], devout  
Such a sacrifice, I endeavor to offer  
To the Living God, my Creator;  
God, All-holy such a sacrifice desires,  
Not a corpse, bloody and dead.

#### REFLECTION

Concerning the power of death and the power of the Cross of Christ, St. Athanasius writes: "Whose death ever drove out demons? And whose death have the demons been afraid of as the death of Christ? Where the Name of Christ is only invoked, there, every demon is driven out. Who in such a measure tamed spiritual passions in men that the prostitutes live a chaste life and murderers do not use the sword anymore and the fearful become courageous? If not the Faith of Christ? If not the sign of the Cross? And who else has so convinced men in immortality as the Cross of Christ and the resurrection of the Body of Christ? The death of the Sinless One and the Cross of the Lover of men have brought a greater and more lasting victory than all the earthly kings with many multi-millions of armies. Which army was able to defeat a single demon? Meanwhile, only the mention of the Name of the Crucified One on the Cross peels to flight the army of demons. O, if all Christians would know what treasure they have in the Name of Christ, and what kind of weapon they have in the Cross of Christ!

#### CONTEMPLATION

To contemplate the action of God the Holy Spirit upon the apostles:

1. How the apostles, led by the Holy Spirit, travel throughout the whole world without means and without friends;
2. How they converted the rich and the poor to the Faith of Christ by their word, life and miracles alone.

#### HOMILY

About how God uses the unbelievers in order to punish the believers

"Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant" (Jeremiah 25:9).

Is not this a difficult saying? Who can be fed by it? The pagan king, the idolatrous king, the Lord call him His servant. If the servant of God is one who knows the True God and who adheres to the law of God, how then can one be a servant of God who does not know the True God and who does not adhere to the law of God? Truly, the true servant of God is he who knows the True God and who keeps the law of God but when he, to whom God has given the knowledge about Himself and His law, perverts knowing into unknowing and law into lawlessness, then God takes as His servant that ignorant one so as to punish the apostates. For, an apostate from God is worse than a pagan and an apostate from the law of God is lower than an idolater by birth.

Therefore, when Israel, as the ancient Church of God, alienated itself from God and the law of God, God chose Nebuchadrezzar for His servant to punish Israel, the Apostate.

Therefore, when the Christian peoples in Asia and Africa through numerous heresies alienated themselves from God, God took as His servant the Arabs to punish Christians in order to bring them to their senses.

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And when the Christian peoples in the Balkans alienated themselves from God and God's law, God invited the Turks as His servants to punish the apostates that by punishment to bring them to their senses.

Whenever the faithful alienate themselves from God, God weaves a whip from the unbelievers to bring the believers to their senses. And, as the faithful consciously and willingly turn away from God, so the unbelievers unconsciously and unwillingly become servants of God; the whip of God.

But God takes the unbelievers only temporarily in His service against the believers. For the land of Nebuchadrezzar, the same Lord says, He will visit it for its lawlessness and "make it perpetual desolations" (Jeremiah 25:12), then will a servant against a servant be found? For God did not take the Babylonians for a servant because of their goodness and faith, rather because of Israel's wickedness and unbelief.

O Righteous Lord, help us by Your Spirit Most-high, to always adhere to You, the One, True God and Your acon saving law.

### **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.

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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*

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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**

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# MIND THE SPIRITUAL GAP!

WHEN DID YOU LAST  
INITIATE THE HOLY MYSTERY  
OF REPENTANCE?

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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”**