



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
9th Sunday of Matthew
The Holy Martyr Callinicus
Theodota the Martyr and her Children
Holy Virgin Martyr Theodota

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 First Letter to the Corinthians 3:9-17

Brethren, we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and another man is building upon it. Let each man take care how he builds upon it. For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any one builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw - each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are.

Gospel Reading

The Gospel According to Matthew 14:22-34

At that time, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land, beaten by the waves; for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately he spoke to them, saying "Take heart, it is I; have no fear."

And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they entered the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.

1. THE HOLY MARTYR CALLINICUS

Callinicus was born in Cilicia. From his youth he was educated in Christian piety. Abandoning all, he went to preach the Holy Gospel. In Ancyra, a heathen Prince Sarcedos arrested him. When the prince threatened him with cruel tortures if he did not worship the idols, St. Callinicus answered him: "To me all pain for my God is most welcome as bread is to a hungry man." After cruel tortures and beatings, the prince placed iron shoes with nails protruding inside on his feet and ordered that he be driven into the city of Gangra for the prince was afraid to torture him anymore or to kill him in Ancyra for many, observing the heroic patience of this holy man, converted to the Faith of Christ. Along the way the soldiers became thirsty but there was no water. St. Callinicus prayed to God and brought forth water from a stone. When they arrived in the city of Gangra, the torturers threw St. Callinicus into a fiery furnace. The saint prayed to God saying: "I give thanks to you O Heavenly Father for making me worthy of this hour in which I die for Your Name." After that, he entered the fire. When the fire died down they found his body, whole and

unharmd by the fire. He honorably suffered and was crowned with the wreath of eternal glory about the year 250 A.D.

2. THE HOLY FEMALE MARTYR SERAPHIMA

Seraphima was a maiden from Antioch. She lived in the home of Sabina, the wife of a senator whom she converted to the Faith of Christ. Hearing about her Virilus, a persecutor of Christians, ordered that Seraphima be brought before him. Since Seraphima remained unwavering in her faith, Virilus ordered that she be thrown into prison and sent some young men to spend the night with her to defile her. Seraphima prayed to God in the prison when the young men arrived before the prison gates. Suddenly, an angel of God flashed before them with a fiery sword in hand and they fell as dead, completely unconscious and were rendered incapable. The next day, the persecutor begged Seraphima and she, through her prayer, restored the young men to consciousness. Ascribing all of this to magic, Virilus ordered that this holy virgin first be burned with candles and after that to be beaten with rods. While they were beating her, a piece of the rod fell off, deflected and struck Virilus in the eyes and he was blinded. Finally they beheaded this handmaiden of Christ and she gave up her soul to God. The pious Sabina honorably buried her body from which began to flow healing for many. St. Seraphima suffered during the reign of Emperor Hadrian between the years of 117-138 A.D.

3. THE HOLY FEMALE MARTYR THEODOTIA

Theodotia was a young widow with three children. In Thessalonica, together with St. Anastasia (December 22), Theodotia labored in the work of God completely dedicated to a pious life. During the time of Diocletian's persecution, she was sentenced to death and, together with her children, was thrown into a fiery furnace. Their holy souls soared into the Heavenly Fatherland.

4. THE HOLY MARTYR EUSTATHIUS OF MTSKHETA

Eustathius was a Persian born in the village of Arbuket. At age thirty he came to the city of Mtskheta and seeing how Christians live and believe in Mtskheta, he received baptism. He was tortured for Christ and was beheaded in Tiflis in the year 589 A.D. His relics repose in the cathedral church in Mtskheta and give healing to those who believe.

HYMN OF PRAISE SAINT SERAPHIMA

Seraphima, dear to the angels,
Completely innocent, both in soul and in body,
In all thoughts, kind,
Was tortured, many days
For Christ the Lord, the Immortal.
The godless prince, into the temple forced her
Sacrifices to the idols, to offer.
Saint Seraphima replied:
To the One God, I am a handmaiden,
Of the Holy Spirit my body is the temple,
In virginity, my body I preserved
That, as a sacrifice to God to offer.

The temple of the body, as a sacrifice to offer,
As much as it is dear to you, torture my body,
But, my soul you will never see dead,
The soul alive, before and after death
Be fire, by sword, destroy it you cannot.
Because of the soul, the body was created,
And by the soul, the body is blessed.
From God, the soul into the world appears,
That, in the body, the Lord it glorifies.
Glory to God, the Triune God!
Glory to God, my Creator!

REFLECTION

By true repentance with tears, prayer and good works the most defiled soul can be completely cleansed and changed. Therefore be careful that you do not maliciously mention the sins of a repentant sinner but offer thanksgiving to God and be astonished how from darkness, light is made and from slime, pure water. The Egyptian Pharaoh Amases was of lowly birth and when he became king, men respected him very little, remembering his origin. In order to outwit the people and to gain their respect, he took a metal basin in which, according to custom, the feet of the visitors to the palace were washed. He ordered the basin to be melted down and from it to make a likeness of a certain idol. The pharaoh then placed this idol on the street. Seeing this idol, the people began to worship it and to render it divine honor. Then the pharaoh revealed what this idol was made of. The people then understood that, by this, the pharaoh wanted to show that they need not think anymore about what he once was but what he is now. Then the people began to render the pharaoh the respect due to royalty.

CONTEMPLATION

To contemplate the miraculous sign that God showed Gideon (Judges 6):

1. How the first night only the fleece was under the dew and the remaining ground was dry; and how the second night, all the ground was under the dew, and the fleece was dry;
2. How that first signified, the Israelites in the midst of the pagan world (until the coming of Christ) and after that the pagan world under grace and graceless Israel [Israel without grace] (after the coming of Christ).

HOMILY

About the delaying of the Dreadful Day according to the mercy of God

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness: but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Brethren, the mercy of God delays "that day which burns like a furnace, according to the words of the Prophet Malachi" (Malachi 4:1). Therefore, let the scoffers be ashamed, who scoff at the promise of God and say: "Where is the promise of His coming?" (2 Peter 3:4). God has not forgotten His promise but the sinners themselves have forgotten it. God, according to His immeasurable mercy, waits for the sinners to come to their senses, repent and to prepare themselves for that day which is not repeated. Behold that day is not like the many days which are given to men for the sake of repentance and to prepare for the

encounter with God. That day is the only day and it differs from all other days, for it does not come for the sake of repentance but rather for judgment. Just as the Dreadful Judgment is only one and unrepeatable, thus is that day only one and unrepeatable.

God does not desire that any man be lost. He did not create man for death but for salvation. Is there a gardener who sows vegetables and desire that his vegetables dry out and perish? God is wiser and more compassionate than all men. God has only one desire, i.e., that all men repent and turn away from evil. How does the husbandman rejoice when his withered vineyard comes to life and again becomes green and brings forth fruit! How much more then is the joy of God and the angels of God when the souls of men, withered from sin, return and become young again from the tears of repentance and bring forth fruit of repentance.

O Lord, Merciful and Lover of Mankind, help sinners to sense Your mercy and Your pity toward them to sense and to repent to repent and to turn away from their wicked ways.

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.

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”