



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
3rd Sunday of Luke
Sergius & Bacchus the Great Martyrs of Syria
Polychronios the Martyr
Julian the Presbyter & Caesarius the Deacon

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 Second Letter to the Corinthians 11:31-33; 12:1-9

Brethren, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed for ever, knows that I do not lie. At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas guarded the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped his hands.

I must boast; there is nothing to be gained by it, but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven -- whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into Paradise --whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows -- and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. Though if I wish to boast, I shall not be a fool, for I shall be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Gospel Reading

The Gospel According to Luke 7:11-16

At that time, Jesus went to a city called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. As he drew near to the gate of the city, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a large crowd from the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." And he came and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." And the dead man sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother. Fear seized them all; and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!"

1. The Holy Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus

These holy and wonderful martyrs and heroes of the Christian Faith were at first noblemen at the court of Emperor Maximian. The emperor himself esteemed them greatly because of their courage, wisdom and fidelity. But when the emperor heard that his two noblemen were Christians, his love for them turned into rage. Once, when there was a great sacrificial offering to idols, the emperor demanded that Sergius and Bacchus offer sacrifices with him, but they openly refused to obey the emperor in this. Beside himself with rage, the emperor commanded that their military garments, rings and emblems be stripped from them and that they be dressed in women's clothing. He then placed iron hoops around their necks and paraded them through the streets of the city of Rome, to be mocked by everyone. Afterward, he sent them to Antiochus, his deputy in Asia, for torture. Antiochus had risen to his position with Sergius and Bacchus's help, as they had at one time recommended him to the emperor. When Antiochus implored them to deny Christ and save themselves from dishonorable suffering and death, these saints replied: "Both honor and dishonor, both life and death-all are the same to him who seeks the Heavenly Kingdom." Antiochus cast Sergius into prison and ordered that Bacchus be tortured first. His minions took turns beating the holy

Bacchus until his whole body was broken. Bacchus's holy soul departed his broken and bloodied body, and in the hands of angels was borne to the Lord. St. Bacchus suffered in the town of Barbalissos. Then St. Sergius was led out and shod in iron shoes with inward-protruding nails. He was driven, on foot, to the town of Rozapha, in Syria, and was beheaded there with the sword. His soul went to Paradise where, together with his friend Bacchus, he received a crown of immortal glory from Christ, his King and Lord. These two wondrous knights of the Christian Faith suffered in about the year 303.

2. The Holy Martyr Polychronius

Polychronius was born in the district of Gamphanitus, of peasant parents. As a young man, he worked as a day-laborer in the vineyard of a certain Constantinopolitan. But even as a day-laborer Polychronius devoted himself to the ascetic life of prayer and fasting day and night. Seeing his life, angelic in its purity and abstinence, the vintner was amazed, and gave him much more money than he earned. St.

Polychronius took the money and built a church. At the time of the Nicaean Council (325), Polychronius was a church reader. He showed such zeal in the defense of Orthodoxy against the Arians that he was ordained a priest. Later, these evil heretics sought revenge, and attacked St. Polychronius inside the church itself, and chopped him into pieces. Thus, this great defender of the truth and purity of Orthodoxy suffered and received a wreath of glory from his Most-glorious Lord.

HYMN OF PRAISE

The Holy Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus
The royal men, Sergius and Bacchus
Served the King, but not the earthly one-
Rather, Jesus, the Immortal King.
The earthly king mocked the saints
And removed the belts from their waists,
But the Lord girded them with strength.
The emperor removed their noblemen's togas,
But the Savior clothed them more beautifully
In an incorrupt garment of immortality;
The emperor removed their rings from their right hands,
But the Lord gave them far more glorious ones,
In betrothing their souls to Himself.
The emperor banished them from his court,
But God welcomed them into the heavenly courts.
The earth tortured these knights of Christ,
The earth tortured them, but heaven gave them repose.
Decay rejects purity,
Evil rejects goodness,
But Saints Bacchus and Sergius
Returned all earthliness to the earth,
And gave their holy souls over to God!
Though exiled from the earthly kingdom,
They illumine the earth even now;
By their suffering, they conquered malice;
By their death for the Cross, they are glorified.
As victors over the powers of darkness,
They show us the path to victory.

REFLECTION

A vision of St. Andrew the Fool-for-Christ: Once, St. Andrew was sitting with his disciple Epiphanius, talking about the salvation of the soul. Just then, a demon approached Epiphanius and began setting traps to distract his thoughts, but did not dare to approach Andrew. Andrew cried out: "Depart from here, impure adversary!" The devil drew back and replied maliciously: "You are my adversary, such as no other in all of Constantinople!" Andrew did not drive him away immediately, but permitted him to speak. And the devil began: "I feel that the time is coming when my work will be finished. At that time, men will be worse than I, as children will be even more wicked than adults. Then I will rest and will not teach men anything anymore, since they themselves will carry out my will in everything." Andrew asked him: "In what sins do your kind rejoice the most?" The devil replied: "The service of idols, slander, malice against one's neighbor, the sodomite sin, drunkenness and avarice-in this we rejoice the most." Andrew further asked him: "And how do you tolerate it when someone who first served you rejects you and your works?" The devil replied: "You know that better than I do; we find it difficult to tolerate, but we are comforted by this: we will probably bring them back to us-for many who have rejected us and turned to God have come back to us again." After the evil spirit had said this and much more, St. Andrew breathed on him and he disappeared.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the righteousness of King Josiah, and God's reward to him (II Chronicles 34):

1. How King Josiah rooted out the idols, and did all that which is good in the sight of the Lord;
2. How God's blessing was poured out upon him and his people during his long reign.

HOMILY

on children and their praise of the Lord

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast ordained strength, because of Thine enemies (Psalm 8:2).

At the glorious Entry of the Lord Jesus into Jerusalem, and even in the Temple itself, the children cried out: Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord! (Matthew 21:9). It seems that nothing irritated the Jewish elders so much as this praising of Jesus by young children. Hearst thou what these say? (Matthew 21:16), they asked Him maliciously. And Jesus answered them meekly: Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? (Matthew 21:16). Thus, it is as clear as day that these prophetic words of David pertain to the wonder that occurred at the Entry of the Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem: this wondrous praising of the Lord by little children. It is obvious that, as this event was prophesied, so it was literally fulfilled. It is also obvious from this that the Lord Himself was then referring to that prophecy of King David: Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise. There can be no doubt that it was a great wonder, inspired by the Spirit of God and carried out by the power and will of God. While the princes, scribes, elders and priests were not able to recognize Christ the Lord, the little children both recognized and proclaimed Him! In truth, this is a miracle, unique throughout the Old and New Testaments; and no less of a miracle than the resurrection of the dead. In fact, during the first miracle [Christ's Entry into Jerusalem] and during the second [Christ's Resurrection], the same power of God was acting-the same Spirit and the same providence of God. And the prophet wanted especially to emphasize this power and majestic glory of God by the event with the little children, which event he places parallel with the wonders of the starry universe, created by the same power of God. When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained (Psalm 8:3).

Besides this, among those little children should be numbered the apostles themselves-and many saints,

ascetics, martyrs for Christ, and virgins-thousands, thousands and thousands of those who, with innocence and open hearts, recognized Christ as the Son of God and their Savior, who embraced Him with wholehearted love and endured difficult suffering for Him. Why, exactly, did the Lord ordain praise for Himself from their mouths, and not from the mouths of nobles, philosophers and rhetoricians? He accepted their praise because of their meekness, and rejected the others because of their pride; for the proud are the greatest enemies of God. That is why Christ miraculously loosed the tongues of children, simple fisherman and peasants-to proclaim the truth contrary to their enemies, that is, the proud and empty princes and scribes of the Jews.

O Lord Most-powerful, Almighty God; loose our tongues also, that with strong faith and childlike joy we too may proclaim Thine endless glory.

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.

Sunday Matins – 8:50 A.M.
Sunday English Divine Liturgy – 10:00 A.M.

VESPERS

Saturday – 5:00 P.M.

By appointment

Before Sunday Divine Liturgy (during Matins)

CONFESSIONS

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

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”