



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 Luke
Plato the Great Martyr of Ancyra
Holy Martyr Romanus
Zaccheus 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 Letter to the Ephesians 4:1-7

Brethren, I, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Gospel Reading

The Gospel According to Luke 12:16-21

The Lord said this parable: "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." As he said these things, he cried out: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

1. The Holy Martyr Plato

Plato was from the town of Ancyra in Galatia. He was a Christian by birth and upbringing. While in his youth, he showed great perfection in every virtue. Plato did not conceal his faith in Christ the Lord, but preached it openly, denouncing idolaters because of their worshiping lifeless objects in place of the Living Creator. For this, he was brought to trial before Governor Agrippinus, and was interrogated and harshly tortured by him. When the governor counseled him to avoid death and save his life by worshiping the idols, Plato said: "There are two deaths, the one temporal and the other eternal; so also are there two lives, one of short duration and the other without end." Then Agrippinus subjected him to even harsher tortures. Among other tortures, red-hot cannon balls were set on the saint's naked body; then they cut strips from his skin. "Torture me more harshly," the martyr cried out to the torturers, "so that your inhumanity and my endurance may be seen more clearly." When the torturer reminded the martyr that his namesake, Plato the philosopher, was a pagan, the martyr replied: "I am not like Plato, nor is Plato like me except in name. I learn and teach the wisdom of Christ, but Plato was a teacher of wisdom that is foolishness to God." After that, Plato was thrown into prison, where he remained for eighteen days without food and water. When the guards were amazed that Plato was able to live in hunger for so long, he told them: "You are satisfied by meat, but I, by holy prayers. Wine gladdens you, but Christ the True Vine gladdens me." Plato was beheaded in about the year 266 and received his wreath of eternal glory.

2. The Holy Martyrs Romanus and Barulas

St. Romanus was a deacon of the church in Caesarea and zealously preached the Gospel in Antioch. One day, there was an idolatrous feast. The Eparch of Antioch, Asclypiades, went to enter a pagan temple to offer sacrifices, but Romanus stood in the way and said: "You sin, O Governor, when you go to the idols. The idols are not gods—Christ is the only true God." The enraged eparch subjected Romanus to tortures and had him flogged and scraped without mercy. During this, St. Romanus saw a child by the name of

Barulas, and said to Asclypiades: ``Even this small child has more understanding than you, old man, for he knows the true God and you do not." The eparch questioned Barulas about his faith, and he confessed Christ the Lord as the One True God, contrary to false idolatry. Asclypiades commanded that young Barulas be beheaded, and St. Romanus be strangled in prison. Thus, both of these martyrs inherited the Kingdom of Christ in the year 303.

HYMN OF PRAISE

The Holy Martyrs Romanus and Barulas
Barulas beheld the tortures of St. Romanus,
And Romanus beheld Barulas, sad and tear-stained.
Barulas had a child's innocent soul;
Barulas had a heart purer than a lily.
And the wicked eparch asked Barulas:
``Come, my child, without bribery, speak the truth:
Is Christ better, or our gods?"
``Christ is far better than your idols!"
``Had I known, O Child, I would not have asked you!
How is Christ better? Come, tell me."
``Christ is the Creator of the world,
Idols are fancies of the demon's kingdom."
The governor, now furious, beat the child.
But this was pleasant to the child, and he spoke louder:
``O people, abandon the cursed demons,
Christ alone is God; He enlightens men."
Barulas's mother stood by, and encouraged her son:
``Become worthy, O Son, of the rank of martyrdom."
As a lamb beneath the sword, Barulas bent his neck,
And glorified Christ, himself and his mother.

REFLECTION

But whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also (Matthew 5:39), commanded the Lord. This is the shortest and clearest teaching on humility. The evil demons fear nothing so much as a humble man fulfilling the Lord's commandments. There was a rich nobleman in Alexandria who had a young daughter into whom an evil spirit had entered, and the daughter had gone insane. Someone told the despairing father that none could heal his daughter except the monks who lived in the wilderness and came to Alexandria from time to time to sell baskets, their handiwork; but none of the monks would enter the rich nobleman's house if he told them why he was inviting them. It would be better for him to purchase baskets from the monks, then ask them to come to his house for payment. Then, when they entered the house, he could implore them to pray to God for all the members of the household, and thus obtain God's help to cure the maiden. The father obeyed and went to the marketplace on a certain day and met one of St. Macarius's disciples as he was selling baskets. The man agreed to buy the baskets, and invited the monk to his home to pay him. When the monk entered the home, the possessed daughter leaped at the monk and vigorously struck him on one cheek with her hand. The monk silently turned the other cheek. The evil spirit cried out in anguish and departed from the girl, and she became completely calm and rational. When the monk returned to the wilderness, he told the elders what had happened and they all glorified God, that He had given so much power to those who fulfill His commandments.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the wondrous creation of the world (Genesis 1):

1. How, on the fifth day, God created the living things that live in the waters and the fowls of the air;
2. How God blessed them and said: Be fruitful and multiply.

HOMILY

on love that surpasses knowledge

... to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge (Ephesians 3:19).

The love that surpasses knowledge, that exceeds our understanding, is the love of Christ. No one can have even an inkling of the quality or the greatness of this love until Christ enters into him. Can anyone who has never tasted honey have any idea of its taste? Only when Christ enters into the heart of man by faith, does man know the inexpressible taste of the love of Christ-its sweet and intoxicating fragrance and incomparable comprehensiveness. Just as a man who has Christ in his heart touches the breadth, length, depth and height of the knowledge of divine wisdom, so this man with Christ in his heart also touches the limitless open seas of the divine love of Christ. O my brethren, how feeble are words when one needs to speak of the love of Christ-words are never weaker than in this situation. Indeed, what can one say before such astounding proofs of His love? He created us out of love, He was incarnate out of love, and out of love He accepted mockery and death for our sake. He opened the heavens for us out of love, and He revealed to us the immortal glory prepared for us! Even all this is only a part of the inexhaustible wealth, glory, beauty and life-creating sustenance that is the love of Christ. Oh, if only we too would be made worthy by faith, so that the Lord Jesus would enter our hearts, and that we would taste of His ineffable love!

O Lord Jesus Christ, our Life, our Wisdom and our Love, cleanse us and enter into us.

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.

CONFESSIONS

Monday-Friday, 4:00-6:00 P.M.
By appointment
Before Sunday Divine Liturgy (during Matins)

VESPERS

Saturday – 5:00 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*

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 EMINENCE, METROPOLITAN 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”