

*Ecumenical Patriarchate
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey*

ASCENSION

**Greek Orthodox Church
FAIRVIEW - NEW JERSEY**

Weekly Bulletin

Sunday, November 14th, 2021

8th Sunday of Luke



Οικουμενικόν Πατριαρχείον
Ιερά Μητρόπολις Νέας Ιερσέης
Ελληνική Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία
ΘΕΙΑΣ ΑΝΑΛΗΨΕΩΣ
ΦΕΡΒΙΟΥ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ
ΕΒΔΟΜΑΔΙΑΙΟ ΔΕΛΤΙΟ
ΕΝΗΜΕΡΩΣΗΣ
Rev. Christos L. Pappas, Protopresbyter



**Light a Candle & Say a Prayer at
Ascension Church, Fairview, NJ**

*"I am the light of the world;
he who follows me will not walk in darkness
but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)*

To light a candle, please click the link below
and after you select the candle(s)
that you would like us to light and before pressing the
"Place Order" button,

please submit the names of your loved ones,
those who are alive and/or those
who have departed this life.

Your candles will be lit at the next Liturgy or service.

Thank you and God bless!

<http://ascensionfairviewnj.square.site/>

*To pay Membership, Greek School Tuition
and all other offerings use:*

https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/305721?widget=1

ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΙΩΝ

Κυριακή, 14 Νοεμβρίου, 2021

Η' Λουκά, 8:30 π.μ. – 11:30 π.μ. Όρθρος, Θ. Λειτουργία
Κατηχητικό Σχολείο

Κυριακή της Φιλοπτώχου

Ο καφές σερβίρεται από τη Φιλόπτωχο

Δευτέρα, 15 Νοεμβρίου, 2021

Αρχίζει η Νηστεία, Θωμάς ο Νέος
9:00 π.μ. Όρθρος, Θ. Λειτουργία

Τρίτη, 16 Νοεμβρίου, 2021

Απόστολος και Ευαγγελιστής Ματθαίος

9:00 π.μ. Όρθρος, Θ. Λειτουργία

6:00 μ.μ. Άγιο Ευχέλαιο

Τετάρτη, 17 Νοεμβρίου, 2021

Γρηγόριος ο θαυματουργός, 9:00 π.μ. Όρθρος, Θ. Λειτουργία
4:30 μ.μ. – 6:30 μ.μ. Ελληνικό Σχολείο

Πέμπτη, 18 Νοεμβρίου, 2021

Πλάτων Μάρτυς, Μάρτυς Ρωμανός

9:00 π.μ. Όρθρος, Θ. Λειτουργία

Παρασκευή, 19 Νοεμβρίου, 2021

Αβδιού Προφήτης, 9:00 π.μ. Όρθρος, Θ. Λειτουργία
4:30 μ.μ. – 6:30 μ.μ. Ελληνικό Σχολείο

Σάββατο, 20 Νοεμβρίου, 2021

Προεόρτια της εν τω Ναώ Εισόδου, 9:00 π.μ. Όρθρος, Θ. Λ.

Κυριακή, 21 Νοεμβρίου, 2021

Είσοδος της Υπεραγίας Θεοτόκου
8:30 π.μ. – 11:30 π.μ. Όρθρος, Θ. Λειτουργία
Κατηχητικό Σχολείο

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday, November 14, 2021

8th Sunday of Luke, 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m., Orthros, Divine Liturgy
Catechism Program

Philoptochos Sunday

Coffee is served by the Philoptochos

Monday, November 15, 2021

Nativity Fast Begins, Thomas, Abp. of Constan.

9:00 a.m. - Orthros, Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, November 16, 2021

Matthew the Apostle & Evangelist

9:00 a.m. - Orthros, Divine Liturgy

6:00 p.m. Holy Unction

Wednesday, November 17, 2021

Gregory the Wonderworker, 9:00 a.m. - Orthros, Divine Liturgy
4:30 p.m.- 6:30 p.m. Greek School

Thursday, November 18, 2021

Plato of Ancyra, Martyr Romanus

9:00 a.m. - Orthros, Divine Liturgy

Friday, November 19, 2021

Obadiah the Prophet, 9:00 a.m. - Orthros, Divine Liturgy
4:30 p.m.- 6:30 p.m. Greek School

Saturday, November 20, 2021

Forefeast of the Entrance, 9:00 a.m. - Orthros, Divine Liturgy

Sunday, November 21, 2021

Entrance of the Theotokos, 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m., Orthros, Divine L.
Catechism Program

Prokeimenon. Mode Plagal 4.

Psalm 18.4,1

Their voice has gone out into all the earth.

Verse: The heavens declare the glory of God.

The reading is from

St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 4:9-16

Brethren, God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are ill-clad and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become, and are now, as the refuse of the world, the off-scouring of all things. I do not write this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me.

Προκείμενον. Ἦχος πλ. δ'.

ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 18.4,1

Εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ἐξῆλθεν ὁ φθόγγος αὐτῶν.

Στίχ. Οἱ οὐρανοὶ διηγοῦνται δόξαν Θεοῦ.

Πρὸς Κορινθίους α' 4:9-16 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα

Ἀδελφοί, ὁ θεὸς ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀποστόλους ἐσχάτους ἀπέδειξεν ὡς ἐπιθανάτιους· ὅτι θέατρον ἐγενήθημεν τῷ κόσμῳ, καὶ ἀγγέλοις, καὶ ἀνθρώποις. Ἡμεῖς μωροὶ διὰ Χριστόν, ὑμεῖς δὲ φρόνιμοι ἐν Χριστῷ· ἡμεῖς ἀσθενεῖς, ὑμεῖς δὲ ἰσχυροί· ὑμεῖς ἔνδοξοι, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄτιμοι. Ἄχρι τῆς ἄρτι ὥρας καὶ πεινῶμεν, καὶ διψῶμεν, καὶ γυμνητεύομεν, καὶ κολαφιζόμεθα, καὶ ἀστατοῦμεν, καὶ κοπιῶμεν ἐργαζόμενοι ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσίν· λοιδορούμενοι εὐλογοῦμεν· διωκόμενοι ἀνεχόμεθα· βλασφημούμενοι παρακαλοῦμεν· ὡς περικαθάρματα τοῦ κόσμου ἐγενήθημεν, πάντων περίψημα ἕως ἄρτι. Οὐκ ἐντρέπων ὑμᾶς γράφω ταῦτα, ἀλλ' ὡς τέκνα μου ἀγαπητὰ νουθετῶ. Ἐὰν γὰρ μυρίους παιδαγωγοὺς ἔχητε ἐν Χριστῷ, ἀλλ' οὐ πολλοὺς πατέρας· ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς ἐγέννησα. Παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε.

The Gospel According to Luke 10:25-37

At that time, a lawyer stood up to put Jesus to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have answered right; do this, and you will live."

But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Ἐκ τοῦ Κατὰ Λουκᾶν 10:25-37 Εὐαγγελίου τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα
Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, νομικός τις ἀνέστη ἐκπειράζων αὐτὸν καὶ λέγων· διδάσκαλε, τί ποιήσας ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω; ὁ δὲ εἶπε πρὸς αὐτόν· ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τί γέγραπται; πῶς ἀναγινώσκεις; ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· ἀγαπήσεις Κύριον τὸν Θεόν σου ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ἰσχύος σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς διανοίας σου, καὶ τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν· εἶπε δὲ αὐτῷ· ὀρθῶς ἀπεκρίθης· τοῦτο ποίει καὶ ζήσῃ. ὁ δὲ θέλων δικαιοῦν ἑαυτὸν εἶπε πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν· καὶ τίς ἐστὶ μου πλησίον; ὑπολαβὼν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν· ἄνθρωπός τις κατέβαινεν ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλήμ εἰς Ἱεριχώ, καὶ λησταῖς περιέπεσεν· οἱ καὶ ἐκδύσαντες αὐτὸν καὶ πληγὰς ἐπιθέντες ἀπῆλθον ἀφέντες ἡμιθανῆ τυγχάνοντα. κατὰ συγκυρίαν δὲ ἱερεὺς τις κατέβαινεν ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ἐκείνῃ, καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὸν ἀντιπαρῆλθεν. ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ Λευίτης γενόμενος κατὰ τὸν τόπον, ἐλθὼν καὶ ἰδὼν ἀντιπαρῆλθε. Σαμαρεῖτης δὲ τις ὁδεύων ἦλθε κατ' αὐτόν, καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὸν ἐσπλαγχνίσθη, καὶ προσελθὼν κατέδησε τὰ τραύματα αὐτοῦ ἐπιχέων ἔλαιον καὶ οἶνον, ἐπιβιάσας δὲ αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ ἴδιον κτήνος ἤγαγεν αὐτὸν εἰς πανδοχεῖον καὶ ἐπεμελήθη αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν αὔριον ἐξελθὼν, ἐκβαλὼν δύο δηνάρια ἔδωκε τῷ πανδοχεῖ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἐπιμελήθητι αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὅ τι ἂν προσδαπανήσης, ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ ἐπανέρχεσθαί με ἀποδώσω σοι. τίς οὖν τούτων τῶν τριῶν πλησίον δοκεῖ σοι γεγονέναι τοῦ ἐμπεσόντος εἰς τοὺς ληστές; ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· ὁ ποιήσας τὸ ἔλεος μετ' αὐτοῦ. εἶπεν οὖν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· πορεύου καὶ σὺ ποίει ὁμοίως.

Nativity Fast

In [Christianity](#), the **Nativity Fast** is a period of abstinence and penance practiced by the [Eastern Orthodox Church](#) and [Catholic Church](#) in preparation for the [Nativity of Jesus](#) on December 25.^[1] The corresponding Western season of preparation for [Christmas](#), which also has been called the Nativity Fast^[2] and [St. Martin's Lent](#), has taken the name of [Advent](#). The Eastern [fast](#) runs for 40 days instead of four (in the [Roman Rite](#)) or six weeks ([Ambrosian Rite](#)) and thematically focuses on proclamation and glorification of the [Incarnation of God](#), whereas the Western Advent focuses on the two comings (or *advents*) of [Jesus Christ](#): his birth and his [Second Coming](#) or [Parousia](#).

The Byzantine fast is observed from November 15 to December 24, inclusively. These dates apply to the Eastern Catholic Churches, and Eastern Orthodox churches which use the [Revised Julian calendar](#), which currently matches the [Gregorian calendar](#). For those Eastern Orthodox churches which still follow the [Julian calendar](#) ([Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem](#), [Russian Orthodox Church](#), [Romanian Orthodox Church](#), [Serbian Orthodox Church](#), [Polish Orthodox Church](#), [Georgian Orthodox Church](#), [Ukrainian Orthodox Church](#), [Macedonian Orthodox Church](#), and [Mount Athos](#)), the Winter Lent does not begin until

November 28 (Gregorian) which coincides with November 15 on the Julian calendar. The [Ancient Church of the East](#) fasts dawn til dusk from December 1 until December 25 on the Gregorian calendar.

Sometimes the fast is called **Philip's Fast** (or the Philippian Fast), as it traditionally begins on the day following the Feast of [St. Philip the Apostle](#) (November 14). Some churches, such as the [Melkite Greek Catholic Church](#), have abbreviated the fast to start on December 10, following the Feast of the [Conception](#) by [Saint Anne](#) of the Most Holy [Theotokos](#).

The purpose of fasting

Through the discipline of [fasting](#), when practiced with prayer, [repentance](#), and [almsgiving](#), it is believed that by tempering the bodily desire for food, other passions are tempered as well, and that the soul can orient more away from worldly needs and more towards spiritual needs. Through this practice one is better enabled to draw closer to [Christ](#), and engage in the continuous and synergistic process of becoming more [Christ-like](#). While fasting is practiced with the body, it is important to note that emphasis is placed on the spiritual facet of the fast rather than mere physical deprivation. [Orthodox theology](#) sees a synthesis between the body and the soul, so what happens to one can be used to have an effect on the other.^[3]

Fasting rules

In the Orthodox Church, fasting refers to not consuming a meal until the evening.^[4] In the Byzantine Rite, the fast traditionally entails [fasting](#) from [red meat](#), [poultry](#), [meat products](#), eggs, [dairy products](#), fish, oil, and wine. Fish, wine and oil are allowed on Saturdays and Sundays, and oil and wine are allowed on Tuesdays and Thursdays, except in the [Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church](#).

The fasting rules permit fish, wine and oil on certain [feast days](#) that occur during the course of the fast: [Evangelist Matthew](#) (November 16), [Apostle Andrew](#) (November 30), [Great-martyr Barbara](#) (December 4), [St. Nicholas](#) (December 6), [St. Spiridon](#) and [St. Herman](#) (December 12), [St. Ignatius](#) (December 20), etc. The Nativity Fast is not as severe as [Great Lent](#) or the [Dormition Fast](#).

As is always the case with Byzantine fasting rules, persons who are ill, the very young or elderly, and nursing mothers are exempt from fasting. Each individual is expected to confer with their [confessor](#) regarding any exemptions from the fasting rules, but should never place themselves in physical danger.

There has been some ambiguity about the restriction of fish, whether it means the allowance of [invertebrate](#) fish or all fish. Often, even on days when fish is not allowed, shellfish may be

consumed. More detailed guidelines vary by jurisdiction, but the rules strictly state that from the December 20 to December 24 (inclusively), no fish may be eaten.

The [Eve of Nativity](#) (December 24) is a strict [fast day](#), called *Paramony* (lit. "preparation"), on which no solid food should be eaten until [Sirius](#) is seen in the evening sky (or at the very least, until after the [Vesperal Divine Liturgy](#) that day). If Paramony falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the day is not observed as a strict fast, but a meal with wine and oil is allowed after the Divine Liturgy, which would be celebrated in the morning.

Νηστεία Χριστουγέννων. Πότε ξεκινάει, πώς την ακολουθούμε, ποια η σημασία της:

Δεύτερη μεγαλύτερη περίοδος νηστείας μετά την Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστή είναι η νηστεία των Χριστουγέννων, γνωστή στη γλώσσα του ορθόδοξου λαού μας και ως σαρανταήμερο.

Πότε αρχίζει η νηστεία Χριστουγέννων

Η νηστεία των Χριστουγέννων αρχίζει την 15η Νοεμβρίου και λήγει την 24η Δεκεμβρίου.

Πώς γίνεται: Η νηστεία του Σαρανταήμερου των Χριστουγέννων γίνεται ως εξής:

Από 15 έως 21 Νοεμβρίου: Κατάλυσις ελαίου, εκτός Τετάρτης και Παρασκευής.

Την 21 Νοεμβρίου, εορτή των Εισοδίων της Θεοτόκου:
Κατάλυσις ιχθύος.

Από 21 Νοεμβρίου έως 17 Δεκεμβρίου: Τα Σάββατα και τις Κυριακές κατάλυσις ιχθύος.

Δευτέρα, Τρίτη και Πέμπτη κατάλυσις ελαίου.

Τις Τετάρτες και τις Παρασκευές χωρίς λάδι, εκτός αν συμπέσουν γιορτές.

Από 18 έως 23 Δεκεμβρίου: Κατάλυσις ελαίου, εκτός Τετάρτης και Παρασκευής.

Λίγα Ιστορικά στοιχεία για τη νηστεία Χριστουγέννων:

Μέχρι τα μέσα του τέταρτου αιώνα, η Ανατολική Εκκλησία γιόρταζε μαζί και τη γέννηση και τη βάπτισή του Χριστού, τα Επιφάνεια, την ίδια ημέρα, στις 6 Ιανουαρίου. Τα Χριστούγεννα ως ξεχωριστή γιορτή, εορταζόμενη στις 25 Δεκεμβρίου έφτασε στην Ανατολή από τη Δύση γύρω στα τέλη του ίδιου αιώνα.

Με τη διαίρεση της άλλοτε ενιαίας γιορτής και την καθιέρωση τριών ξεχωριστών, της Γέννησης την 25η Δεκεμβρίου, της Περιτομής την 1η και της Βάπτισης την 6η Ιανουαρίου, διαμορφώθηκε και το λεγόμενο Δωδεκαήμερο, δηλαδή το γιορτινό χρονικό διάστημα από τις 25 Δεκεμβρίου ως τις 6 Ιανουαρίου. Έτσι διασώθηκε κατά κάποιον τρόπο η αρχαία ενότητα των δύο μεγάλων γιορτών, αυτή της Γέννησης και της Βάπτισης του Κυρίου.

Πώς ξεκίνησε: Η μεγάλη σημασία που απέκτησε με την πάροδο του χρόνου στη συνείδηση της Εκκλησίας η νέα γιορτή των Χριστουγέννων και η ευλάβεια των πιστών και ιδιαίτερα των μοναχών, δημιούργησαν τις προϋποθέσεις για την καθιέρωση και της προ των Χριστουγέννων νηστείας. Σ' αυτό ασφαλώς επέδρασε και η διαμορφωμένη από τότε τεσσαρακονθήμερη νηστεία της Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστής, που προηγείται του Πάσχα.

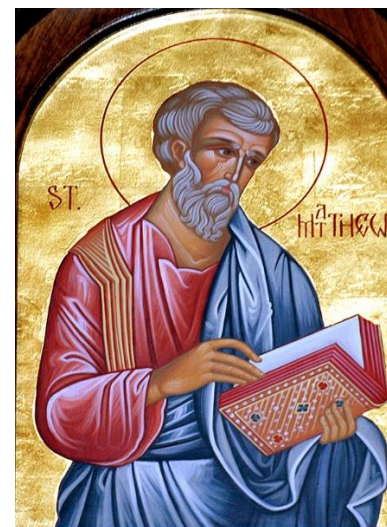
Όπως η γιορτή έτσι και η νηστεία, ως προετοιμασία για την υποδοχή των γενεθλίων του Χριστού, εμφανίστηκε αρχικά στη Δύση, όπου η νηστεία αυτή ονομαζόταν Τεσσαρακοστή “του αγίου Μαρτίνου” επειδή άρχιζε από την γιορτή αυτού του αγίου της Δυτικής Εκκλησίας. Το ίδιο έγινε και σ' εμάς, όπου πολλοί τη νηστεία των Χριστουγέννων ονομάζουν “του αγίου Φιλίππου” επειδή προφανώς αρχίζει την επομένη της μνήμης του Αποστόλου.

Οι πρώτες ιστορικές μαρτυρίες, που έχουμε για τη νηστεία προ των Χριστουγέννων, ανάγονται για τη Δύση στον πέμπτο και για την Ανατολή στον έκτο αιώνα.

Η νηστεία στην αρχή, όπως φαίνεται, ήταν μικρής διάρκειας. Πιθανότατα ξεκίνησε σαν επταήμερη, όμως υπό την επίδραση της νηστείας της Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστής έγινε και αυτή σαράντα ημέρες, χωρίς να γίνει τόσο αυστηρή όσο αυτή του Πάσχα.

Ο Απόστολος και Ευαγγελιστής Ματθαίος, πριν γίνει μαθητής του Κυρίου Ιησού Χριστού, ονομαζόταν Λευίς. Ο πατέρας του λεγόταν Αλφαίος και ήταν από τη Γαλιλαία. Ο Ματθαίος έκανε το επάγγελμα του τελώνη, και ο Ιησούς τον βρήκε να κάθεται στο τελωνείο έξω από την Καπερναούμ. Και είπε προς αυτόν: «Ακολουθεί μου». Ο Ματθαίος, χωρίς καμιά καθυστέρηση, αμέσως τον ακολούθησε. Και όχι μόνο εγκατέλειψε το αμαρτωλό - για την εποχή εκείνη - επάγγελμα του τελώνη, αλλά και με χαρά φιλοξένησε τον Κύριο στο σπίτι του. Εκεί, μάλιστα, ήλθαν και πολλοί τελώνες και άλλοι αμαρτωλοί άνθρωποι, με τους οποίους ο Ιησούς συνέφαγε και συζήτησε. Οι φαραισαίοι, όμως, που είχαν πωρωμένη συνείδηση, όταν είδαν αυτή την ενέργεια του Κυρίου, αμέσως τον κατηγόρησαν ότι συντρώνει με τελώνες και αμαρτωλούς. Ο Ιησούς το άκουσε και είπε εκείνα τα θαυμάσια λόγια: «Οὐ γὰρ ἦλθον καλέσαι δικαίους, ἀλλὰ ἁμαρτωλούς εἰς μετάνοιαν» (Ματθαίου, θ' 13). Δηλαδή, λέει ο Κύριος, δεν ήλθα για να καλέσω εκείνους που νομίζουν τους εαυτούς τους δίκαιους, αλλά ήλθα να καλέσω τους αμαρτωλούς, για να μετανοήσουν και να σωθούν. Στο Ματθαίο οφείλει η Εκκλησία μας το πρώτο κατά σειρά στην Καινή Διαθήκη Ευαγγέλιο, που γράφτηκε το 64 μ.Χ. Ο Ματθαίος κατά την παράδοση κήρυξε το Ευαγγέλιο στην Αιθιοπία, όπου και πέθανε μαρτυρικά.

Apostle and Evangelist Matthew



The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, was also named Levi (Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27); he was one of the Twelve Apostles (Mark 3:18; Luke 6:45; Acts 1:13), and was brother of the Apostle James Alphaeus (Mark 2:14). He was a publican, or tax-collector for Rome, in a time when the Jews were under the rule of the Roman Empire. He lived in the Galilean city of Capernaum. When Matthew heard the voice of Jesus Christ: “Come, follow Me” (Mt. 9:9), left everything and followed the Savior. Christ and His disciples did not refuse Matthew’s invitation and they visited his house, where they shared table with the publican’s friends and acquaintances. Like the host, they were also publicans and known sinners. This event disturbed the pharisees and scribes a great deal. Publicans who collected taxes from their countrymen did this with great profit for themselves. Usually greedy and cruel people, the Jews

considered them pernicious betrayers of their country and religion. The word “publican” for the Jews had the connotation of “public sinner” and “idol-worshipper.” To even speak with a tax-collector was considered a sin, and to associate with one was defilement. But the Jewish teachers were not able to comprehend that the Lord had “come to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Mt. 9:13).

Matthew, acknowledging his sinfulness, repaid fourfold anyone he had cheated, and he distributed his remaining possessions to the poor, and he followed after Christ with the other apostles. Saint Matthew was attentive to the instructions of the Divine Teacher, he beheld His innumerable miracles, he went together with the Twelve Apostles preaching to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt. 10:6). He was a witness to the suffering, death, and Resurrection of the Savior, and of His glorious Ascension into Heaven.

Having received the grace of the Holy Spirit, which descended upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, Saint Matthew preached in Palestine for several years. At the request of the Jewish converts at Jerusalem, the holy Apostle Matthew wrote his Gospel describing the earthly life of the Savior, before leaving to preach the Gospel in faraway lands.

In the order of the books of the New Testament, the Gospel of Matthew comes first. Palestine is said to be the place where the Gospel was written. Saint Matthew wrote in Aramaic, and then it was translated into Greek. The Aramaic text has not survived, but many of the linguistic and cultural-historical peculiarities of the Greek translation give indications of it.

The Apostle Matthew preached among people who were awaiting the Messiah. His Gospel manifests itself as a vivid proof that Jesus Christ is the Messiah foretold by the prophets, and that there would not be another (Mt. 11:3).

The preaching and deeds of the Savior are presented by the evangelist in three divisions, constituting three aspects of the service of the Messiah: as Prophet and Law-Giver (Ch. 5-7), Lord over the world both visible and invisible (Ch. 8-25), and finally as High Priest offered as Sacrifice for the sins of all mankind (Ch. 26-27).

The theological content of the Gospel, besides the Christological themes, includes also the teaching about the Kingdom of God and about the Church, which the Lord sets forth in parables about the inner preparation for entering into the Kingdom (Ch. 5-7), about the worthiness of servers of the Church in the world (Ch. 10-11), about the signs of the Kingdom and its growth in the souls of mankind (Ch. 13), about the humility and simplicity of the inheritors of the Kingdom (Mt. 18:1-35; 19 13-30; 20:1-16; 25-27; 23:1-28), and about the eschatological revelations of the Kingdom in the Second Coming of Christ within the daily spiritual life of the Church (Ch. 24-25).

The Kingdom of Heaven and the Church are closely interconnected in the spiritual experience of Christianity: the Church is the historical embodiment of the Kingdom of Heaven in the world, and the Kingdom of Heaven is the Church of Christ in its eschatological perfection (Mt. 16:18-19; 28:18-20).

The holy Apostle brought the Gospel of Christ to Syria, Media, Persia, Parthia, and finishing his preaching in Ethiopia with a martyr’s death.

This land was inhabited by tribes of cannibals with primitive customs and beliefs. The holy Apostle Matthew converted some of the idol-worshippers to faith in Christ. He founded the Church and built a temple in the city of Mirmena, establishing there his companion Platon as bishop.

When the holy apostle was fervently entreating God for the conversion of the Ethiopians the Lord Himself appeared to him in the form of a youth. He gave him a staff, and commanded him to plant it at the doors of the church. The Lord said that a tree would grow from this staff and it would bear fruit, and from its roots would flow a stream of water. When the Ethiopians washed themselves in the water and ate the fruit, they lost their wild ways and became gentle and good.

When the holy apostle carried the staff towards the church, he was met by the wife and son of the ruler of the land, Fulvian, who were afflicted by unclean spirits. In the Name of Christ the holy apostle healed them. This miracle converted a number of the pagans to the Lord. But the ruler did not want his subjects to become Christians and cease worshiping the pagan gods. He accused the apostle of sorcery and gave orders to execute him.

They put Saint Matthew head downwards, piled up brushwood and ignited it. When the fire flared up, everyone then saw that the fire did not harm Saint Matthew. Then Fulvian gave orders to add more wood to the fire, and frenzied with boldness, he commanded to set up twelve idols around the fire. But the flames melted the idols and flared up toward Fulvian. The frightened Ethiopian turned to the saint with an entreaty for mercy, and by the prayer of the martyr the flame went out.

The body of the holy apostle remained unharmed, and he departed to the Lord.

The ruler Fulvian deeply repented of his deed, but still he had doubts. By his command, they put the body of Saint Matthew into an iron coffin and threw it into the sea. In doing this Fulvian said that if the God of Matthew would preserve the body of the apostle in the water as He preserved him in the fire, then this would be proper reason to worship this One True God.

That night the Apostle Matthew appeared to Bishop Platon in a dream, and commanded him to go with clergy to the shore of the sea and to find his body there. The righteous Fulvian and his retinue went with the bishop to the shore of the sea. The coffin carried by the waves was taken to the church built by the apostle. Then Fulvian begged forgiveness of the holy Apostle Matthew, after which Bishop Platon baptized him, giving him the name Matthew in obedience to a command of God.

Soon Saint Fulvian-Matthew abdicated his rule and became a presbyter. Upon the death of Bishop Platon, the Apostle Matthew appeared to him and exhorted him to head the Ethiopian Church. Having become a bishop, Saint Fulvian-Matthew toiled at preaching the Word of God, continuing the work of his heavenly patron.

Saint Gregory, Wonderworker of Neocaesarea

Saint Gregory the Wonderworker, Bishop of Neocaesarea, was born in the city of Neocaesarea (northern Asia Minor) into a pagan family. Having received a fine education, from his youth he strived for Truth, but the thinkers of antiquity were not able to quench his thirst for knowledge. Truth was revealed to him only in the Holy Gospel, and the youth became a Christian.

For the continuation of his studies Saint Gregory went to Alexandria, known then as a center for pagan and Christian learning. The youth, eager for knowledge, went to the Alexandrian Catechetical School, where the presbyter Origen taught. Origen was a famous teacher, possessing a great strength of mind and profound knowledge. Saint Gregory became a student of Origen. Afterwards, the saint wrote about his mentor: "This man received from God a sublime gift, to be an interpreter of the Word of God for people, to apprehend the Word of God, as God Himself did use it, and to explain it to people, insofar as they were able to understand it." Saint Gregory studied for eight years with Origen, and was baptized by him.

The ascetic life of Saint Gregory, his continence, purity and lack of covetousness aroused envy among his conceited and sin-loving peers, pagans that they were, and they decided to slander Saint Gregory. Once, when he was conversing with philosophers and teachers in the city square, a notorious harlot came up to him and demanded payment for the sin he had supposedly committed with her. At first Saint Gregory gently remonstrated with her, saying that she perhaps mistook him for someone else. But the profligate woman would not be quieted. He then

asked a friend to give her the money. Just as the woman took the unjust payment, she immediately fell to the ground in a demonic fit, and the fraud became evident. Saint Gregory said a prayer over her, and the devil left her. This was the beginning of Saint Gregory's miracles.

Having returned to Neocaesarea, the saint fled from the worldly affairs into which influential townsmen persistently sought to push him. He went into the desert, where by fasting and prayer he attained to high spiritual accomplishment and the gifts of clairvoyance and prophecy. Saint Gregory loved life in the wilderness and wanted to remain in solitude until the end of his days, but the Lord willed otherwise.

The bishop of the Cappadocian city of Amasea, Thedimos, having learned of Saint Gregory's ascetic life, decided to have him made Bishop of Neocaesarea. But having foreseen in spirit the intent of Bishop Thedimos, the saint hid himself from the messengers of the bishop who were entrusted to find him. Then Bishop Thedimos ordained the absent saint as Bishop of Neocaesarea, beseeching the Lord that He Himself would sanctify the unusual ordination. Saint Gregory perceived the extraordinary event as a manifestation of the will of God and he did not dare to protest. This episode in the life of Saint Gregory was recorded by Saint Gregory of Nyssa (January 10). He relates that Saint Gregory of Neocaesarea received the episcopal dignity only after Bishop Thedimos of Amasea performed all the canonical rites over him.

During this time, the heresy of Sabellius and Paul of Samosata began to spread. They taught falsely concerning the Holy Trinity. Saint Gregory prayed fervently and diligently imploring God and His most

pure Mother to reveal to him the true faith. The All-Holy Virgin Mary appeared to him, radiant like the sun, and with Her was the Apostle John the Theologian dressed in archepiscopal vestments.

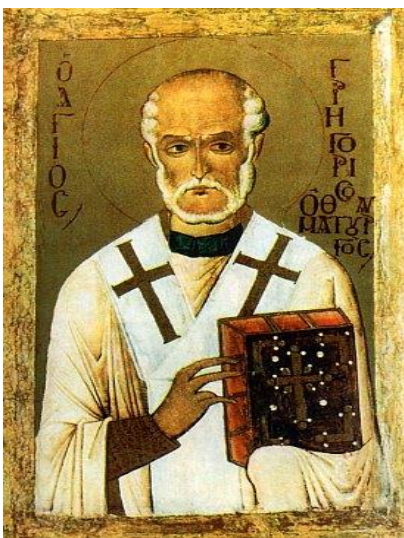
By the command of the Mother of God, the Apostle John taught the saint how to correctly and properly confess the Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Saint Gregory wrote down everything that Saint John the Theologian revealed to him. The Mystery of the Symbol of the Faith, written down by Saint Gregory of Neocaesarea, is a great divine revelation in the history of the Church. The teaching about the Holy Trinity in Orthodox Theology is based on it. Subsequently it was used by the holy Fathers of the Church: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and Gregory of Nyssa. The Symbol of Saint Gregory of Neocaesarea was later examined and affirmed in the year 325 by the First Ecumenical Council, showing his enduring significance for Orthodoxy.

Having become a bishop, Saint Gregory set off to Neocaesarea. Along the way from Amasea he expelled devils from a pagan temple, the priest of which he converted to Christ. The convert was witness to still another miracle of the saint, at his word a large stone shifted from its place.

The preaching of the saint was direct, lively and fruitful. He taught and worked miracles in the name of Christ: he healed the sick, he helped the needy, he settled quarrels and complaints. Two brothers sharing an inheritance were not able to agree over the property of their dead father. There was a large lake over which they argued, for each of the brothers wanted the lake for himself. They both gathered their friends together,

and were ready to come to blows. Saint Gregory persuaded them to delay their fight until the following day, and he himself prayed all night long at the shore of the lake which sparked the quarrel. When dawn broke, everyone saw that the lake had dried up or gone underground. Through the intense prayer of the saint, now there was only a stream, and its course defined the boundary line. Another time, during the construction of a church, he commanded a hill to move and make room at the place of the foundation. When a persecution against Christians began under the emperor Decius (249-251), Saint Gregory led his flock to a faraway mountain. A certain pagan, knowing about the hiding place of the Christians, informed the persecutors. Soldiers surrounded the mountain. The saint went out into an open place, raised up his hands to heaven and ordered to his deacon to do the same. The soldiers searched the whole mountain, and they went several times right past those praying, but not seeing them, they gave up and went away. In the city they reported that there was nowhere to hide on the mountain: no one was there, and only two trees stood beside each other. The informer was struck with amazement, he repented of his ways and became a fervent Christian.

Saint Gregory returned to Neocaesarea after the end of the persecution. By his blessing church Feasts were established in honor of the martyrs who had suffered for Christ. By his saintly life, his effective preaching, working of miracles and graced guiding of his flock, the saint steadily increased the number of converts to Christ. When Saint Gregory first ascended his cathedra, there were only seventeen Christians in Neocaesarea. At his death, only seventeen pagans remained in the city.



Ο Άγιος Γρηγόριος γεννήθηκε περίπου το 210 με 215 μ.Χ. Αρχικά ονομαζόταν Θεόδωρος και οι γονείς του ήταν Έλληνες ειδωλολάτρες και είχαν μεγάλη κοινωνική θέση στη Νεοκαισάρεια του Πόντου (γνωστή στην αρχαιότητα και ως Καβηρία, Διάσπολις και Σεβαστή, το σημερινό Νικσάρ).

Μετά τη στοιχειώδη εκπαίδευση του, ο Άγιος Γρηγόριος μαζί με τον αδελφό του Γρηγόριο ή (σύμφωνα με μερικές αγιολογικές πηγές) Αθηνόδωρο, (βλέπε και για τους δύο στις [7 Νοεμβρίου](#)) πήγαν στη Βηρυτό για να σπουδάσουν νομικά. Ο Θεός όμως είχε άλλα σχέδια για το Γρηγόριο. Όταν περνούσε από την Καισαρεία, άκουσε το δεινό ερμηνευτή των Γραφών, Ωριγένη. Ο Γρηγόριος τόσο πολύ ενθουσιάστηκε μαζί του, ώστε άφησε τα νομικά και διετέλεσε επί χρόνια μαθητής του. Ονομαστός είναι ο αποχαιρετιστήριος λόγος του μετά το πέρας των σπουδών του. Εκεί φαίνεται η μεγάλη αξία του Ωριγένη, σαν διδασκάλου και η βαθειά ευγνωμοσύνη του Γρηγορίου,

σαν μαθητού. «Άπασαν προσήγε την παρ' αυτού τέχνην και επιμέλειαν και κατειργάσατο ημάς», γράφει για το διδάσκαλό του.

Κατόπιν πήγε στην Αλεξάνδρεια, και από εκεί επέστρεψε στη Νεοκαισάρεια με πλήρη θεολογική μόρφωση και άγιο ζήλο. Τότε ο Μητροπολίτης Αμασειάς Φαίδημος διέκρινε τα χαρίσματα του και τον έκανε επίσκοπο Νεοκαισαρείας η οποία είχε μόνο 17 χριστιανούς! Ο Γρηγόριος, όμως, δεν το θεώρησε υποτιμητικό. Βασιζόταν πολύ στη δύναμη της θείας χάριτος και πάντα είχε στο μυαλό του τα ενθαρρυντικά λόγια του θείου Παύλου: «Ἐνδυναμοῦ ἐν τῇ χάριτι τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ» (Β' πρὸς Τιμόθεον, β' 1), δηλαδή να ενδυναμώνεσαι με τη χάρη που μας δίνεται από τη σχέση και την ένωση μας με τον Ιησού Χριστό. Πράγματι, με τη χάρη του Θεού, ο Γρηγόριος έκανε καταπληκτικό αγώνα και εκχριστιάνισε σχεδόν όλη την πόλη. Και ενώ είχε παραλάβει 17 χριστιανούς, όταν πέθανε ειρηνικά στα τέλη του 270 μ.Χ. είχαν απομείνει στην επισκοπική του περιφέρεια μόνο 17 ειδωλολάτρες! Υπήρξε δε τόσο εγκρατής στη γλώσσα του, ώστε δεν βγήκε απ' αυτή κανένας κακός, περιττός ή αργός λόγος. Γι' αυτό και ο Θεός τον κόσμησε και με το χάρισμα της θαυματουργίας.

Στον Γρηγόριο αποδίδεται η καθιέρωση εορτασμών προς τιμήν των μαρτύρων, των διδασκαλιών σχετικά με τους αγίους και η τήρηση εορτών για τους αγίους, που αποτέλεσε επίσης μέσο για να προσελκύσει ειδωλολάτρες στην εκκλησία.

Τον βίο του Αγίου Γρηγορίου του θαυματουργού συνέγραψε ο Άγιος Γρηγόριος ο Επίσκοπος Νύσσης, αδελφός του Μεγάλου Βασιλείου, ο οποίος αποτελεί την πιο αξιόπιστη βιογραφική πηγή εν μέσω ασαφειών και θρύλων. Στον εγκωμιαστικό του λόγο προς τον Άγιο, τον ονομάζει

Μέγα και θεωρείται ότι ήταν το πρώτο άτομο που είναι γνωστό ότι έλαβε όραμα της Παναγίας (μαζί με τον Ιωάννη τον Βαπτιστή), βάσει του οποίου κατέγραψε μια ομολογία σχετικά με το δόγμα της Αγίας Τριάδας. Επίσης, ο Άγιος Γρηγόριος Επίσκοπος Νύσσης αναφέρει ότι ο ίδιος μεγάλωσε ακούοντας διηγήσεις και περιγραφές περιστατικών της ζωής του Αγίου Γρηγορίου του Θαυματουργού, καθώς και τους θεοπνεύστους λόγους του, από την γιαγιά του Μακρίνα η οποία ήταν μαθήτρια και πνευματικό παιδί του Αγίου Γρηγορίου Νεοκαισαρείας. Αλλά και ο Μέγας Βασίλειος σ' ένα του λόγο λέει για τον Γρηγόριο τον θαυματουργό, ότι για τα πνευματικά του χαρίσματα και την χάρη των θαυμάτων «δεύτερος Μωϋσής παρ' αὐτῶν τῶν ἐχθρῶν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἀνηγορεύετο».

Τα έργα του Γρηγορίου έχουν διασωθεί σε ιδιαίτερα αποσπασματική κατάσταση. Ονομαστός παραμένει ο αποχαιρετιστήριος λόγος του Εἰς Ωριγένην Προσφωνητικός μετά το πέρας των σπουδών του, όπου εξυμνείται η διδακτική δεινότητα του Ωριγένη. Άλλα έργα του που σώζονται είναι η Επιστολή Κανονική Περί των ἐν τῇ Καταδρομῇ τῶν Βαρβάρων Εἰδωλόθυτα Φαγόντων ἢ καὶ Ἔτερα τινὰ Πλημμελησάντων, Προς Τατιανόν Περί Ψυχῆς Λόγος Κεφαλαιώδης, Λόγοι Εἰς τον Ευαγγελισμόν της Παναγίας Θεοτόκου και Αεί Παρθένου της Μαρίας, Λόγος εἰς τους Αγίους Πάντας, Ομιλία Εἰς τον Εκκλησιαστήν, αποσπάσματα ἀπό σχολιολόγια στο Ευαγγέλιο του Ματθαίου, στον Ιερεμία και στον Ιώβ.

ΑΓΙΟΣ ΠΛΑΤΩΝ, ΜΑΡΤΥΣ



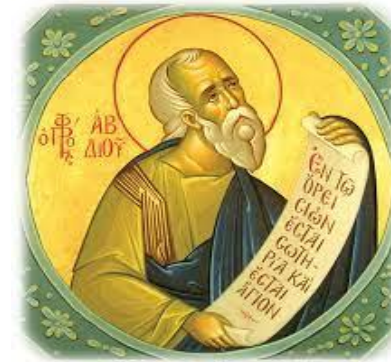
Ο Άγιος Πλάτωνας έζησε στα τέλη του 3ου αιώνα μ.Χ. Είχε καταγωγή από την Άγκυρα της Γαλατίας της Μικράς Ασίας, και ήταν αδελφός του μάρτυρα Αντιόχου. Σε νεαρή ηλικία τον συνέλαβαν οι ειδωλολάτρες, διότι διακήρυττε την πίστη του στον Ιησού Χριστό και τον οδήγησαν μπροστά στον ηγεμόνα Αγριππίνο. Ο Αγριππίνος βλέποντας την ωραιότητα του νέου και γνωρίζοντας ότι κατείχε περιουσία, προσπάθησε να τον ελκύσει με κολακείες. Όμως ο Άγιος Πλάτων αρνήθηκε και συνέχισε να διακηρύττει την πίστη του στον Έναν και μοναδικό Θεό. Αφού ο ηγεμόνας είδε ότι δεν κατάφερε να τον αλλαξοπιστήσει δελεάζοντάς τον, τον απείλησε με μαρτύρια. Παρ' όλα ταύτα ο Άγιος Πλάτων παρέμεινε σταθερός στην πίστη του. Έτσι ο Αγριππίνος διέταξε να τον μαστιγώσουν ανελέητα και ύστερα να τον βασανίσουν με πυρωμένες ράβδους. Ο Άγιος διατήρησε όλη του την πίστη και δεν έπαψε να ομολογεί τον Ιησού Χριστό, γι' αυτό διατάχθηκε ο αποκεφαλισμός του (306 μ.Χ.). Έτσι λοιπόν ο Άγιος μεγαλομάρτυρας Πλάτωνας παρέδωσε το πνεύμα του στον Κύριο και τιμήθηκε με το αμάραντο στέφανο του μαρτυρίου.

Martyr Platon of Ancyra

The Holy Martyr Platon, brother of the holy Martyr Antiochus the Physician (July 16), was born at the city of Ancyra in Galatia. While still a youth he left home and went through the cities, preaching the Word of God to pagans, amazing his audience with the persuasiveness and beauty of his speech, and his profound knowledge of Greek learning.

Because of his preaching he was arrested and brought for trial to the temple of Zeus before the governor Agrippinus. At first, the judge attempted to persuade the saint to turn away from Christ by flattery. He assured the youth that he might be on a par of intellect with the greatest of the philosophers Plato, if only he worshipped also the pagan gods. To this Saint Platon answered, that the wisdom of the philosopher, although great, was but ephemeral and limited, whereas the true, eternal and unbounded wisdom comprised the Gospel teachings. Then the judge promised to give him his beautiful niece for his wife if he would deny Christ. He also threatened him with torture and death if he refused. Saint Platon replied that he chose a temporal death for the sake of eternal life. The patience of the governor was exhausted, and he gave orders to mercilessly beat the martyr, and then send him off to prison. When they led Saint Platon off to prison, he turned to the people gathered about the temple, and he called on them not to forsake the Christian Faith. Seven days later they again led the Martyr Platon for trial before Agrippinus in the temple of Zeus, where they had the implements of torture already prepared: boiling cauldrons, red-hot iron and sharp hooks. The judge offered the martyr a choice: either to offer

sacrifice to the pagan gods, or to feel the effects of these implements of torture on his body. Again the saint steadfastly refused to worship idols, and after his tortures they threw him in prison for eighteen more days without bread or water. But seeing that this did not shake the martyr, they offered him his life and freedom if he would only say, “Great is the god Apollo.” The martyr refused to deny Christ or to sacrifice to the idols. Therefore, Agrippinus ordered the holy Martyr Platon to be beheaded.



Ο Προφήτης Αβδιού (ή Οβδιού) που το όνομα του σημαίνει «δούλος Κυρίου», έζησε περί το 800 π.Χ., (κατ' άλλη εκδοχή στο δεύτερο μισό του βου αιώνα π.Χ.), και είναι ένας από τους δώδεκα μικρούς λεγόμενους προφήτες. Ο Προφήτης Αβδιού καταγόταν από τη Συχέμ (εκ του αγρού Βηθοχαράμ ή Βαθαχαράμ), και με τη σύντομη προφητεία του αυστηρά παρατηρεί με ισχυρές ποιητικές εκφράσεις την υπερηφάνεια και την πτώση του Ισραήλ. Να τι λέει χαρακτηριστικά για την υπερηφάνεια: «Υπερηφάνια τῆς καρδίας σου ἐπῆρε σε κατασκηνοῦντα ἐν ταῖς ὄπαῖς τῶν πετρῶν, ὑψῶν κατοικίαν αὐτοῦ,

λέγων ἐν καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ - τίς κατάξει με ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν; ἐὰν μετεωρισθῆς ὡς ἀετὸς καὶ ἐὰν ἀνὰ μέσον τῶν ἄστρον θῆς νοσσιᾶν σου, ἐκεῖθεν κατάξω σε, λέγει Κύριος» (Οβδιού, α' 3,4). Δηλαδή, η υπερηφάνεια της καρδιάς σου σε έκανε να φρονεῖς πολύ υψηλά για τον εαυτό σου, ὅτι τάχα κατοικεῖς σε φαράγγια και σπηλιές των ορέων και γενικά ἀπόρθητες περιοχές. Έχεις κτίσει την κατοικία σου σε πολύ ὕψος, πιστεύεις ὅτι εἶσαι ισχυρός και ἀνίκητος και λες ἀπό μέσα σου; Ποιος θα μπορέσει να με κατεβάσει στη γη; Και αν ακόμα πετάξεις σε μεγάλα ὕψη σαν τον αετό, και αν στήσεις τη φωλιά σου ψηλά ανάμεσα στ' αστέρια, ἀπό 'κει θα σε καταρρίψω και θα σε κατεβάσω, λέγει ὁ Κύριος. Ἀς προσέξουμε, λοιπόν, τα λόγια του προφήτη και ας καλλιεργούμε το θεμέλιο των αρετῶν, που εἶναι η ταπεινώση. Να αναφέρουμε ἐπίσης, ὅτι ὁ Ἀβδιού ἦταν μαθητῆς του προφήτου Ηλίου, ἐπὶ της βασιλείας Οχοζία, ὁ ὁποῖος ἔστειλε τον Ἀβδιού στον Ηλία για να τον πείσει να κατέβει ἀπό το βουνό προς τον βασιλιά. Μετά την μετάβαση του Ηλία στον Οχοζία, ὁ Ἀβδιού, παραιτήθηκε ἀπό τη θέση του πεντηκοντάρχου, ἀκολούθησε τον προφήτη Ηλία και τον υπηρετούσε. Ὅταν πέθανε ετάφη στον τάφο των πατέρων του.

Prophet Obadiah (Abdia)

The holy Prophet Obadiah [or Abdia] is the fourth of the Twelve Minor Prophets, and he lived during the ninth century B.C. He was from the village of Betharam, near Sichem, and he served as steward of the impious Israelite King Ahab. In those days the whole of Israel had turned away from the true God and had begun to offer sacrifice to Baal,

but Obadiah faithfully served the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in secret.

When Ahab's wife, the impious and dissolute Jezebel, hunted down all the prophets of the Lord (because of her quarrel with the Prophet Elias), Obadiah gave them shelter and food (3/1 Kgs 18:3 ff). Ahab's successor King Okhoziah [Ahaziah] sent three detachments of soldiers to arrest the holy Prophet Elias (July 20). One of these detachments was headed by the holy Prophet Obadiah. Through the prayer of the Prophet Elias, two of the detachments were consumed by heavenly fire, but Obadiah and his detachment were spared by the Lord (4/2 Kgs 1).

From that moment Obadiah resigned from military service and became a follower of the Prophet Elias. Afterward, he himself received the gift of prophecy. The God-inspired work of the Prophet Obadiah is the fourth of the Books of the Twelve Minor Prophets in the Bible, and contains predictions about the future salvation of the Gentiles (Vs. 15) and that the Savior would come forth from Sion (Vs. 17). The holy Prophet Obadiah, whose name means servant (or worshipper) of the Lord, was buried in Samaria.

In iconography, the Prophet Obadiah is depicted as a grey-haired old man with a rounded beard. His scroll reads: "In that day, saith the Lord, I shall destroy the wise men out of Idumea."(Obadiah 8).

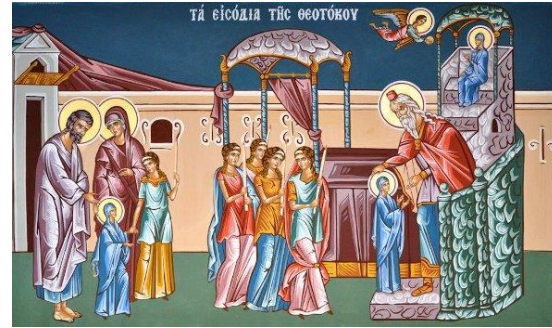
Forefeast of the Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Theotokos



The Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple has only one day of prefeast. The hymns for today praise Saint Anna for bringing her daughter, the living temple of God, to the Temple in Jerusalem.

The three Old Testament readings at Great Vespers refer to the Temple. The first lesson (Exodus 40:1-5, 9-10, 16, 34-35) refers to the arrangement of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation (a portable sanctuary which was carried by the Israelites in their wanderings). The second lesson (III Kings/I Kings 7:51; 8:1, 3-7, 9-11) describes the dedication of Solomon's Temple. The third lesson (Ezekiel 43:27-44:4) speaks of the gate of the sanctuary which faces east. God enters through this gate, which is shut so that no one else can enter by it.

The entrance of the Theotokos. 21st of November



The Entrance of the Ever Virgin Mary and Theotokos in God's Temple is considered to be one of the most important events in the History of Salvation. All the Orthodox Church around the world is celebrating the Entrance of the Mother of God, the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary, into the Holy of Holies.

The faithful and all the heavenly Powers conjoin and concelebrate. Earth rejoices and the faithful Orthodox Christians gather to honor with all piety and respect the all praised Mother of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We venerate the holy icon of the Theotokos. With a humble and broken heart all those who suffer address their prayers to Her, in order to express their needs and beseech Her protection and help. All true faithful will bless Her, they shall sing hymns to Her and all generations will glorify Her. The Mother of God and Ever Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, is the source of our sanctification and salvation, for She had gave birth to the incarnated Son and Word of God. The Entrance of the Ever Virgin Mary consist the preparation of the salvation of mankind. She enters the Holy of Holies, where only the High Priest was allowed to enter only once a year. The Prophet

Zacharias, the father of St John the Forerunner and Baptist, and many young virgins receive Mary, when she was only three years of age, dedicated to God by Her parents Joachim and Anna.

The Mother of God, Mary, enters the Holy of Holies, where She was honored to become the living Ark and Temple of God. She is been fed by Archangel Gabriel with heavenly food. She enters the Holy of Holies, where She surpassed in holiness the holiness of all the Angelical Hosts. She enters the Holy of Holies, as a golden censer, for She had conceived within Her holy womb all the Fire of the Deity. She enters the Holy of Holies, as a golden jug which contains the Heavenly Manna, the Heavenly Bread, the God-Man Jesus Christ. She enters the Holy of Holies and She nurtures the Creator and Provider of all the World.

The Ever Virgin Mary and Theotokos became the Mother of the Son and Word of God. Considering Her sacred and holy personality, the holy Prophets spoke of. Moses foresaw Her on Mount Sinai as the flaming but not burning Bush. Jacob foresaw Her as the Ladder, which united earth and heaven. Daniel, foresaw Her as the Holy Mountain.

Today, the Ever Virgin and Mother of God, Mary, is entering into the most holy places of the earthly Temple of God in Jerusalem; and is honored to become the most splendid Living Temple of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God. She departs from the world and enters into the Heavenly Kingdom. Angels and men accompany Her; and the Mother of God is presented as a Queen dressed in gold.

Many important women have passed from history into the abyss of forgetfulness. Many great queens with amazing power were erased and vanished from the memory of men. But, the name of the Ever

Virgin Mary and Theotokos remains immortal to the ages of ages. The name of the Mother of God moves, comforts and saves all those who with faith turn to Her.

The Holy Orthodox Church of God in all parts of the Earth chants hymns and songs to proclaim Her majesty. The prayers of the faithful are heard everywhere. The prophecy, which the Mother of God announced to Her cousin Elisabeth, the mother of St John the Baptist, "hence all generations will call Me blessed", is being fulfilled.

The glory and the majesty of the Mother of God are found in Her extreme humbleness. In order that one can participate in God's glory, he must go through the narrow path of humbleness. The Mother of God, although Her majesty, She never boasted or felt proud. She remained the humble Daughter, the long-suffering Mother, who for the sake of Her only Begotten Son, took upon Herself all the responsibilities for the sake of mankind's salvation. She was a martyr and bereaved Mother, who faced the unjust suspicious thoughts of St Joseph.

The supernatural birth of Her Son was followed by Herod's murderous persecution and the refuge in the land of Egypt. The numerous miracles and the hailing of the people are followed by the insinuations and slanders by the Pharisees and Scribes of Israel, who had as their final goal to bring upon the Mother's of God heart the bitter venom.

The cruel and humiliating death of Her Son, caused Her to suffer. She saw Her child on the Cross bleeding and struggling with death. She saw Him dead, necked and unburied. What pain and sadness was felt in Her motherly heart! At that moment the prophecy of St Symeon was fulfilled, who said to Her, "and through your heart a double edged

sword will pass through”. But, the Ever Virgin Mary did not despair; neither became short hearted, nor became angry because of the unjust slaughtering of Her Son. She suffered with patience the sufferings of Her Child as though they were Her own sufferings.

The Ever Virgin Mary and Mother of God, gives us the example which we should follow in order that we might be glorified also. Her humble state raised Her to the highest level of any heavenly glory. The Entrance of the Mother of God is the introduction of man’s salvation, which opened the Gates of Heaven. She became the precious jewel of Heaven, for She became the Gate of Heaven. She was the faithful handmaiden of the Lord, who suffered pain for whatever the Saviour of the world suffered. She is the safe port of all those who are in distress.

Today, we should take as an example the life and personality of the Ever Virgin Mary. In our good moments, as well as in our bad moments, when we face the problems of life, we should turn to our Protector, the Mother of God and Ever Virgin Mary.

The Mother of God invites us all to enter into the Holy of Holies. She invites us to enter accompanied with the virtues and to become living temples of Her Son and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Through our holy life, we must honor today’s feast. The Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple must become a reason for us to experience our own entrance into the temple of virtues. Amen.

Η εν τω Ναώ είσοδος της Υπεραγίας Θεοτόκου

Είναί αριστουργηματική η εκκλησιαστική ποίηση για το γεγονός των Εισοδίων της Θεοτόκου στον Ναό του Σολομώντος, μολονότι δεν καταγράφεται το περιστατικό στα Ευαγγέλια. Η Εκκλησία μας

θεωρεί ως αληθές το περιστατικό της προσφοράς και αφιέρωσης της μικρής Μαριάμ από τους γονείς της Ιωακείμ και Άννας στον Κύριο, μέσα στον Ναό, όταν εκείνη ήταν ακόμη παιδούλα τριών ετών, με την προοπτική της ετοιμασίας της για να γίνει η μητέρα του ίδιου του Θεού ως ανθρώπου. Και με το δεδομένο αυτό κατέγραψε διά των υμνογράφων της όλες τις διαστάσεις και του συγκεκριμένου περιστατικού, αλλά και της βαθιάς θεολογίας που το συνοδεύει. Από τους ωραιότερους λοιπόν στίχους της εορτής θεωρούμε εκείνους που αναφέρονται στην αγία Άννα, όταν κατευοδώνει την κόρη της Μαριάμ με τα λόγια που δείχνουν το νόημα της εκεί πιά ζωής και παρουσίας της. «Άπιθι, τέκνον, – λέει η μάνα στην κόρη -, τω Δοτήρι γενήθητι και ανάθημα και ευόδες θυμίαμα. Είσελθε εις τα άδυστα και γνώθι μυστήρια, και ετοιμάζου γενέσθαι του Ιησού οικητήριον τερπνόν και ωραίον, του παρέχοντος τω κόσμω το μέγα έλεος» (απόστιχα του εσπερινού). Δηλαδή: Πήγαινε, παιδί μου, γίνε για τον Δοτήρα Θεό και προσφορά κι αφιέρωμα, αλλά και ευωδιαστό θυμίαμα. Μπες μέσα στ’ άδυστα των Αγίων του Ναού και γνώρισε τα μυστήρια του Θεού, κι ετοιμάσου να γίνεις κατοικητήριο του Ιησού, τερπνό και ωραίο, του Ιησού που παρέχει ως Θεός στον κόσμο το μέγα έλεος. **Γιατί στεκόμαστε ιδιαιτέρως στους συγκεκριμένους στίχους; Διότι·** 1. τονίζουν τον σκοπό των Εισοδίων της μικρής Μαριάμ στον Ναό: εισέρχεται όχι απλώς γιατί έπρεπε να εκπληρωθεί κάποιο τάμα των γονιών της ή για να προφυλαχτεί από την κακότητα του κόσμου λόγω της αδυναμίας των γονιών αυτών από τα γηρατειά τους, αλλά για να περάσει το προβλεπόμενο διάστημα της ζωής της μέσα στον οίκο Κυρίου, προκειμένου να ετοιμαστεί για το

συγκλονιστικότερο και πέραν κάθε ανθρωπίνης αντίληψης και σύλληψης μυστήριο: να γίνει η μητέρα του Θεού ως άνθρωπου – ο Ευαγγελισμός της έχει ακριβώς την αρχή της, πέραν βεβαίως της Γεννήσεώς της, στο συγκεκριμένο γεγονός: ο αρχάγγελος Γαβριήλ που θα ευαγγελιστεί αργότερα τη σάρκωση του Θεού, ο ίδιος την τρέφει μέσα στα άγια των αγίων.

Και 2. Καθορίζεται από τα λόγια της αγίας Άννας η μέθοδος και ο τρόπος της ετοιμασίας της Μαριάμ: θα γίνεις η Παναγία η μητέρα του Θεού, όταν θα γίνεις όχι μόνο το αφιέρωμα και η προσφορά για Εκείνον, αλλά και το ευωδιαστό λιβάνι. Κι έχουν ιδιαίτερη σημασία τα λόγια αυτά της μητέρας Άννας, γιατί και στην Παλαιά Διαθήκη βεβαίως, αλλά και μετέπειτα σ' όλη τη χριστιανική ιστορία, μπορεί κάποιος να προσφέρει πράγματα ή και τον ίδιο τον εαυτό του στον Θεό, αλλ' όχι με τον σωστό τρόπο. Πόσες φορές δεν ακούμε τον αυστηρό λόγο των Προφητών, οι οποίοι στηλίτευαν τις προσφορές και τα αφιερώματα των Ιουδαίων, γιατί προσφέρονταν όχι με καθαρή καρδιά; «Αποστρέφω το πρόσωπό μου από τις προσφορές σας – λέει αίφνης Κύριος ο Θεός στους Ιουδαίους διά του προφήτου Ησαΐου – γιατί τα χέρια σας στάζουν από το αίμα των αδικιών σας κατά των συνανθρώπων σας». Και πιο πίσω βεβαίως θυμάται κανείς το τραγικό λόγω της συνέχειάς του περιστατικό των προσφορών και αναθημάτων στον Θεό των αδελφών Κάιν και Άβελ: πρόσφεραν και οι δύο προσφορές, μα ευλογήθηκε από τον Κύριο μόνον ο Άβελ· γιατί του Κάιν οι προσφορές ήταν τα περισσεύματα των καρπών του και όχι οι απαρχές. Κι από τη μετέπειτα χριστιανική ιστορία είναι αρκετή η

μνημόνευση των λόγων του ίδιου του Κυρίου, όταν επισημαίνει ότι το δίληπτο της χήρας συνιστά τη μεγαλύτερη προσφορά, γιατί προέρχεται από το υστέρημα και όχι από το περίσσειμά της· ή ακόμη τραγικότερα το «παράδοξο» όπως ακούγεται λόγιο του αποστόλου Παύλου, ο οποίος στον ύμνο της αγάπης του αποκαλύπτει: «και εάν παραδώ το σώμά μου ίνα καυθήσωμαι, αγάπην δε μη έχω, ουδέν ωφελούμαι». Μαρτύριο (!) χωρίς αντίκρυσμα κι ωφέλεια! Λοιπόν η κάθε προσφορά στον Θεό είναι όντως προσφορά αποδεκτή από Αυτόν, όταν γίνεται με τον σωστό τρόπο, δηλαδή προσφέρεται από καρδιά που αγαπά τον Θεό, κάτι που συνιστά όντως λιβάνι ευωδιαστό για τον Κύριο. Κι είναι ακριβώς εκείνο που αποτελεί και το νόημα της συγκεκριμένης εορτής των Εισοδίων και για εμάς τους πιστούς: Με το δεδομένο ότι σκοπό έχουμε να σαρκώνουμε τον Κύριο στην ύπαρξή μας, να γινόμαστε δηλαδή Παναγίες, απαιτείται όχι μόνο η προσφορά του εαυτού μας διά του αγίου βαπτίσματος και των λοιπών «αγωνισμάτων» και ασκήσεών μας, αλλά και η σωστή και ορθή προσφορά αυτή. Είμαστε δηλαδή χριστιανοί όχι γιατί απλώς βρεθήκαμε βαπτισμένοι στην Εκκλησία κι ούτε γιατί επιτελούμε ορισμένα τυπικά καθήκοντα, όπως του εκκλησιασμού μας, της νηστείας μας, κάποιων ελεημοσύνων μας – το στοιχείο του «αναθήματός» μας – αλλά γιατί η όλη βιοτή μας είναι τέτοια που ο Κύριος την αισθάνεται ως ευωδιαστό λιβάνι ενώπιόν Του. Κι αυτό σημαίνει, όπως αναφέραμε, καθαρή καρδιά και αδιάκοπη επαγρύπνηση να βρισκόμαστε πάνω στις άγιες εντολές Του. Τότε το χαρμόσυνο στοιχείο που περικλείει η εορτή, γίνεται χαρμοσύνη κι ευφροσύνη και για εμάς.



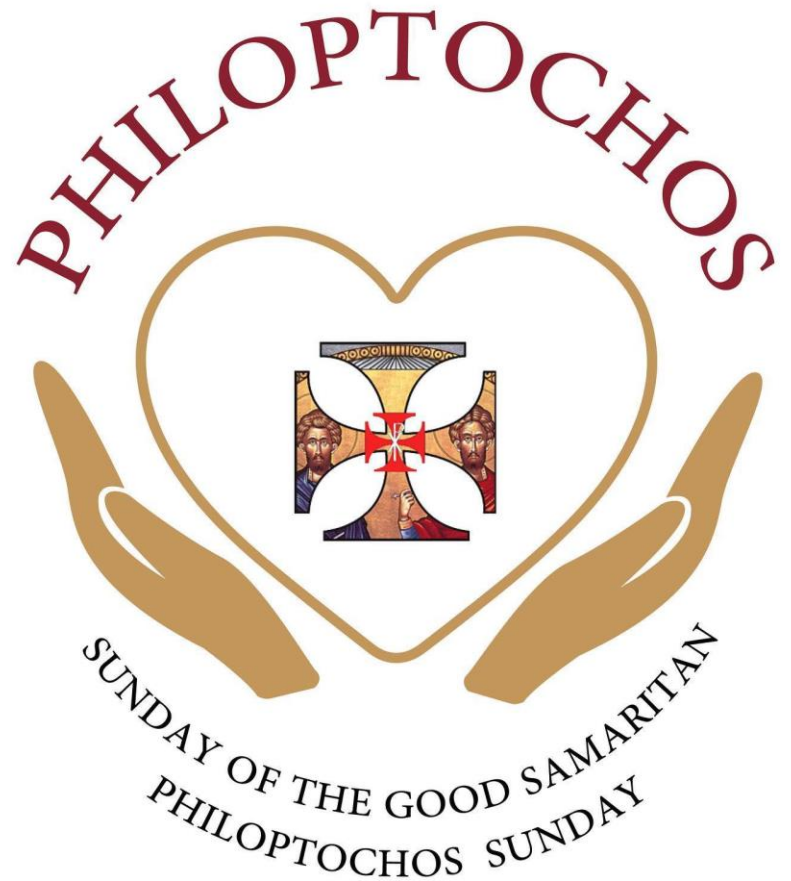
Philoptochos is having a
Food Drive for Thanksgiving.

Please donate and help us
contribute to those in need.

Boxes for canned and dry goods,
toiletries, baby food and paper goods
can be found outside the bookstore.



November 14, 2021, "Philoptochos Sunday"



Ascension Greek Orthodox Church
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THE WEEKLY BULLETIN

SUNDAY, November 14th, 2021
8th Sunday of Luke

ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ, 14 Νοεμβρίου, 2021
Η' Λουκά

SACRAMENTS— ΜΥΣΤΗΡΙΑ

2:30 p.m. Wedding

George Mandilas
&
Angella Giannacopoulos

MEMORIAL SERVICES/ ΜΝΗΜΟΣΥΝΑ

Μέλη της Φιλοπτώχου
Members of the Philoptochos

40 μέρες: Μαρία Λιγνού
40 days: Maria Lignos

1 χρόνος: Φώτιος Πούλος
1 year: Fotios Poulos

18 χρόνια: Αικατερίνη Θωμά
18 years: Aikerini Thomas

22 χρόνια: Ανδρέας Δημητρίου
22 years: Andreas Dimitriou

*Ο καφές προσφέρεται από τις οικογένειες
Λιγνού, Πολέμη και Πούλου που τελούν τα μνημόσυνα
εις μνήμη των κεκοιμημένων*

*The coffee is offered by the Lignos, Polemis & Poulos
Families that have the Memorial Services.*