

No matter how long you might stay at the spring, you would always be beginning to see the water. For the water never stops flowing, and it is always beginning to bubble up again. It is the same with one who fixes his gaze on the infinite beauty of God. It is constantly being discovered anew, and it is always seen as something new and strange in comparison to what the mind has always understood. And as God continues to reveal himself, man continues to wonder...

Saint Gregory of Nyssa



**7 July is the Seventh
Sunday of Matthew**

Matins Gospel: John 20:1-10

Epistle: Romans 15:1-7

Gospel: Matthew 9:27-35

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

Angelic powers were above Thy tomb, and they that guarded Thee became as dead. And Mary stood by the grave seeking Thine immaculate Body. Thou hast despoiled Hades and wast not tried thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst grant us life. O Thou Who didst arise from the dead, Lord, glory be to Thee.

Seasonal Kontakion:

You were transfigured upon the mount, O Christ our God, and Your disciples, in so far as they could bear, beheld Your glory. Thus, when they see You crucified, they may understand Your voluntary passion, and proclaim to the world that You are truly the effulgence of the Father.

Readings and saints for this week:

Monday, 8 August: 1 Corinthians 9:13-18; Matthew 16:1-6
Emilian the Confessor; Myronus, Bp. Of Crete

Tuesday, 9 August: Acts 1:12-17, 21-26; Matthew 16:6-12
Matthias; Anthony of Alexandria

Wednesday, 10 August: 1 Corinthians 10:12-22; Matthew 16:20-24
Martyr Archdeacon Laurence; Chitus of Athens

Thursday, 11 August: 1 Corinthians 10:28-33; 11:1-8; Matthew 16:24-28
Martyr Euplus the Deacon; Patriarch Niphonus

Friday, 12 August: 1 Corinthians 11:8-23; Matthew 17:10-18
Martyrs Photius & Anicetus; Soldier-martyrs of Crete

Saturday, 13 August: Romans 13:1-10; Matthew 12:30-37
Apodosis of Transfiguration; Maximus the Confessor



Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

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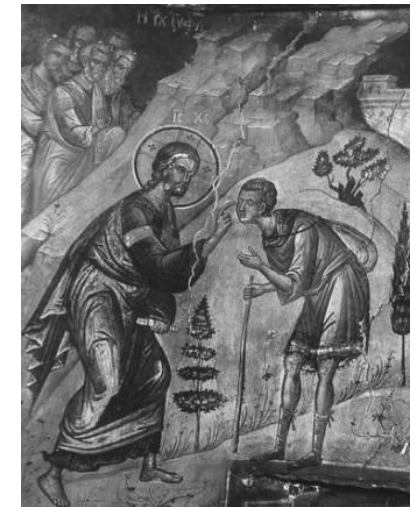
Archbishopric of Good Hope
Patriarchate of Alexandria & All Africa

Have Mercy on Us, Son of David

Today we hear Saint Matthew's account of another healing miracle of Jesus Christ. In today's Gospel we are told of two blind men who came to Jesus asking to be healed. This is followed by an account of a dumb demoniac who, when the devil was driven out of him, was able to speak. Both of these healing miracles showed Christ's power, and people were amazed and began to revere Him.

Blindness and dumbness are among the greatest of our human infirmities. And even those of us who can see and speak are in many ways nevertheless spiritually blind and dumb. If our spiritual eyes are darkened, then this affects not only our knowledge of God, but also how we view the world around us. It is all too easy for us to view our fellow human beings through the lenses of our own prejudices and thus to miss seeing them for what they truly are, namely beloved children of God, created in His Image and Likeness. In the same way, sin has affected our power of speech; not only do we find it difficult to communicate with God, but our communication with each other becomes distorted. When we remain caught up in our own egos, we simply project our own views onto others, without really listening to them, and real dialogue becomes impossible.

The healing that Christ offers to us requires faith, and also a willingness to see reality for what it truly is. We need to pray that the Lord will shed His Light upon us, and give us the courage to allow it to shine into those dark corners of our lives that we would rather keep hidden.



It was God who said, 'Let there be light', and all at once there was light. So, if He shines a light spiritually within a heart or appears as a flash of light as mighty as the sun, what do you think He can do if He illuminates the soul of a disciple? Can He not enlighten it so that it has a clear and perfect understanding of God, and how He is present within it?

Saint Symeon the New Theologian

Education in Christ

The Message of the Holy and Great Council

The Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church was recently held from 19 to 26 June at the Orthodox Academy of Crete. After addressing our identity as Christians and as the Church, the Church's mission in the world, and the importance of the family, the Council Fathers proceeded to discuss challenges that we face in the area of education in their encyclical:

In our time, new tendencies can be observed in the realm of upbringing and education in regard to the content and aims of education as well as in the way childhood, the role of both teacher and student and the role of the contemporary school are viewed. *Since education relates not only to what man is, but also to what man should be* and to the content of his responsibility, it is self-evident that the image we have of the human person and the meaning of existence determine our view of his education. The dominant secularized individualistic educational system that troubles young people today is of deep concern to the Orthodox Church.



At the center of the Church's pastoral concern is an education that looks not only to the cultivation of the intellect, but also to the edification and development of the whole person as a psycho-somatic and spiritual being in accordance with the triptych, *God, man and world*. In her catechetical discourse, the Orthodox Church caringly calls on the people of God, especially the young people, to a conscious and active participation in the life of the Church, cultivating in them the "excellent desire" for life in Christ. Thus, the fullness of the Christian people finds an existential support in the divine-human communion of the Church and experiences in this the resurrectional perspective of *theosis* by grace. (See www.holycouncil.org for more).



Abba Poemen said: "The nature of water is soft, and the nature of stone is hard; but if a bottle is hung above the stone, allowing the water to fall down drop by drop, it wears away the stone. So it is with the Word of God: it is soft and our heart is hard, but the man who hears the Word of God often opens his heart to the fear of God."

From the Sayings of the Desert Fathers

The Dormition Paraklesis, or Supplicatory Canon

In just over a week, on 15 August, we will celebrate the Dormition, or falling asleep, of the Holy Theotokos. During the two weeks preceding this feast we keep the Dormition Fast, and during this time the Church prays the Paraklesis service on weekday evenings.

A Paraklesis is a service of supplication for the living and contains a supplicatory canon to the Most Holy Theotokos. It reminds us continually that the Mother of God is a refuge and protection to those who seek her aid. And it encourages us to place our concerns before her and implore her help, both for ourselves and for those who are dear to us and for the needs of the whole world.



The Scriptures describe how, when Jesus Christ was dying on the Cross, He entrusted His Mother to the Apostle John, who took her into his home where she continued to pray with and for the Apostles. Through this act, Christ gave His Mother to the Church and assured us of her maternal care and protection, which is why throughout history Christians have sought her aid and intercession when they are in need.

The Supplicatory Canon recalls situations of need in which people have found themselves throughout history, and it invites us to identify ourselves with them and call out to her for help. Here are some verses that give a sense of the motherly protection that we ask of her:

Crossing the waters as on dry land,
In that way escaping from the evils of Egypt's land,
The Israelites cried out exclaiming:
To our Redeemer and God, now let us sing.

Most Holy Theotokos save us.

With many temptations surrounding me,
Searching for salvation,
I have hastened unto you;
O Mother of the Word, and ever-Virgin,
From all distresses and dangers deliver me.

Most Holy Theotokos save us.

Assaults of the passions have shaken me,
My soul to its limits
Has been filled with much despair;
Bring peace, O Maiden, in the calmness,
Of your own Son and your God, all-blameless One...

If you cannot attend the Paraklesis service, or if you want to also listen to it at other times, you can find the text and music here:

http://www.goarch.org/chapel/chant/paraklesis/index_html