

Fear of God is of two kinds. The first is generated in us by the threat of punishment. It is through such fear that we develop in due order self-control, patience, hope in God and dispassion; and it is from dispassion that love comes. The second kind of fear is linked with love and constantly produces reverence in the soul, so that it does not grow indifferent to God because of the intimate communion of its love. The first kind of fear is expelled by perfect love when the soul has acquired this and is no longer afraid of punishment (cf. I John 4:18). The second kind, as we have already said, is always found united with perfect love. The first kind of fear is referred to in the following two verse: 'Out of fear of the Lord men shun evil' (Prov. 16:6), and 'Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' (Ps. 111:10). The second kind is mentioned in the following verses: 'Fear of the Lord is pure, and endures forever' (Ps. 19:9), and 'Those who fear the Lord will not want for anything' (Ps. 34:10).

Saint Maximos the Confessor



**25 September is the
First Sunday of Luke**

Matins Gospel: Mark 16:9-20

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 1:21-24; 2:1-4

Gospel: Luke 5:1-11

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

Let us worship the Word, O ye faithful, praising Him that with the Father and the Spirit is co-beginningless God, Who was born of a pure Virgin that we all be saved; for He was pleased to mount the Cross in the flesh that He assumed, accepting thus to endure death. And by His glorious rising, He also willed to resurrect the dead.

Seasonal Kontakion:

O Protection of Christians that cannot be put to shame, mediation unto the creator most constant: O despise not the voices of those who have sinned; but be quick, O good one, to come unto our aid, who in faith cry unto thee: Hasten to intercession and speed thou to make supplication, O thou who dost ever protect, O Theotokos, them that honor thee.

Readings and saints for this week:

Monday, 26 September: John 21:14-25; 1 John 4:12-19; John 19:25-27; 21:24-25
Translation of John the Theologian

Tuesday, 27 September: Galatians 2:21; 3:1-7; Luke 5:12-16
Martyr Callistratus & his Companions; Apostle Aristarchus

Wednesday, 28 September: 2 Corinthians 4:6-15; Luke 6:17-23
Chariton the Confessor; Alkeisonus of Nicopolis

Thursday, 29 September: Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2; Luke 6:12-19
Cyriacus the Anchorite; Martyr Petronius

Friday, 30 September: 1 Corinthians 16:13-24; Matthew 24:42-47
Gregory the Illuminator; Mardonios & Stratonikos the Martyrs

Saturday, 1 October: Acts 9:10-19; Luke 5:17-26
Holy Protection of the Theotokos; Ananias of the 70



Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

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The Fear of God

Today we hear Saint Luke's account of the miraculous catch of fish. The disciples had been fishing all night, but had caught nothing. However, when Jesus instructed them to "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch," they nevertheless obeyed Him. They acted in faith, and, having done so, they caught such a quantity of fish that their nets started to break and they had to call others to help them bring them all in.

The disciples were "astounded" at what had taken place, and Saint Luke tells us that the Apostle Peter fell on his knees before Christ saying, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." We see here something of the awe and amazement that occurs from realizing that we are in the presence of God. But Jesus responds, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will be catching men."

The fear of God can be a difficult concept for us to understand today. After all, we believe that God is love and God can hardly want us to be afraid of Him. But there is also another – positive – kind of fear of God that we see in this Gospel passage. We hear this repeated in the prayers of the Church, notably when the priest calls out in the Liturgy inviting us to receive Holy Communion: "With fear of God, with faith and love, draw near."

This positive sense of fear is something like amazement, awe, or wonder. It is the awareness that we are confronted with something totally outside our normal frame of reference, which we can neither domesticate nor control. And it makes us aware of our own smallness and sinfulness, in contrast to the inexpressible Holiness of God.

This encounter with the Living God is at the heart of the Church's life. Yet it is often all-too-easy for us to take God for granted and lose this awareness of His greatness. This is why the Fathers of the Church teach that the fear of the Lord is something that we need to cultivate and guard, being careful that we never take God's gifts for granted.

No one can love God consciously in his heart unless he has first feared Him with all his heart. Through the action of fear the soul is purified and, as it were, made malleable and so it becomes awakened to the action of love.

Saint Diadochos of Photiki



The Church & the Refugee Crisis

The Message of the Holy and Great Council

The Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church was held from 19 to 26 June at the Orthodox Academy of Crete. In addition to discussing the Church, and the nature of its mission in our world, they also turned their attention to several pressing needs of our time. Having discussed various causes of war and conflict, they now turn their attention to the pressing refugee crisis:

The contemporary and ever intensifying *refugee and migrant crisis*, due to political, economic and environmental causes, is at the center of the world's attention. The Orthodox Church has always treated and continues to treat those who are persecuted, in danger and in need on the basis of the Lord's words: "I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me to drink, and was a stranger and you took me



in, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to me", and "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these my brethren, you did for me" (Matt 25.40). Throughout its history, the Church was always on the side of the "weary and heavy laden" (cf. Matt 11.28). At no time was the Church's philanthropic work limited merely to circumstantial good deeds toward the needy and suffering, but rather it sought to eradicate the causes which create social problems. The Church's "work of service" (Eph 4.12) is recognized by everyone.

We appeal therefore first of all to those able to remove the causes for the creation of the refugee crisis to take the necessary positive decisions. We call on the civil authorities, the Orthodox faithful and the other citizens of the countries in which they have sought refuge and continue to seek refuge to accord them every possible assistance, even from out of their own insufficiency.

(See www.holycouncil.org for more.)



You cannot be too gentle, too kind. Shun even to appear harsh in your treatment of each other. Joy, radiant joy, streams from the face of him who gives and kindles joy in the heart of him who receives. All condemnation is from the devil. Never condemn each other. We condemn others only because we shun knowing ourselves. When we gaze at our own failings, we see such a swamp that nothing in another can equal it. That is why we turn away, and make much of the faults of others. Instead of condemning others, strive to reach inner peace. Keep silent, refrain from judgment. This will raise you above the deadly arrows of slander, insult and outrage and will shield your glowing hearts against all evil.

Saint Seraphim of Sarov

Saint Luke and his Gospel

Today, on the first Sunday of Luke, the Church begins reading the gospel that bears his name. This shift occurs after the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross and marks a new emphasis in the Church's year that will continue until early next year.

Each of the four evangelists, or gospel writers, have a particular emphasis and together they present us with a rich tapestry that shows us the Church's understanding of who Jesus Christ is for us. The gospels are not simply biographies of Jesus, but are rather theological works. They not only recount the events of history, but they also show His significance for our world.

Saint Luke was from Antioch in Syria and was probably from a pagan background. He was a highly-educated physician and was also renowned for his artistic talent. Hearing of the accounts of Jesus Christ, he came to Palestine and accepted Christ's teaching, becoming one of the seventy apostles who the Lord sent out to preach the Gospel (Luke 10:1-3).

After the Ascension, Saint Luke became a companion of Saint Paul and accompanied him on his missionary journeys. After the deaths of Saints Peter and Paul in Rome, Saint Luke proceeded to preach in Achaia, Libya, Egypt, and the Thebaid, before being martyred in the city of Thebes.

This experience, together with his literary skill, enabled Saint Luke to record the events surrounding the life of Christ and the early Church, and he wrote both the gospel that bears his name and the Acts of the Apostles.

Saint Luke's gospel presents us with a radical picture of Jesus Christ. While this is also true of the other gospels, Saint Luke focuses particularly on Christ's love for the outcasts and those rejected by society. He stresses Christ's mercy and compassion for sinful humanity that He came to visit as a Physician (Luke 4:23; 5:31). In his gospel, we see how Jesus Christ turns everything on its head as the poor become rich and those on the outskirts of society come to play a central role. This is expressed particularly in the Magnificat of the Holy Theotokos that the Church continues to pray daily:

My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
because He has regarded His servant's humility.
For from now on all generations will call me blessed
because He who is mighty and whose name is holy
has done great things for me.
And His mercy is for those who fear Him
from generation to generation.
He has shown His power with His arm,
He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart.
He has pulled down rulers from their thrones
and has exalted the humble.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich He has sent away empty.
He has helped His servant Israel
as He promised to our fathers,
so as to remember His mercy to Abraham and his sons forever. (Luke 1: 46-55)

