



Sunday, October 30, 2011

20TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PROPHET HOSEA; MONK-MARTYR ANDREW OF CRETE

RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION - TONE THREE:

Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad! For the Lord has shown strength with His arm! He has trampled down death by death! He has become the firstborn of the dead! He has delivered us from the depths of hell, and has granted to the world great mercy!

TROPARION TO THE PROPHET HOSEA - TONE TWO:

We celebrate the memory of Your prophet Hosea, O Lord; through him we beseech You: save our souls.

TROPARION TO THE MONK-MARTYR ANDREW - TONE FOUR:

Trained in asceticism on the mountain, with the weapon of the Cross you destroyed the spiritual assaults of the hostile powers, all-blessed one. Again you bravely prepared for combat and slew Copronymus with the sword of faith and for both struggles you have been crowned by God, O monk-martyr Andrew of eternal memory.

RESURRECTIONAL KONTAKION - TONE THREE:

On this day You did rise from the tomb, O Merciful One, leading us from the gates of death. On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices; with the prophets and the patriarchs they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Your power!

KONTAKION TO THE PROPHET HOSEA - TONE FOUR:

Illumined by the Spirit, your heart was a vessel of illustrious prophecy, seeing far-off things as though they were present. Therefore we venerate you, O glorious prophet Hosea.

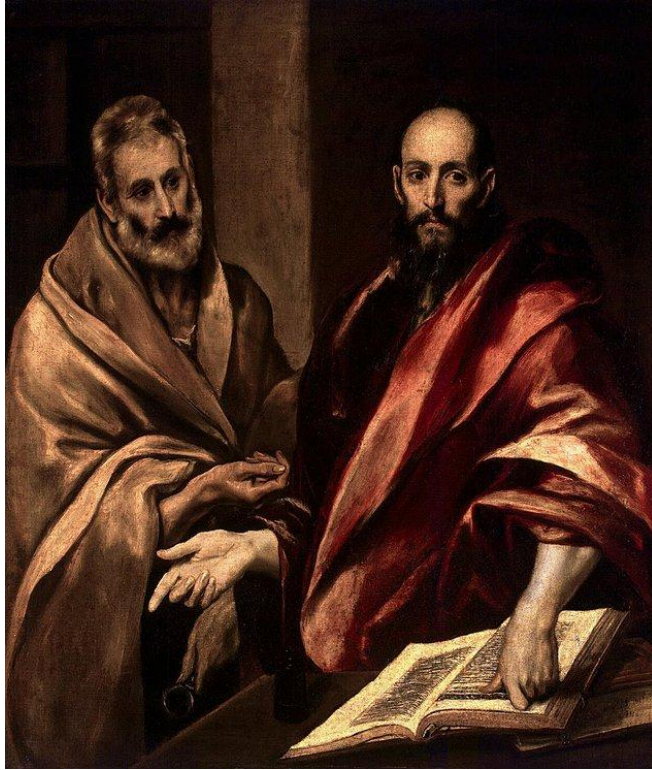
KONTAKION TO THE MONK-MARTYR ANDREW - TONE THREE:

Today the Queen of cities celebrates the radiant feast of your light-bearing memory, and invites every city and country to join her. She rejoices for she has gained a great treasure: your body which sustained many struggles, O martyr Andrew, beacon of Orthodoxy.

HYMN TO THE MOTHER OF GOD - TONE SIX:

Steadfast Protectress of Christians and constant advocate before the Creator, do not despise the cry of us sinners; but in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on

you in faith. Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos, for you always protect those who honor you!



Apostles Peter and Paul (Spain, 16th century)

EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

THE PROKIMENON IN THE 3RD TONE:

Sing praises to our God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!

20TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, GALATIANS 1: 11 – 19

Brethren, I make known to you that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the Church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

THE ALLELUIA VERSES:

In You, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be put to shame! Be a God of protection for me, a house of refuge, in order to save me!

COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE READING FROM GALATIANS

The true Gospel of Christ is taught by His true apostles, but how do we know the true ones? First, they are called by God, learning the Gospel by revelation ó directly from Christ or indirectly through apostolic tradition. Next, they form one Church -government,ø holding the same doctrine and working in council. Additionally, they stand firm in matters of conscience and are correctable when mistaken, always seeking to glorify God and not themselves.



Christ Raising the Son of the Widow of Nain (Italy, 17th century)

GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

20TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, LUKE 7: 11-16

At that time, Jesus went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man 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. When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.” Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, “Young man, I say to you, arise.” So he who

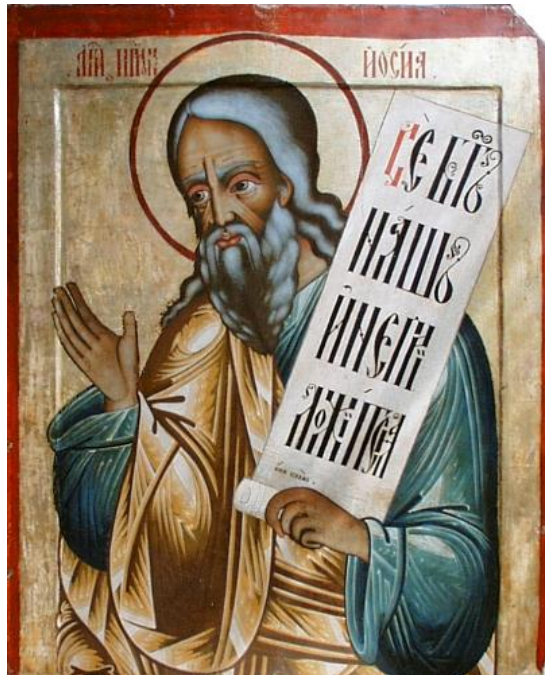
was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother. Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us" and, "God has visited His people."

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL READING FROM ST. LUKE

This account is recorded only in Luke's Gospel. Jesus shows compassion for this widow who has lost not only her only son, but her provider as well. Like Jairus's daughter (8: 41-56) and Lazarus (John 11: 1-44), this young man was resuscitated by our Lord but not resurrected. All three would die again physically in this world, but not before their "new life" manifested Christ's divinity and assured the coming general resurrection and a transformation to glory for His chosen flock.

SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

From The Prologue for October 17/30 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:



The Holy Prophet Hosea (Russia, 18th century)

Hosea was the son of Beeri of the tribe of Issachar. Hosea lived and prophesied more than eight hundred years before the birth of Christ. His divinely inspired words are found in his book, which contains fourteen chapters. He strongly rebuked Israel and Judah for their idolatry and also foretold God's punishment for their sins, the destruction of Samaria and Israel for their apostasy, and God's mercy on the tribe of Judah. He foretold the abolition and the end of the sacrifices of the Old Testament. He foretold the coming of the Lord, and the richness of gifts that He would bring with Him to earth. He lived to a very old age and entered peacefully into rest.

The Holy Martyrs Cosmas and Damian, the Unmercenaries

There are three pairs of holy physicians by the name of Cosmas and Damian. The first entered into rest peacefully on November 1, the second pair was stoned in Rome on July 1, and the third was from Arabia; and it is these that we speak of under today's date. They were physicians by profession, and when they received the Christian Faith, they healed the sick in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They became widely known for their miraculous healings. The malicious pagans seized them, and took them before Governor Lysias in the town of Aegea. Since neither of these brothers would renounce Christ at any cost, they were cast into the sea, then into fire, but the omnipotent God saved them from both the water and the fire. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and saved them. The pagan governor ascribed this to their alleged sorcery but they answered: "We know nothing of sorcery nor do we need sorcery, but we possess the power of Christ" which saves us and all who invoke His Most-holy Name. The pagans struck them with stones but the stones bounced off them; they shot them with arrows, but the arrows rebounded as well. Finally, they were beheaded with the sword. Saints Leontius, Anthimus and Eutropius also suffered with them, and received heavenly wreaths of glory. They suffered in the time of Diocletian and Maximian. Many miracles were manifested from their holy relics, even as miracles abounded from them during their life.

The Venerable Martyr Andrew

St. Andrew was a Cretan by birth and a Christian priest. In the time of the iconoclastic persecution, he showed himself to be a great defender of the veneration of icons. Andrew went to Constantinople to denounce the wicked Emperor Copronymus. As the emperor stood in the Church of the Holy Martyr Mamas, Andrew entered the church, stood before him, and openly rebuked him before all. "It would be better for you, O Emperor, to attend to military matters and to govern the people, than to persecute Christ and His servants." For this, St. Andrew was beaten severely, tortured and dragged through the streets, where a heretic struck him with an axe and killed him. Thus, Andrew rendered his holy soul to God in the year 767. His relics gave healing to the sick.

Saint Lazarus the Four-days-dead

Lazarus's principal feasts are on March 17 and Lazarus Saturday during Great Lent. Under today's date is commemorated the translation of his relics from the island of Cyprus to Constantinople. This occurred when Emperor Leo the Wise built the Church of St. Lazarus in Constantinople, and translated Lazarus's relics there in the year 890. When, after almost a thousand years, Lazarus's grave in the town of Kition on Cyprus was unearthed, a marble tablet was found with the inscription: "Lazarus of the Four Days, the friend of Christ."

HYMN OF PRAISE: The Holy Prophet Hosea

The discerning Prophet Hosea cried out
And prophesied tribulation to the sinful nation:
"The Lord, the Lord saith: Mercy is dear to Me,
But sacrifices, filthy and rotten, are not dear.
Ye transgress the Law, as did Adam of old,
Ye worship lies, and a falsehood is lord over you."

Your sacrifices are finished; I will not accept them.
Now I shall prepare the greatest sacrifice for Myself.
Ye have planted godlessness; iniquity have ye reaped.
Ye have sown wind, and harvested a storm.
But if ye now plant righteousness, ye will reap mercy
And to Me, ye will be a holy people again.
But ye are ashamed of Me and love idols.
Ye encourage adultery, ye encourage sin!
That is why ye shall wander throughout the world,
And every nation shall be more powerful than you.
And I will raise up a New Israel:
A new Kingdom a Kingdom of saints.
It will be as the dew and as a blossoming lily,
And its most wondrous fragrance shall fill the world.
I am the Lord, the Lord; whatever I desire I can do!
Blessed are those who worship Me, the Living God.ö

REFLECTION

The second appearance of the Holy Martyr Longinus: When Longinus appeared to the blind widow whose son had died, he promised to restore her sight and to reveal her son in great glory. Finding the relics of the holy martyr and touching them with her hands, the widow immediately regained her sight, and thus, one promise was fulfilled. The following night, St. Longinus appeared to the widow in radiant attire, holding her son by the hand, who was also clothed resplendently. Caressing the child like a father, Longinus said: öWoman, behold your son for whom you weep so much! Look at the honor and glory given him; look and be comforted. God has numbered him among the heavenly ranks who live in His Kingdom. I have now brought him from the Savior, and he will never be parted from me. Take my head and your son's body, and bury them together in one coffin. Mourn your son no longer, and let not your heart be troubled, for great glory, joy, and endless rejoicing is given him from God.ö Seeing and hearing all this, the woman was filled with great joy, and she returned to her home, saying to herself: öI asked for bodily eyes and I found spiritual eyes. I was saddened at the death of my son, and now I have him in heaven, where he remains in glory with the prophets and rejoices with them unceasingly.ö

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the wondrous vision of St. Stephen the Archdeacon and Protomartyr (Acts 7):

1. How Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, saw the heavens opened;
2. How he said: *Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God* (Acts 7:56);
3. How the Jews stoned him.

HOMILY

on the festering wounds of sin

My wounds are foul and festering because of my foolishness (Psalm 38:5).

The prophet speaks of the wounds of sins that he himself committed, and from which he sensed in himself the stench of sin. As much as this acknowledgment reveals the impurity of previous sins, so is the subsequent purity of the repentant one also shown. For as long as man follows the corrupt path of sin, he does not sense its suffocating stench; but when he withdraws from this path and sets off on the pure path of righteousness, he senses the inexpressible difference between purity and impurity, between the path of virtue and the path of vice. Imagine a man who has spent the night in a stinking tavern and finds himself in a garden of roses the next morning. In the former there was stench, poison, debasement of soul and body, anger, discord, and the tormenting of himself and others. In the latter is God's great sun overhead, beautiful flowers everywhere, fresh air, wondrous fragrance, serenity and health. Imagine this, and understand that there is an even greater difference between the path of sin and the path of God. *My wounds are foul and festering.* Thus the great king describes the fruits of his sinful past. Nothing is as foul as sin, nothing festers as much and nothing spreads as much as sin. The stench of bodily wounds suggests, in only a small way, the unbearable stench of a sinful soul. That is why every holy thing distances itself from such a soul. The pure heavenly spirits hide from such a one, and the impure spirits of hades seek its company. Every new sin is a fresh wound on the soul; every sin is corruption and stench. How does sin arise? From *my foolishness* explains the prophet. A mind derailed from its divine track leads man to sin. Until the mind is cleansed, man cannot be cleansed. *But we have the mind of Christ* (I Corinthians 2:16), says the Apostle. In other words, we have a mind put back on track, as was Adam's mind before the sinful stench. Hence brethren, all Orthodox teaching on asceticism concentrates on one main point: on the mind of man; on the cleansing and correcting of the mind. O Lord Jesus Christ, Purity and eternal Source of purity, help us to reject our foolishness; help us to reason according to Thy mind. To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.
