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ΕΠΑΡΧΗΑ

May 2, 2010

**FIFTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA;
SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN**

PASCHAL TROPARION - TONE ONE:

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!

RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION - TONE FOUR:

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Your Resurrection; they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles: Death is overthrown! Christ God is Risen, granting the world great mercy.

MID-FEAST OF PENTECOST TROPARION - TONE EIGHT:

In the middle of the feast, O Savior, fill my thirsting soul with the waters of piety, as You cried to all: "If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink!" O Christ God, Fountain of our life, glory to You!

SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN KONTAKION - TONE EIGHT:

The Samaritan Woman came to the well in faith; she saw you, the Water of Wisdom, and drank abundantly! She inherited the Kingdom on high, and is ever glorified.

MID-FEAST OF PENTECOST KONTAKION - TONE FOUR:

Christ God, the Creator and Master of all, cried to all in the midst of the feast of the law: "Come and draw the water of immortality!" We fall before You and faithfully cry: "Grant us Your mercies, for You are the Fountain of our life!"

INSTEAD OF 'IT IS TRULY MEET...' we sing:

The Angel cried to the Lady, full of grace: "Rejoice, O pure Virgin! Again, I say: 'Rejoice, your Son is risen from His three days in the tomb! With Himself He has raised all the dead.'" Rejoice, O ye people!

Shine, shine, O New Jerusalem! The glory of the Lord has shone on you! Exult now, and be glad, O Zion! Be radiant, O pure Theotokos, in the Resurrection of your Son!

EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

THE PROKIMENON IN THE 3RD TONE:

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

ACTS 11:19-26, 29-30

In those days, those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

ALLELUIA

Stretch Your bow, and grant prosperity and reign because of truth, gentleness and righteousness.

You loved righteousness and hated lawlessness.

COMMENTARY

That the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch is more than just historical fact. It demonstrates that Christ's command to preach the Gospel among the Gentiles was first fully realized in Antioch. "It was there for the first time that men were accounted worthy of that name" (St. John Chrysostom). There are two key truths revealed in Barnabus' mission to Antioch: 1) an apostle is sent, but never works in isolation from the Church, and 2) The Church in Antioch needed the seal of apostolic authority to be integrated into the universal Church. The need to be received into the apostolic Church is indisputable. Even those who have direct revelations of Christ in the Holy Spirit are invariably directed to the apostolic Church. For it is in the Church that the unity and fullness of Christ are experienced, and the words of salvation are proclaimed without alteration. May the Risen Christ continue to bless us with the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that as we too are scattered in the wind, we may continue to preach the Risen Lord to the world!

GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

JOHN 4: 5-42

At that time, Jesus came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink', you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself as well as his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband', for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly." The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to Him, "I know the Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He." And at this point His disciples came and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?" The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" Then they went out of the city and came to Him. In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?" Jesus

said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest?’ Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.” And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all what I ever did.” So when the Samaritans had come to Him they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

COMMENTARY

Jesus Christ is the Living Water, who quenches thirst through His Saving Resurrection. To drink of His water, we must first deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Christ. This is exactly what was asked of the Samaritan woman, when Christ told her to, “go and call her husband...” She was challenged to face her own sinfulness, just as we are challenged to face ours. Through her repentance, she becomes an apostle of Christ, going out into the town and preaching that the Messiah has come. May our Risen Lord grant us the strength to repent of our own sinfulness, so that we too may go out into the world, proclaiming that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the World!

SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

From *The Prologue for Apr. 19/May 2* by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:

The Venerable John of the Ancient Caves

John lived a life of asceticism in the so-called Ancient Caves or Lavra of Chariton the Great, in Palestine. Having loved Christ the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his mind, John, at an early age, began to travel to the holy places, listening to the instructions and counsels of the holy men. Finally, he settled in the Caves of Chariton. There he gave himself to rigorous asceticism, spending days and years in fasting, prayer and vigils, continuously meditating on death, and teaching himself humility. As a well-ripened fruit, he was plucked by death and took up his habitation in Paradise. He lived and died in the eighth century.

The Holy Martyrs Christopher, Theonas and Antonius

Christopher, Theonas and Antonius were young officers serving under Emperor Diocletian. When St. George the Great Martyr was being tortured, they witnessed his sufferings as well as the miracles that occurred at that time. Seeing all of this, they came before the emperor, laid down their arms, removed their military belts and bravely confessed the name of the Lord Jesus. For that, they were subjected to great torture and were finally thrown into the fire. Their bodies were consumed, while their souls went to God and entered into eternal joy. They honorably suffered in Nicomedia in the year 303.

Saint Tryphon, Patriarch of Constantinople

The Emperor Romanus, who reigned over Byzantium at the beginning of the tenth century, had a son, Theophylactus, who was sixteen years old when Patriarch Stephen died. The emperor wanted his son to be elevated to the patriarchal throne, for he had promised him this spiritual calling from his youth. Yet, because his son was a minor, the emperor was ashamed to do this. The patriarchal throne was assumed by Tryphon, a simple but chaste and pious old man. Tryphon remained on the throne for three years. When the son of the emperor reached his twentieth year, the emperor thought to remove Tryphon at any cost and install his son as patriarch. The saint of God, Tryphon, did not want to relinquish his throne voluntarily, for no other reason than because he considered it to be a great scandal for such a young man to be elevated to such a responsible and burdensome position as that of patriarch. Through the intrigue of an iniquitous bishop, the signature of the innocent Tryphon was obtained by guile on a blank sheet of paper. Later on, in the imperial court, the alleged resignation of the patriarch was written above that signature, and was announced by the emperor. As a result of this, there arose a great confusion in the Church, for the laity and the clergy stood by Tryphon, the godly man. The emperor then forcibly removed the aged patriarch, sending him to a monastery, while his son Theophylactus was consecrated as patriarch. St. Tryphon lived as an ascetic in this monastery for two years and five months, and went to the Lord in the year 933.

The Venerable Martyr Agathangelus

Agathangelus was from Thrace. His secular name was Athanasius. Serving the Turks, he was forcibly converted to Islam in Smyrna. As a penitent, he was tonsured a monk on the Holy Mountain in the Monastery of Esphigmenou. Still tormented by his conscience, he desired to wash away his sin with his own blood. He departed for Smyrna, where he showed the Turks a cross and an icon of the Resurrection of Christ. He was beheaded on April 19, 1819, in his nineteenth year. Following his death, he appeared alive to Germanus, his spiritual father.

The Venerable Simeon the Barefoot

Simeon lived a life of asceticism on the Holy Mountain, and for a short while he was the abbot of the Monastery of Philotheou. He strengthened Christians in the Faith in many areas of the Balkans and was famous for his miracle-working. He walked barefoot, for which he is called “the Barefoot.” He reposed in Constantinople.

HYMN OF PRAISE

Saint Tryphon

Innocent Tryphon, gray-haired shepherd,
Through innocence obtained an unfading wreath.
The emperor, out of empty vanity, desired wrongly,
Not fearing God or God’s punishment.
To be patriarch is an honor before men
But a burden before God and before angels.
A lad can tend an irrational flock,
But where is his wisdom for a rational one?
Kindhearted Tryphon guarded the righteousness of God;
“That can never be, O Emperor,” said he.
“Give the patriarchal throne to a mature man, one wiser than me,
Who will steer the Ship of God through the rocks,
And not to a child, even though he be your son,
Who would smash the Ship of God against the rocks!”
Emperor Romanus did as he himself wished,
And saddened St. Tryphon and the people.
But the eye of God roams throughout the world,
Seeking where to bestow a wreath and where vengeance.

REFLECTION

An elder and spiritual father said: “Arising in the morning, say to yourself: Body, work in order to feed yourself; soul, be vigilant in order to save yourself and inherit the Kingdom!” These are not empty words, but this has been the rule of many thousands of monks throughout the centuries—their daily rule of life. By labors they fed themselves; through prayer they remained vigilant. Why only for monks? Cannot this be the rule of every follower of Christ? Did not Christ Himself give us a clear example of this—an example of physical effort and constant vigilance in prayer?

Deal with all situations with love, kindness, meekness, patience and humility

Certain people often become overwhelmingly distressed about the state of the world. They are vexed when they see that the will of God is not done today by others and by themselves and they suffer with the physical and psychological pain of others. This sensitivity is a gift of God. We find it more frequently among women. Souls with this sensitivity are especially receptive to the will of God. These sensitive souls have the ability to advance greatly in the life n Christ, because they love God and do not wish to cause Him vexation. They do, however, run a danger. If they do not entrust their life fully to Christ, it is possible for the evil spirit to exploit their sensitivity and to lead them to depression and despair.

Sensitivity cannot be corrected. It can only be transformed, altered and transfigured so as to become love, joy and worship. How? By turning upwards. By turning every sorrow into knowledge of Christ, love of Christ and worship of Christ. And Christ, who constantly waits with eagerness to help us, will give you His grace and His strength to transform sorrow into joy, into love for our fellows and worship of Him. Thus darkness will flee.

Remember Saint Paul. What did he say? *Now I rejoice in my sufferings.* (Col.1:24)

Let your soul devote itself to the prayer "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me" in all your worries, for everything and for everyone. Don't look at what's happening to you, look at the light, at Christ, just as the child looks to its mother when something happens to it. See everything without anxiety, without depression, without strain and without stress.

There is no need to exert yourselves and strain yourselves. Let all your effort be directed towards the light and towards acquiring the light, so that instead of devoting yourselves to thoughts of despair, which do not come from the Spirit of God, you devote yourselves to the praise of God.

All the unpleasant things which are within your soul and cause you anxiety can become occasions for the glorification of God and cease to torment you. Have trust in God. then you will forget your worries and become His instruments. Distress shows that we are not entrusting our life to Christ. Doesn't Saint Paul say, We are afflicted on every side, but not distressed? (2Cor. 4:8)

Deal with everything with love, kindness, meekness, patience and humility. Be rocks! Let all the waves break over you and turn back leaving you untroubled. You'll say, 'That sounds fine, but is it possible?' The answer is 'Yes, always - with the grace of God'. If we look at things in human terms, of course, it is impossible. But instead of affecting you adversely, all these things can be of benefit to you, increasing your patience and your faith. Because all the difficulties that surround us represent a kind of gymnastics for us. We exercise ourselves in patience and endurance. Listen and I'll give you an example.

A man once came to me and started to recount all his grievances with his wife. When he had finished I said to him:

'Are you really so stupid?'

'What's so stupid about what I've been saying?' he asked.

'Everything, I replied. 'This wife of yours loves you deeply'.

'I know', he said, but look at all the things that she does to me...'

'She does all these things to you to sanctify you, but you're too dim-witted to realize it. Instead of being sanctified, you are infuriated and you make your life hell'.

If only he had had patience and humility, he wouldn't have missed those opportunities for sanctification.

Patience is a great thing, a great virtue. Christ said that if you don't have patience, you will lose your souls, and in order to gain your souls you must have patience (Lk 21:19)

Patience is love, and without love you can't have patience. But it's a matter of faith. In reality, we are without faith, because we don't know how God works and frees us from difficulties and vexations. Make petition to our Holy Lady:

*Turn now my lamentation to joy
And into gladness change my mourning and sorrowing,
My grieving and pain convert to mirth, into festal delight,
O Most Blessed Virgin who gave birth to God.*

Our disposition to love God also contains within it a certain pain. When we wish to live spiritually we suffer pain because we need to sever every bond that links us to matter. But when we wish to satisfy ourselves or others, what we expend is love, and energy, a power of our soul.

We need to take care about how and for whom we expend that energy.

The sorrow which we have in our love for God contains within it joy and on account of this joy we persevere and do not give way to soul-destroying depression. Where there is humility, there is no depression. An egotist is vexed at the slightest thing. A humble person is free and independent from everyone and everything.

This comes about only through union with Christ. All our senses function in accordance with the law of our Lord. You are ready to empty yourself to anyone whom-soever. This is freedom. Where there is love, there is freedom. When you live in the love of God, you live in freedom.

**Wounded by Love
The Life and the Wisdom
of Elder Porphyrios**

IMPORTANT REMINDERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Special Prayer Request

His Grace, Bishop Maxim is asking all of our clergy and faithful to offer prayers for the recovery of our brother in Christ, V. Rev. Miladin Garic, who is seriously ill and currently at the Amador Sutter Hospital, in Jackson, California.

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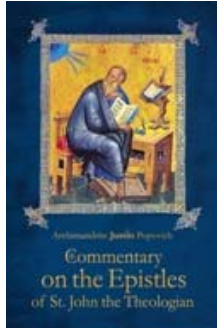
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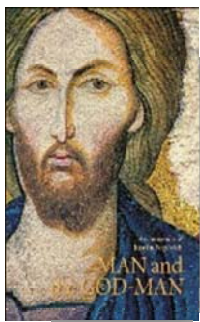
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By Archimandrite Justin Popovic

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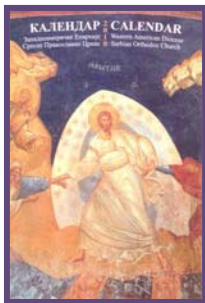


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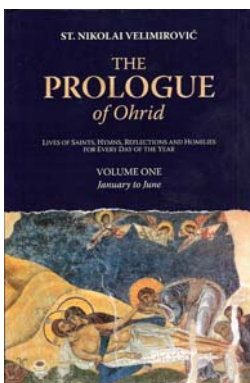
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