

Prokeimenon

TONE 4 (Forefathers): Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our Fathers / and praised and glorified is Thy Name forever!

v: For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us!

Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews 11:9 – 10, 17-23, 32-40

Brethren: by faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, “*In Isaac your seed shall be called,*” concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s command. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented – of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Alleluia

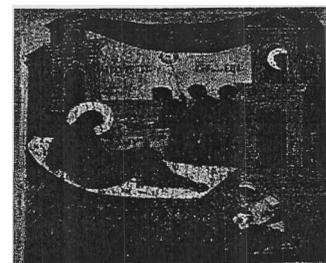
v: We have heard with our ears O God, for our fathers have told us.

v: For Thou hast saved us from them that oppose us, and hast put to shame them that hate us.

Matthew 1:1-25

Gospel

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife Uriah. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram and Joram begot Uzziah. Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ. ... (*verses 17-25*)



Schedule

Sunday, December 18, 2016

*Children’s Yolka Program
immediately following the Divine
Liturgy*

Saturday, December 24, 2016

*Christmas Eve
STRICT FAST DAY
10:00 A.M. Divine Liturgy of St.
John Chrysostom*

*11:30 A.M. Vespers
5:00 P.M. Vigil of Christmas
(Compline/Matins)*

Sunday, December 25, 2016

*NATIVITY IN THE FLESH OF
OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS
CHRIST
10:00 A.M. Divine Liturgy of St.
Basil the Great*

Monday, December 26, 2016

*Early Afternoon – Christmas
Caroling – CHOIR*

Saturday, December 31, 2016

5:00 P.M. Vespers

Sunday, January 1, 2016

*9:30 A.M. 3rd & 6th Hours
10:00 A.M. Divine Liturgy*

Nativity of the Virgin Mary

Orthodox Church

416 Ewing Ave, Madison, IL 62060

Sunday, December 18, 2016

*26th Sunday After Pentecost; Sunday Before the
Nativity; Marty Sebastian*

www.nativityofthevirgin.com

It will sound somewhat silly for me to suggest that we learn to pray to God as if He really exists. Of course, God really exists. But the habits of the heart within a two-storey universe harbor deep and secret doubts about that very existence. True asceticism and devotion hungers for the Kingdom of God above all else, present among us, knowing that it is the only proper ground of our being.

Such devotion (*true asceticism*) is not meant only for special Christians such as monastics and hermits of the desert. (*It is meant for you too!*) I find the long unbroken chain of holy living represented by the monastic tradition to be a help for all. In the last analysis, every Christian must learn a “careful devotion to Christ.” We must fast, pray, weep, repent before God, and seek to remember Him moment by moment – and never as an abstraction. Compared to God, we are the abstractions. But God has become man, and in that event the abstraction of our schismatic existence was overcome. In the life of the Church we are now united to Reality. Why do we settle for less?

Why are our enemies more important than God? They must be, else we would forgive them in accordance with His commandment. I could take this question and apply it across the board in our Christian lives. God is less important to us than many things, because we believe in the reality of those things more than the Reality of God. It is the habit of two-storey thinking.

Some suggestions, all of which are aimed at overcoming the false sense of God’s distance:

1. Recognize that though “God is every where

present and filling all things,” you often go through the world as if He were not particularly present at all and things were just empty things. When you see this, make it a matter of confession and repentance (*i.e. go to confession*)

2. Always approach the church and the sacraments (where we have an even more specific promise of His presence) with awe. Never treat the building or things that have been set aside as holy as though they were common or empty. Do not divide your life into two – “now He’s here, now He’s not.” Syrian Christians traditionally believed that the *Shekinah* presence of God left the Temple and took up abode in the cross – every cross – and thus they had a extraordinary devotion to each and every cross. We should never be indifferent to the icon or prayer corner in our home. Cross yourself whenever you pass it or come into its presence.

3. Make careful preparations for communion. Always read the pre-communion prayers if you are going to receive communion (and perhaps even if you are not); pray akathists and other devotional prayers that particularly focus on Christ and His presence, such as the Akathist to the Sweetest Lord Jesus. The tradition Western hymn written by St. Patrick, known as his “breastplate,” is also a very fine hymn to know. Find it, keep it with you, and learn it.

4. Learn by heart psalms of presence, such as Psalm 23, “The Lord is my Shepherd,” and Psalm 91, “He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High,” and any others that strike you. Repeat them frequently throughout the day.

5. Throughout the day, search for God. He is everywhere present, and yet our searching helps us to be more properly aware. In searching, expect to find Him. He delights in sharing His presence.

6. Approach others with deep respect and wonder – it will often be the foundation for love. As much as is possible, forgive everyone for everything, staying mindful of the great mystery that is every human being. If you cannot yet pray for an enemy, begin by saying, “O Lord, do not hold this sin against them on judgment day on my account.” It seems to postpone the forgiveness, but it also makes a beginning.

7. More than anything, give thanks to God for all things. There is no better way to acknowledge His presence. “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thessalonians 5:18)” *“Everywhere Present: Christianity in a One-Storey Universe” by Father Stephen Freeman*

Prayer Requests

Those in this earthly life

Deacon Marco	Dasia	Infant James
Radu	Leo	Sue
Daniella	Antoinette	Selaphiel
Kenneth	Priest Bryan	Shawn
Caroline	Melea	Margaret
Gregory	Peter	James
Anastasia	Rebecca	Macarius
Matushka Marie	Subdeacon Paul	Gabrielle
Peter	Judith	John
Leah	Peter	Gregory

Larysa
Nolan
Elijah
Abigail
Noah
Virginia
Alla
Bogdan
Chris
Michael
Michael
Paula
Andrew
Tatiana
Michael
Emily
Elizabeth
Paul
Matthew
Matushka Tanya
Mark
Angie
Elijah

Kiera
Anna
Jean

Sophia
Janet
Sandy
Catherine
Catechumen George
Wilma
Victor
Kristen & her child
Dan
Elizabeth
Andrew
Barbara
Archpriest Moses
Archpriest Theodore
Archpriest Joseph
Archpriest Anthony
Archpriest Joseph
Priest Philip
Archpriest John
Matushka Laryssa
Archpriest Emilian
Natalia

Those in the life to come

Allen
Daniel
Vincent Michael

Troparia
Resurrection
TONE 1

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews; while the soldiers were guarding Thy Most Pure Body; Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Thy Kingdom! Glory to Thy Dispensation, O Thou Who lovest mankind.

Forefathers
TONE 2

Great are the accomplishments of faith, for the Three Holy Youths rejoiced in the flames as though at the waters of rest, and the prophet Daniel appeared, a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. So by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Forefathers
TONE 6

You did not worship the graven image, O thrice-blessed ones, but armed with the immaterial Essence of God, you were glorified glorified in a trial by fire. From the midst of unbearable flames you called on God, crying: Hasten, O compassionate One! Speedily come to our aid, for Thou art merciful and art able to do as Thou dost will.

Zachary
Stephan
Matushka Gayle
Matushka Snezana
Matushka Carol
Matushka Mary
John
Daria
Cynthia
Priest Josef
Archpriest Vladimir
Subdeacon Charles
Julia
Agnes
Mary (*Macek*)
Mary (*Uram*)
Mary (*Wierciszewski*)
Nicholas
Anne
Wade
Andrew
Anthony

Lorraine
Archbishop JOB
Charlie
Archpriest Thomas