



Weekly Bulletin

Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

The 11th Sunday after Pentecost August 28th , Tone 2, Matt.18:23-35

Forgive Us...As We Forgive

Troparion of the Resurrec- tion, Tone 2

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead! And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out: O Giver of Life! Christ our God! Glory to Thee!

Troparion for Annuncia- tion , Tone 4

Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery! the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you.

Kontakion of Annunciation, Tone 8

O Victorious Leader of triumphant hosts! We, your servants delivered from evil, sing our grateful thanks to you, O Theotokos! As you possess invincible might set us free from every calamity so that we may sing: Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!

“Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.” This petition from the Lord’s Prayer is illustrated by the parable from the gospel for the eleventh Sunday after Pentecost (Matt. 18:23-35). A king calls his servants to account: one of the servants owes him then thousand talents and, as he cannot pay the debt, he will be sold, together with his family and all his possessions. The servant begs the king to allow him time to repay, and the king mercifully forgives him the whole debt. However, the servant, on meeting another servant who owes him a very small sum, takes him by the throat and has him thrown into prison. Other servants report this to the king who, in his wrath, hands the servant over to the tormentors until the debt is fully paid off: “Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?” Jesus ends: “So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgiven not every one his brother their trespasses”.

We shall underline two very striking points in this parable. God does not forgive our debts *because* we forgive those of our debtors. Certainly, there is continuity, a sequence, a parallel (“as we forgive...”) between the forgiveness which we receive from God and that which we accord to men, but the second is not the cause of the first. God, in his generosity, takes and keeps the initiative of forgiveness. When we ourselves forgive others, it is not “our” own forgiveness we grant them. We allow the divine forgiveness which we ourselves have received to “pass through” and beyond us, we make ourselves its instruments: for all forgiveness comes from God. And also, we do not only forgive others because they are men, just as we are, but because we are all servants of the same King.

Let us, today, examine every fold of our heart, every corner of our mind, lest some trespass, some injustice that we have not forgiven lies there. We have no right to try to bring to a halt in ourselves the forgiveness that flows from the Cross with the blood of the Savior. We must allow it to flow freely, we can make it flow on to others, and especially on to those who may have harmed us. If I do not, how shall I dare to say the Lord’s Prayer through to its end? The forgiveness that God grants me, I can send on beyond myself. May it reach those to whom I would extend it, and then come back and remain with me.

(Taken from *The Year of Grace of the Lord*, by a Monk of the Eastern Church)

Announcements and Activities

The Beheading of the Baptist— it is a fast day, given the solemn character of the day. Unfortunately, Fr. Lawrence is having a recently broken tooth repaired and cannot do Liturgy, as he typically would celebrate. Pray for us, Holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John

Saturday Great Vespers— 5:30 PM.

Divine Liturgy— Sunday, at 10AM.

Mortgage Drive— Last year we met our pledge goal of 20K and church matching funds of 20K. Our goal was to do the mortgage reduction for 2 consecutive years and see if we can't retire the mortgage in 2023. Let's throw the Mortgage Reduction Red Thermometer on the wall in the Hall over the top and be able to say that this facility is totally in possession of God and His people. We will conclude this particular drive on September 1st. So far, we've only raised about 5K. It will be very blessed for each of us to search our hearts for the extra that we can give toward this phenomenal goal. What a glory it will be to burn the mortgage, and what a credit to your stewardship.

Many thanks and Many Years— to those who came and worked to beautify the church grounds and other elements of our complex.

Coffee Hours— This week's Coffee Hour is our monthly potluck. Next week's Coffee Hour will be sponsored by Tricia and Kirk and Kathy.

Pray for... Hierarch Nikolai (Soraich)— battling cancer. Samir's friend, **Johnny, who has been improving in the battle to save his sight.** **Brian**, Sunday's brother. **George and Alex**, health problems. **All those who have lost their lives or are suffering as a result of the current Pandemic**. **Archimandrite Alexander**— Fr. Lawrence's long-time father confessor, who reposed. **Our Vladyka Benjamin**— battling on-set parkinsons. **Tsige Roman and Abraham**— I know we are always mindful of Tsige, but please continue to pray for the work and for Ethiopia, torn by civil war, with all the problems that go with a regional terror. **George and Alesis**, Brother and Daughter of Peter and Irene S. **Matushka Ioanna R. reposed.** **Matushka Priscilla**, ill. **Anya J**— a longtime friend of the parish who is ill. **Stephen F.**— battling back pain. **John F.**— battling cancer. **Archpriest Anthony**— battling cancer. **Julie**— sister of Kathy M., battling health problems. **Rhoda's requests** for Douglas and Kayana. **Reposed Constance**— the mother of Andrew F. **Will**— reposed, Michael T.'s brother-in-law. **Reposed Vadim. Christian**— undergoing some medical testing. The reposed— **Novice Nonna, Robbie**— cancer. **Raphael**, cancer. Child **Aidan**— seizures. Child **Henry. Robbie** the cousin of Brian R., who reposed after a battle with cancer. **Louis Joseph M.**, is now home and, thank God, ready to come to church **Reposed Dn. George. Jobie**, cancer. **Darryl and Laura Beth. Repose: Stavrophore Elizabeth, of Kazan Skete**. **Pastor Brad**, a friend of Kirk's who is going through a difficult time. **Sarah**, the daughter of Fr. Lawrence's godfather, health issues. **Youseff and Jimmy**— who are ill. **Matushka Ann Hopko**, reposed.

From the Lives of the Saints... THE VENERABLE MOSES THE BLACK [THE ROBBER]

Moses was an Ethiopian by birth. In the world, he was a thief and the leader of a band of thieves, and yet he became a penitent and a great ascetic. Moses was once a slave, who escaped and joined the thieves. Because of his great physical strength and daring, the robbers chose him as their leader. Then one day he was suddenly overcome with pangs of conscience and repented for his misdeeds. He left the thieves, entered a monastery, and gave himself over completely to obeying his spiritual father and the monastic rule. He benefited much from the teachings of Saints Macarius, Arsenius and Isidore. Later he withdrew to solitude in a cell, where he dedicated himself completely to physical labor, prayer, vigils and contemplating God. Tormented by the demon of lust, Moses confessed to Isidore, his spiritual father, who gave him counsel to increase his fasting, and even when eating to avoid satisfying his appetite. When this regimen did not help, he was counseled to keep all-night vigil and to pray standing. Then he also began the practice of bringing water to the elderly monks from a distant well, all night long. After six years of terrible struggles, St. Isidore miraculously healed him of lustful thoughts, fantasies and dreams perpetrated on him by the demon. Moses was ordained a priest in old age. He founded his own monastery, had seventy-five disciples, and lived to the age of seventy-five. He foresaw his death: one day he told his disciples to flee, for the barbarians were about to attack the monastery. When the disciples urged him to escape with them, Moses said that he had formerly been violent, and had to suffer violence himself, according to the words: For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword (Matthew 26:52). He remained at the monastery with six brethren, and the barbarians slew them. One of the brethren, hiding nearby, saw seven shining wreaths descend from heaven upon the seven martyrs.

THE VENERABLE SAVA OF PSKOV AND KRYPTETSK

Sava was a Serb by descent. He lived a life of asceticism in the Monastery of the Holy Theotokos in Pskov, and then became abbot of that monastery. But they praised him, and so, fleeing the glory of men, he withdrew to the shores of Lake Kryptetsk, where he founded a new community dedicated to St. John the Theologian. Nevertheless, he was unable to conceal his fame and prominence even there. He was visited by Prince Yaroslav of Pskov and his wife. Sava would not allow the wife to enter the monastery, but he blessed her and prayed to God for her, and healed her of a disease outside the monastery. This saint of God found rest in the year 1495 A.D. and his relics have retained miracle-working power. Abbot Dositheus was one of his visitors at Kryptetsk.

REFLECTION

A true Christian avoids the praise of men--and not only avoids it, but has a true fear of it. St. Sava of Pskov left the office of abbot, and the monastery itself and the good brotherhood of the monastery, fleeing to a desolate place to escape the praise of men--for the love of praise robs our hearts. A devout prince, upon hearing of the asceticism of St. Moses Murin [the Black], took his retinue into the desert to see him. Moses learned that the prince was coming to his monastery, and quickly ran to hide somewhere, but he unexpectedly encountered the high-ranking visitors. "Where is the cell of Abba Moses?" the servants of the prince asked, not suspecting that this was Moses himself. Moses opened his mouth and said: "What do you want him for? He is an ignorant old man, very untruthful, and completely impure in life." Hearing this, the visitors were astonished, but continued on. When they arrived at his cell, they asked for the elder, but the monks said he was not there. The visitors told them what the monk on the road had said. The monks were dismayed, and asked them: "What did this old man look like?" The visitors answered that he was very dark-skinned, tall and dressed miserably; and the monks cried out loudly: "But that was Abba Moses himself!" This incident was of great spiritual benefit to the prince. He returned home rejoicing.

Taken from the Prologue of Ochrid, by St. Nikolai Velimirovich

"There do not exist many or few, nor small or great problems. The only problem is the absence of Christ from our lives" (From the life and teachings of Elder Epiphanius Theodoropoulos)