



Simply Orthodox



Prayer and Contemplation

Written by the Very Rev. Vladimir Berzonsky

'Thoughts in Christ' series

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Prayers from the Lenten Period:

No one could describe
the Word of the Father;

But when He took flesh
from you, Theotokos, He
accepted to be described,

And restored the fallen
image to its former state
by uniting it to Divine
Beauty.

We confess and proclaim
our salvation in word and
images!

Sunday of Orthodoxy Kontakion Tone 8

www.ocf.org/OrthodoxPage/prayers/triodion/lent1sun

Church Schedule

***Vesper Service
Saturday 7pm***

***Divine Liturgy
Sunday 10am***

***Church Address:
6 Oxford Street
Collingwood VIC
(Melway 44 B6)***

***"Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and
do not do what I tell you?" (Luke 6:46)***

The simple yet productive way to progress in union with the Holy Trinity is to pray slowly enough so that you will listen to what you are communicating to the Lord. Sometimes we make a habit of saying our prayers by rote, reciting them without thought of what the words mean. That's what our loving Lord Jesus means in the above quotation. We don't always consider the implications of our prayers.

How often we call God "Lord" both in our private prayers and in the sacred services. Ask anybody the meaning of the term, and we'll rarely hear, "I don't know." But the essence of the word has been lost in a democracy like ours, where we so emphasize equality that we have lost any concept of the difference between master and servant. That's the glory of our American way of life, but in the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Christian, we are not on an equal basis. We don't save ourselves; He saves us. We don't elect ourselves members of the Kingdom of Heaven; we pray for Him to choose us. And we don't make the rules for the way we live on earth; we take our cues from the sacred scriptures and the teachings of the Church. Of course we may find many who call themselves Christians and follow their own impulses by fashioning a do-it-yourself religion; but for the true Christian, that's not only impossible, it leads to a dead end.

How can we do what Christ tells us? He speaks directly in the New Testament at times, and through the apostles in other places. His teachings are embellished and shaped for further comprehension in the sacred services of the Church, in the writings of the saints and those who are inspired by the Holy Spirit with insights that help us on our journeys through life.

He speaks to us in our prayers as well. Pay attention to the phrases you are whispering, and you will be gifted with

hidden meanings that you would not capture by cursory repetitions. You will discover that some prayer you have recited daily since childhood, such as the Lord's Prayer, O Heavenly King or the 23rd Psalm, will come alive in a most unexpected way. You are captured by a term or phrase in an "Aha!" moment. You had not understood it quite that way ever before.

It happens especially when you have experienced something new and different in your life's journey. Maybe you have been humbled by a disappointment, or challenged by some illness, a loss of job or a move from your place of residence. Perhaps somebody dear to you caused a trauma in your own routine. A relative had been severely tested, a loved one created a hardship in your life, or you decided to explore at a deeper level the beliefs that you had previously taken for granted.

It may happen that when you are hospitalized you find you can be changed by Him who "makes me lie down" either in green pastures or on a bed of nails. Or when for the first time you "walk through the shadow of death," you learn the depth of your faith. And when you are overflowing with joy brought on by somebody you had come to appreciate in a new and exciting way, and you find that "my cup runneth over."

These are examples of word nourishment, and the taste of such morsels is more delicious than anything that comes from mere food. When you learn to contemplate in this manner, you will relish the experience and want nothing more to satisfy you. Here you will find a new meaning of life. You will rise above the mundane and move into the temple of your mind.

* <http://www.oca.org/CHRIST-thoughts-article.asp?SID=6&ID=166>

The Scripture Readings and Commemorations

Sunday, March 8th, 2009

First Sunday of Great Lent: Sunday of Orthodoxy



EPISTLE READING

The Reading is from Hebrews 11: 24-26, 32-40

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶ esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. ³² 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: ³³ who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴ 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. ³⁵ Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. ³⁶ Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ 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— ³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. ³⁹ And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, ⁴⁰ God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from John 1: 43-51

⁴³ The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." ⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." ⁴⁶ And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." ⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!" ⁴⁸ Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." ⁴⁹ Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" ⁵⁰ Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." ⁵¹ And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

New King James Version sourced from www.biblegateway.com

The Lives of Saints Commemorated:

Sunday March 8th, 2009

St Theophylactus, bishop of Nicomedia (845)

"Theophylact was from the east; his native city is unknown. In Constantinople he became a close friend of Tarasius, who afterwards became Patriarch of Constantinople (see Feb. 25). Theophylact was made Bishop of Nicomedia. After the death of Saint Tarasius, his successor Nicephorus (see June 2) called together a number of Bishops to help him in fighting the iconoclasm of Emperor Leo the Armenian, who reigned from 813 to 820. Among them was Euthymius, Bishop of Sardis (celebrated Dec. 26), who had attended the holy Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787 — he was exiled three times for the sake of the holy icons, and for defying the Emperor Theophilus' command to renounce the veneration of the icons, was scourged from head to foot until his whole body was one great wound, from which he died eight days later, about the year 830; Joseph of Thessalonica (see July 14); Michael of Synnada (see May 23); Emilian, Bishop of Cyzicus (see Aug. 8); and Saint Theophylact, who boldly rebuked Leo to his face, telling him that because he despised the long-suffering of God, utter destruction was about to overtake him, and there would be none to deliver him. For this, Theophylact was exiled to the fortress of Strobilus in Karia of Asia Minor, where after 30 years of imprisonment and hardship, he gave up his holy soul about the year 845. Leo the Armenian, according to the Saint's prophecy, was slain in church on the eve of our Lord's Nativity, in 820." (Great Horologion)

Hieromartyr Theodoretus (362)

The priest Theodoretus was custodian of a great cathedral in Antioch, built by the Emperor Constantine and known in its time as 'the golden church' for the beauty and luxury of its appointments. When Julian the Apostate came to the throne, he denied Christ and launched a persecution of Christians. The Emperor's uncle, also named Julian, came to Antioch to prosecute the persecution there. After plundering the church he brought Theodoretus to trial and demanded that he deny Christ. Instead, the faithful priest confessed Christ fervently and rebuked the Emperor for having denied the faith and returned to idol-worship 'as a dog returns to its vomit.' In spite, the judge urinated in the golden church, for which Theodoretus prophesied that he would die a terrible death. Theodoretus was beheaded, and Julian his judge was seized with terrible abdominal pain from the moment he defiled the church until he died in torment. Note: Theodoretus is commemorated on March 3 in the Greek Calendar.

compiled by John Brady www.abbamoses.com/months/february.html

Fr Igor will celebrate the Divine Liturgy at **St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, Ballarat**

fourth Saturday of the month
commencing 10am.

Contact Spiro 53347439 or spiro@iprimus.com.au

Church Address:

116 Humffray St, BALLARAT



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