

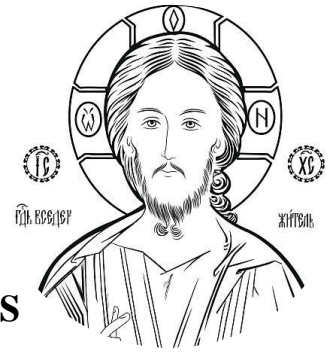


The Forerunner

Weekly Parish Bulletin

Sunday, November 21, 2021

FEAST OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS



RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION

(Tone 5)

Let us believers praise and worship the Word coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation. For He took pleasure in ascending the cross in the flesh to suffer death and to raise the dead by his glorious resurrection!

APOLYTIKION OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS

(Tone 4)

Today the Virgin is the foreshadowing of the pleasure of God, and the beginning of the preaching of the salvation of mankind. Thou hast appeared in the Temple of God openly and hast gone before, preaching Christ to all. Let us shout with one thrilling voice, saying: Rejoice, O thou who art the fulfillment of the Creator's dispensation.

KONTAKION OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS

(Tone 4)

The sacred treasury of God's holy glory, * the greatly precious bridal chamber and Virgin, * the Savior's most pure temple, free of stain and undefiled, * into the House of the Lord * on this day is brought forward * and bringeth with herself the grace * of the Most Divine Spirit; * her do God's Angels hymn with songs of praise, * for she is truly the heavenly tabernacle.



PROKEIMENON

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. For He had regarded the humility of His servant"

(Lk. 1:46-47)

THE READING FROM THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE HEBREWS

(Heb. 9:1-7)

Brethren, even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary. For a tent was prepared, the outer one, in which were the lamp stand and the table and the bread of the Presence; it is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain stood a tent called the Holy of Holies, having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, which contained a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. These preparations having thus been made, the priests go continually into the outer tent, performing their ritual duties; but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people.



THE READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE

(Luk. 10:38-42; 11:27-28)

At that time, Jesus entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha received Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to His teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to Him and said, "Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her." As He said this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the breasts that Thou didst suck!" But He said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

MEGALYNARION OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS

(Tone 4)

The Angels beholding the entrance of the all-pure one were overtaken by surprise; how had the Virgin entered into the Holy of Holies?

Since you are a living temple of God, O Theotokos, no impure hand shall touch you. But the lips of believers, let them ceaselessly laud you, crying unto you joyfully with the voice of the angels: Verily, O undefiled Virgin, you are more exalted than all creatures.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRIEST

By: Fr. Michael Gillis

In the letters of Sts. Barsanuphius and John,

there is an interesting exchange between a young zealous monk and St. John (letters 503 - 570). In the first letter we find out that the young monk is upset with his spiritual father, who was also his cellmate, because he eats and sleeps too much. Apparently the spiritual father was eating three times a day, instead of once a day as was usual among desert monks. In addition, when the young monk would wake the older monk while saying his early morning prayers, the older monk would say, "Giving rest to one's neighbour is a great virtue..." This young monk felt like the possibility of his spiritual growth was thwarted by the apparent laziness of his spiritual father.

St. John's response is surprising. He first says that each person must eat what he needs, even if this means eating three times a day. And as far as sleep goes, St. John points out that there are two kinds of sleepiness: the sleepiness that comes from bodily weakness (referring probably to the spiritual father) and the sleepiness that comes from over-eating, leading to temptation to fornication (referring probably to the young monk).

Further, St. John points out that even if one does eat only once a day, but he eats without discernment, then such asceticism is of no benefit. "Without discernment" is a bit of a technical term. It means to do something, anything, without understanding how what you are doing is helping (or hindering) your relationship with God and with the people around you. Discernment is key to almost everything in the spiritual life. And the beginning of discernment is to realize that we are really bad at it.

One saying of the Desert Fathers is, "He who is his own spiritual father has a fool for a spiritual father." And when we do have someone

else as a spiritual father or mother, we gain no benefit if we are continually second guessing them. Ironically, in our foolishness, we think we are discerning, but we are really just puffed up with pride and don't realize it. In the following letters, we find out that this younger monk's real problems lay in his anger—often the underlying fuel for lustful thoughts. And anger often finds its ground in a “pretence to rights.” That is, we think we deserve something else, something bigger, better, easier, more spiritual, more important, more interesting, more this, less that. We think we have a right to be treated better, recognized, thanked and respected. And when our rights are ignored, we become angry.

This anger, however, is often hidden, we are too proud to be honest. That is, we would be ashamed if others knew, even our spiritual father or mother, that we are not as humble as we want them to think we are. The inner anger and frustration then bursts out in unexpected places, often in thoughts of fornication. But there is a way forward.

St. John writes to this young monk that he must talk to his spiritual father “without turmoil [in his heart], but with humility and discernment. Until he is able to do this, St. John gives this young monk a process by which he can acquire humility and discernment. He tells the young monk that he is to do his best, “and no more.”

Those words, “and no more,” are the secret to the first steps in acquiring humility and discernment. Here's the problem: We so often set ourselves up for failure by thinking our best must mean that we should do what someone else, probably a saint, is doing or has done. And so, without discernment, we force ourselves to complete a rigorous prayer rule

or fasting discipline, or to sleep very little, or attend copious church services, or to volunteer at every opportunity—all without discernment, often motivated by a pride that thinks that all we have to do is force ourselves and we will attain the spiritual heights others seem to have attained.

How do we know if our asceticism is without discernment? Like this young monk, we start to judge the weakness of others. Judging others is a sure sign that our own asceticism may be without benefit. Or we find that trying harder only makes us more angry and fills our minds with turmoil so that we are too embarrassed or seem somehow unable to talk to our spiritual father or mother about it. When we find ourselves in this spot, I think the advice of St. John is very helpful. We must do our best, and no more. And we must accept that our best may be much less than we think it should be. This will be the beginning of the humility which will bring discernment.

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

If you wish to announce something on The Forerunner, please e-mail Elias Neto at neto.elias@aol.com by Thursday

- The Fraser Valley Orthodox Youth Group every Thursday from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm at 2051 Windsor Street, Abbotsford. For questions, please contact Chris Hawthorne at: fraservalleyorthodoxyouth@gmail.com Masks are mandatory for those attending, including youth leaders.
- The Nativity Fast has already begun. We fast to enter into the longing of all mankind for the coming of the Saviour.
- Orthodox Christianity 101: On November 20 at 12:00 pm we started our 5-week catechumen classes. We will discuss what Orthodox Christians believe and do, and why

they believe and do it. All are welcome.

- Our next Church education class for home-schoolers will be Friday December 2 at 9:00 am. The topic will be St. Nicholas and why he is such a big deal. Talk to Judi Petker for more information

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This Bulletin is a publication of:

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Thank you for your presence today!

PRAYERS FOR THE DEPARTED

PRAYERS FOR THE LIVING



Icon: The Entrance of the Theotokos

Readings for the Week: **Mon.** Phm. 1:1-25. Luk. 17:20-25; **Tue.** 1Thes. 1:6-10. Luk. 17:26-37; 18:8; **Wed.** Php. 3:20-21; 4:1-3. Luk. 18:15-17, 26-30; **Thu.** Gal. 3:23-29; 4:1-5. Mk. 5:24-3; **Fri.** 1Thes. 2:14-20. Luk. 19:12-28; **Sat.** 2Cor. 8:1-5. Luk. 10:19-21.