

COMMITTED TO THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY

Key points about the early Church are brought out in today's reading from the Book of Acts (Acts 11:19-30). We must note that there has been a definitive shift in how Christ's followers are perceived by those who are not attracted to their teachings: they are viewed as a threat that needed to be dealt with swiftly. With the stoning of Stephen, a terrible period of persecution was launched against the Christians. Despite meeting violent opposition from the Jewish religious leaders, the Church continued to grow.

In today's reading, we also see just how committed the first Christians were to helping one another in time of need. A great famine struck the ancient world, beginning in Judea and later spreading to Greece and Italy. It was to last nearly seven years, bringing with it much hardship. In an organized manner, the church responds to this crisis by sending relief to those affected by the famine in Judea, "each according to his ability." Their donations were taken there by Barnabas and Paul, who would later do extensive missionary work together.

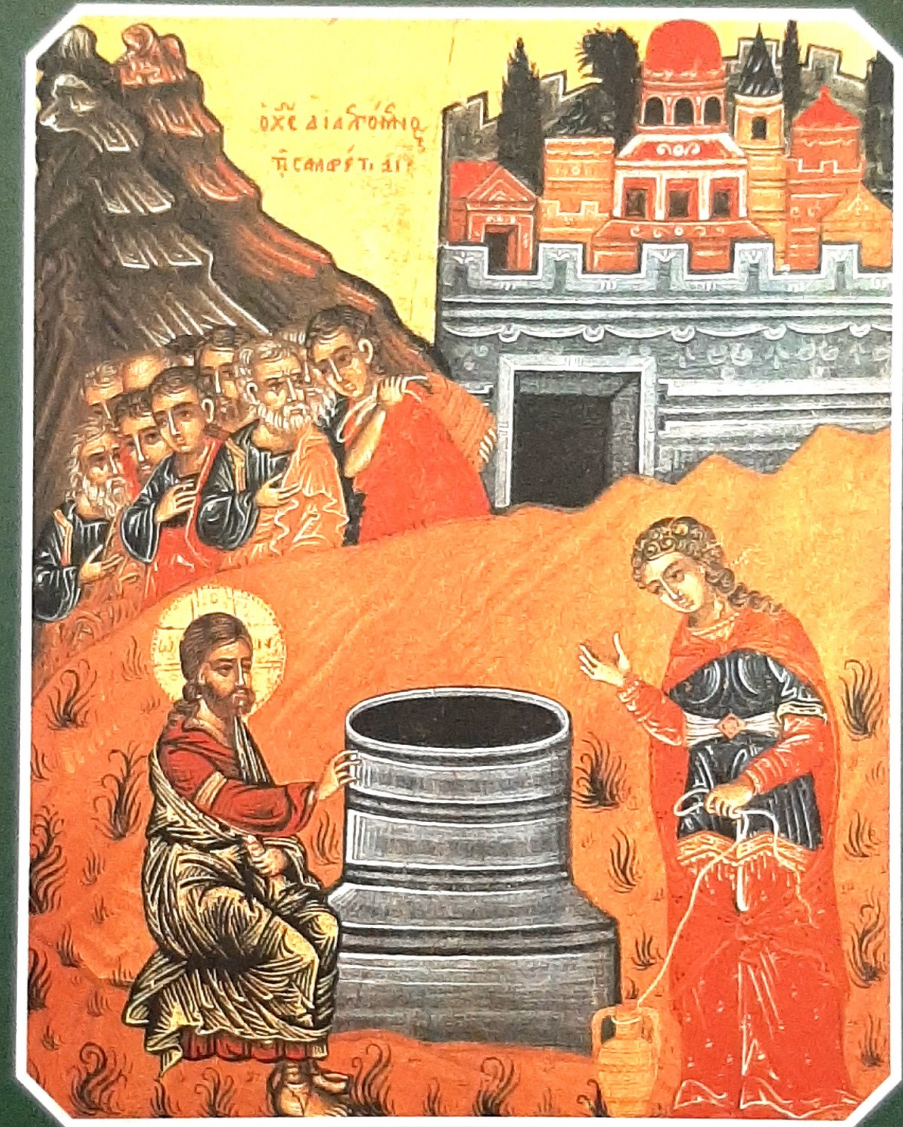
An important fact is also mentioned in today's reading: **'THE DISCIPLES WERE FIRST CALLED CHRISTIANS IN ANTIOCH.'** This was not originally a positive term. Non-believers ridiculed the disciples by referring to them in this manner. Far from taking offense at this word, it was embraced by the disciples as the greatest of honors to be called something that was directly related to their Master.

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey Litho in U.S.A.

ABOUT COMMUNION

We are happy that you have joined us today. Indeed, we pray for the "unity of the Faith" for the day when all of Christianity are united as ONE and can share a common Chalice. However, this is not the case as yet. Please note that Holy Communion, the actual Body & Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, is only for Members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting, and confession, & arrived before the Gospel reading. However, everyone is welcome to partake of the blessed bread and receive a blessing from the pastor at the dismissal. If you are interested, you may inquire with the pastor how you can become a member.

If you are a guest or otherwise not a regular communicant, please give your baptismal name when receiving.



A MEETING AT THE WELL



St. Anthony The Great Antiochian Orthodox Church

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Very Rev. Fr. Elia Shalhoub, Pastor & Dean of South Florida Deanery
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WELCOME TO ST. ANTHONY'S

Where people from around the world come together to serve God and our community. We are glad you are worshiping with us today! This Church is one community of many in the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. The Church of Antioch belongs to two thousand years of evangelization, teaching, history, and tradition which expresses the continued commitment of its members to the Orthodox Christian faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!

St. Anthony Church is a Pan-Orthodox community, under the omophorion of His Eminence Metropolitan SABA within Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America.

If you are a first time visitor, please fill out the guest form located on the literature table.
We want you to feel at home in prayer and worship. Please submit your names to the ushers and introduce yourself to Fr. Elia at the end of the service so he may welcome you personally.

Following services, please join us for sharing of fellowship, coffee, and food.

DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES FOR SUNDAY, MAY 18, 2025

TONE 4 / EOTHINON 7; FIFTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA

SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

MARTYRS PETER, DIONYSIOS, ANDREW, PAUL, CHRISTINA, HERAKLIOS, PAULINOS AND
BENEDIMOS; STEPHEN THE NEW, PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE

~ The Priest begins Divine Liturgy with "Blessed is the Kingdom" and the choir responds "Amen." Bearing the Paschal Candle, the priest then leads the singing of the Paschal Apolytikion and censes the west side of the altar.

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

~The choir then sings this twice, and the liturgy continues with the great litany.

THE FIRST ANTIPHON

Verse: Shout with joy to God, all the earth; sing to His Name, give glory to His praises.

Refrain: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

Verse: Say to God: How awesome are Thy works; let all the earth worship Thee, and sing to Thee. Let it sing a song to Thy Name, O Most High. (*Refrain*)

Glory... Both now... (*Refrain*)

THE SECOND ANTIPHON

Verse: May God have mercy upon us, and bless us, and may He cause His face to shine upon us, and have mercy upon us.

Refrain: Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.

Verse: That Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy salvation among all nations; let the people give thanks to Thee, O God, let all the people give thanks to Thee. (*Refrain*)

Verse: May God bless us, and may all the ends of the earth fear Him. (*Refrain*) Glory... Both now... O, only begotten Son and Word of God...

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His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS

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THE THIRD ANTIPHON

Verse: Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered, and let those who hate Him flee from before His face.

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

Verse: As smoke vanishes, so let them vanish, as wax melts before the fire. (*Refrain*)

Verse: So let sinners perish before the face of God, and let the righteous be glad. (*Refrain*)

Verse: This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. (*Refrain*)

THE EISODIKON (ENTRANCE HYMN) OF PASCHA

In the gathering places bless ye God the Lord, from the springs of Israel. Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee: Alleluia.

~ Now sing these hymns in the following order.

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE FOUR

Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel, the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying, Death hath been spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world Great Mercy.

APOLYTIKION FOR MID-PENTECOST IN TONE EIGHT

In the midst of this Feast, O Savior, give Thou my thirsty soul to drink of the waters of true worship; for Thou didst call out to all, saying: Whosoever is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Wherefore, O Christ our God, Fountain of life, glory to Thee.

~ Now sing the apolytikion of the patron saint or feast of the temple.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT

Thou didst become like the zealous Elijah in his condition, and followed John the Baptist in his upright ways. Becoming a dweller in the wilderness, and an establisher of the universe by thy prayer O Father Anthony.

Wherefore intercede thou with Christ our God to save our souls.

THE KONTAKION OF PASCHA IN TONE EIGHT

Though Thou didst descend into the grave, O Immortal One, yet didst Thou destroy the power of Hades, and didst arise as victor, O Christ God, calling to the myrrh-bearing women, Rejoice, and giving peace unto Thine Apostles, O Thou Who dost grant resurrection to the fallen.

THE EPISTLE

How magnified are Thy works, O Lord. In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

The Reading from the Acts of the Holy Apostles. (11:19-30)

In those days, when the apostles were scattered because of the tribulation that arose over Stephen, they traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one, except to Jews only. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who upon coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned to the Lord. The report concerning them reached the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas, to go as far out as Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they should cleave to the Lord; for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great multitude was added unto the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year, they were gathered together in the church, and they taught a great multitude of people, and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabos stood up and signified by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over the whole world; and this took place in the days of Claudius Caesar. And the disciples, every one according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren who dwelt in Judaea; and they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (4:5-42)

At that time, Jesus came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and so Jesus, wearied as He was with his journey, sat down beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give Me a drink.” For His Disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to Him, “How is it that Thou, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and Who it is that is saying 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, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; where do you get that living water? Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?” Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst forever; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal 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 Him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband; this you said truly.” The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain; and Thou sayest that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming [He Who is called Christ]; when He comes, He will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I Who speak to you am He.” Just then His Disciples came. They marveled that He was talking with a woman, but none said, “What dost Thou wish?” or, “Why art Thou talking with her?” So the woman left her water jar, and went away into the city, and said to the people, “Come, see a man Who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” They went out of the city and were coming to Him. Meanwhile the Disciples besought Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” But He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” So the Disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him food?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him Who sent Me, and to accomplish His work. Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see how the fields are already white for harvest. He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.” Many Samaritans from that city believed in Him because of the woman’s testimony, “He said to me all that I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to Him, they asked Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His words. They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”

MEGALYNARION FOR PARALYTIC SUNDAY IN TONE ONE

The angel spake to her that is full of grace, saying, O pure Virgin, rejoice; and I say also, Rejoice; for thy Son is risen from the tomb on the third day.
Rejoice and be glad, O gate of the divine Light; for Jesus Who disappeared in the tomb hath risen with greater radiance than the sun, illuminating all believers, O Lady favored of God.

KOINONIKON (COMMUNION HYMN) OF PASCHA IN TONE EIGHT

Receive ye the body of Christ; taste ye the Fountain of immortality.
Instead of “We have seen the true light,” sing “Christ is Risen” once.

the floor with my brothers in the same room. The abbot said to him: "So, you did not make a major concession in the monastery. As for that brother, about whom you complained, he was in his house, sleeping on a bed, with a soft mattress underneath it, and an ostrich feather pillow. Do you think he could bear our austerity all at once?"

There is reality and there is the ideal, and what is in between is the path on which the Christian strives throughout his life. The fruit of virtue is not a goal in itself. Loving God is the goal, and the fruit is a natural product of it. Your ultimate goal is to keep striving toward perfection, whether you reach it or not. The great spiritual teacher, St. John Climacus, said: "God will not hold you accountable for the number of virtues you have attained, but for the sincere effort you have made to achieve this or that virtue." In another place, he says something shocking at first glance: "The drops of sweat of your struggle are more valuable in the eyes of God than the water of baptism."

Perhaps the pastoral realism of Christianity is most evident in the absence of a clear and conclusive legal definition that determines for the believer what to do in both general and specific situations. There is no teaching, gentle or rigid, that soothes the conscience. You are constantly inspired by the Spirit of God, the Spirit of true understanding, to illuminate your path, so you know how to walk and act in the face of countless situations that may come your way.

Take marital relationships, for example. There is no specific teaching regarding how spouses should deal with each other in all aspects. The concept of married life is clear in Christianity. But how it is lived, the extent of each partner's tolerance, the method of encompassing love that accommodates the other's flaws, and many other questions become the subject of research and dialogue. These require frank openness between the spouses, under the care of their spiritual father, who helps them practically to succeed and overcome their failures through continuous personal spiritual care. Care that acknowledges existing weakness transcends and strengthens the person. It does not exempt from the obligations of repentance for what the Church considers a human weakness, which it treats until the person is cured. There are many behavioral issues, or issues within the science of ethics, that are not subjects of definitive decision in Christianity as much as they are subjects of dialogue, prayer, and inspiration from above.

Christians do not have any justification that can completely clear their consciences. You are called to confront the spiritual forces of evil in all their forms in this fallen world by arming yourself with the gospel, seeking divine guidance and advice from spiritual fathers, and strengthening yourself with your brothers and sisters in the Lord. If you make a mistake, nurture a life of repentance in yourself, making amends for what you did, renew your life, and direct it towards deeper and deeper spiritual maturity and awareness.

Saint Ephraim the Syrian defines the Church as "the community of penitents," that is, those who walk in this community. As a Christian, you cannot neglect repentance for a single day. You walk in it, rising in its spirit, day by day, toward the full stature of Christ. Christianity is not a static religion in the sense of being satisfied with so-called religious duties. It is a path on which you are always moving toward the peak. It is a dynamic faith, if you prefer, because it does not stop you at a certain level of transcendence, maturity, and holiness, but rather opens the horizons wider before you to the Absolute, to God, so that you imitate Him and live up to His example. If you truly love your Lord, you will throw yourself into His arms, not looking for peace of mind, but rather, desiring to live in His care. You walk, without stopping, with Him and to Him, being satisfied with Him alone, and finding yourself in Him.

Between Reality and the Ideal

His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

What I like about Christianity that it is ideal and realistic at the same time. It is ideal to the extent that it makes a person, if he wants, a heavenly being, an angel on earth; and realistic in its care for him, if he seeks the ideal, so that he can achieve it. It rejects sin and fights it on principle, and pledges to the person, who is weak before it, a healing method that will rid him of it. It nurtures him until he is strengthened in spirit, supports him so that he does not fall, and if he does, Christianity strengthens him so that he can rise from his fall and start again.

The ideal of Christianity is derived from the word "example," meaning it offers the presence of a teacher, a role model, a clear standard which the believer strives, with God's grace, to imitate. The ideal is not a utopia, a dream, that is impossible to reach or unworkable. The person of Christ Himself is the ideal, role model, and example. It believes that the Word of God was incarnated and became a human being to give humans the ability to reach His likeness. He became a perfect human being in every aspect, a real human being like us in every aspect, except for sin.

The Church Fathers have said about His earthly birth: "God (the Word) became man, so that man might become God." The true Christian seeks to imitate his Master in everything. The Holy Fathers teach us to think, before embarking on any action: If Christ were in my place, how would He act? Thus, the believer imitates, as much as possible, His example. Many followed this path and were sanctified and exalted, becoming angels in human bodies. Some are well-known, even saints whose fragrance spread throughout the world. Many of them – perhaps most – are unknown or known within a small area. Therefore, after Pentecost, the Church celebrates a special Sunday feast for All Saints, "whether men or women, known or unknown" (The Horologion, or The Book of the Hours).

Christianity's realism lies in the rich, militant, spiritual approach accumulated by the work of the Holy Spirit in it over the centuries. This approach is based on the believer's progression through the stages of the Gospel, based primarily on sound, personalized guidance. The most important books in this field are available to everyone. But to live what is stated in them, and for the believer to gain the ability to apply it, requires someone to personally lead and guide. Father Andrei Skrima wrote in an introduction about the book "The Ladder of Divine Ascent" (a didactic, ascetical, and spiritual book, considered essential in the Orthodox Church): "This book is not for reading." By this, he meant this to live by it, not just to learn from it. This book is lived with help from an experienced guide. It is not enough to read about a spiritual teacher until you truly walk the path of his teaching.


The personal dimension of guidance is essential in Christianity. The general recipe for all believers is the Gospel. Living and applying it depends on each person's ability, circumstances, personality, character, and upbringing. Not all human beings are the same internally. Someone who grew up in a pious and devout home environment is different from someone who grew up in something completely different. Whoever has a sin ingrained in him since childhood will not be treated in the same way as someone who has never experienced this sin.

Then there is the growth in our life in Christ. Not everyone is at the same spiritual level. People are advanced, beginning, and somewhere in between. "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways" (1 Corinthians 13:11).

Bustan al-Ruhbaan (The Garden of Monks) tells the following story: The order of the monks in the Egyptian desert at that time required sleeping on a mat without a pillow. A new monastic student came to them from a wealthy background. The abbot allowed him to use a stone as a pillow. One of the brothers complained, so the abbot asked him: "How were you sleeping at home, my son?" He answered: "On


Announcements

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR IS PROVIDED BY PARISH COUNCIL TO LAUNCH OUR NEW BUILDING CAMPAIGN PLEASE SIGN UP ON THE CALENDAR IN THE NARTHEX TO PREPARE AND SERVE FOOD FOR OUR COFFEE HOUR .

<div>May 11</div> <div>May 18</div> <div>May 25</div>	<div></div> <div>Epistle Reader</div> <div>Sydney</div> <div>Chance Ricketts</div> <div>Kurt Ziems</div>	<div>Upcoming Birthdays & Anniversarie</div> <div>May</div> <div>18: Henry and Donna Soto Anniversary</div> <div>19: Nickolas Mariano</div> <div>Jennifer Glass</div> <div>20: Seleen Adili</div> <div>24: Beth Manzini</div> <div>27: Tristan Riter</div> <div>Alex and Bobbi Skaff Anniversary</div> <div>30: Sam and Ceara Jacobs Anniversary</div> <div>31: Corina Dragu</div> <div>May God Grant You Many Years!</div>
<div>Fasting Calendar</div> <div>Fast-Free through the Great Feast of Ascension (May 28)</div> <div>Abstain from meat, dairy, eggs, fish, olive oil, wine: 5/30</div> <div>View calendar at https://tinyurl.com/AOCfast2025</div>		



Upcoming Events

<div>This Week</div> <div>Sunday, 5/18</div> <div>8:45 am: Matins Service</div> <div>10:00 am: Divine Liturgy followed by coffee hour, all are welcome</div> <div>Wednesday, 5/21</div> <div>5:30pm: Great Vespers</div> <div>6pm: Choir Practice</div> <div>Saturday, 5/24</div> <div>4:00 pm: Catechism Class</div> <div>5:30 pm: Great Vespers Followed by Confessions</div> <div>Celebration of the Feast of Ascension</div> <div>Divine Liturgy Wednesday, May 28 at 5:30pm</div>	<div>Sunday School Graduation</div> <div></div> <div>Sunday, June 1</div> <div>after the Divine Liturgy.</div> <div>Are you curious to see how the Bible Bowl works?</div> <div>Join us Sunday, June 1 after the Coffee Hour, to support our Teen SOYO group at the Mock Bible Bowl</div>
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Please pray for the healing of Laney Ricketts, Michealle Carey, Debbie Thieme, Adriana Theodoropoulos, Beverly Delida, Alix Hall, Nina and Diogo Penas, Beth Manzini, John Archambeau, Alex & Soula, Susan Moran, Susan Perers, William Snell, Vasilika Yardines, Faouzi Najjar and Marie Williams.



Beloved in Christ, Christ is risen!

Blessed Feast of Mid-Pentecost!

Love of Neighbor

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your strength. This is the first and great -commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22: 37-40)

The love of the neighbor does not mean the love of only those who love us and are good to us. The neighbor means anyone near at hand, everyone made by God, all "for whom Christ has died" (Romans 14:15). The neighbor also includes the enemies. This is the point of Christ's parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10.29-37). It is also the Lord's specific teaching in the Sermon on the Mount."But I say to you that hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you . . . If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He is kind to the ungrateful and selfish (Luke 6:27-35). Genuine love is expressed in deeds, and not in words alone. It is expressed through what one actually does in one's life. It is manifested in concern for others through kindly speech and generosity with one's earthly possessions given by God. It is revealed in one's works of faith in keeping all of God's commandments. - Fr. Thomas Hopko (The Orthodox Faith 'Virtues')

In the Risen Lord,

Fr. Elia Shalhoub

Very Rev. Fr. Elia Shalhoub, Pastor



TODAY'S FEAST: SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

One of the most ancient cities of the Promised Land was Shechem, also called Sikima, located at the foot of Mount Gerazim. There the Israelites had heard the blessings in the days of Moses and Jesus of Navi. Near to this town, Jacob, who had come from Mesopotamia in the nineteenth century before Christ, bought a

piece of land where there was a well. This well, preserved even until the time of Christ, was known as Jacob's Well. Later, before he died in Egypt, he left that piece of land as a special inheritance to his son Joseph (Gen. 49:22). This town, before it was taken into possession by Samaria, was also the leading city of the kingdom of the ten tribes. In the time of the Romans it was called Neapolis, and at present Nablus. It was the first city in Canaan visited by the Patriarch Abraham. Here also, Jesus of Navi (Joshua) addressed the tribes of Israel for the last time. Almost three hundred years later, all Israel assembled there to make Roboam (Rehoboam) king. When our Lord Jesus Christ, then, came at midday to this city, which is also called Sychar (John 4:5), He was wearied from the journey and the heat, and He sat down at this well. After a little while the Samaritan woman mentioned in today's Gospel passage came to draw water. As she conversed at some length with the Lord and heard from Him secret things concerning herself, she believed in Him; through her many other Samaritans also believed. Concerning the Samaritans we know the following: In the year 721 before Christ, Salmanasar (Shalmaneser), King of the Assyrians, took the ten tribes of the kingdom of Israel into captivity, and relocated all these people to Babylon and the land of the Medes. From there he gathered various nations and sent them to Samaria. These nations had been idolaters from before. Although they were later instructed in the Jewish faith and believed in the one God, they worshipped the idols also. Furthermore, they accepted only the Pentateuch of Moses, and rejected the other books of Holy Scripture. Nonetheless, they thought themselves to be descendants of Abraham and Jacob. Therefore, the pious Jews named these Judaizing and idolatrous peoples Samaritans, since they lived in Samaria, the former leading city of the Israelites, as well as in the other towns thereabout. The Jews rejected them as heathen and foreigners, and had no communion with them at all, as the Samaritan woman observed, "the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9). Therefore, the name Samaritan is used derisively many times in the Gospel narrations. After the Ascension of the Lord, and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the woman of Samaria was baptized by the holy Apostles and became a great preacher and Martyr of Christ; she was called Photine, and her feast is kept on February 26.

NIKEPHOROS THE CONFESSOR, PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Saint Nicephorus was born in Constantinople about the year 758, of pious parents; his father Theodore endured exile and tribulation for the holy icons during the reign of Constantine Copronymus (741-775). Nicephorus served in the imperial palace as a secretary. Later, he took up the monastic life, and struggled in asceticism not far from the imperial city; he also founded monasteries on the eastern shore of the Bosphorus, among them one dedicated to the Great Martyr Theodore.

After the repose of the holy Patriarch Tarasius, he was ordained Patriarch, on April 12, 806, and in this high office led the Orthodox resistance to the Iconoclasts' war on piety, which was stirred up by Leo the Armenian. Because Nicephorus championed the veneration of the icons, Leo drove Nicephorus from his throne on March 13, 815, exiling him from one place to another, and lastly to the Monastery of Saint Theodore which Nicephorus himself had founded. It was here that, after glorifying God for nine years as Patriarch, and then for thirteen years as an exile, tormented and afflicted, he gave up his blameless soul in 828 at about the age of seventy. See also March 8.