

St. Herman's Orthodox Church

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December 24 2023 – 29th Sunday After Pentecost

Sunday: Hours and Divine Liturgy – 9:30 am

Week of Holy Forefathers

John 20:1-10 (7th Matins Gospel)

Colossians 3:4-11 Epistle (29th Sunday)

Luke 14:16-24 Gospel (28th Sunday)

Troparion and Kontakions:

Troparion of the Sunday, Tone IV –

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel / the joyous message of Thy resurrection,
/ they cast away the ancestral curse / and elatedly told the Apostles: / Death is overthrown! / Christ
God is risen, / granting the world great mercy!

Hymn to the Theotokos, Tone IV –

The mystery of all eternity, / unknown even by angels, / through you, O Theotokos, is revealed to those
on earth: / God incarnate, by union without confusion. / He voluntarily accepted the cross for us, / by
which He resurrected the first-created man, / saving our souls from death.

Kontakion of the Sunday, Tone IV –

My Savior and Redeemer as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earthborn from their chains. He
has shattered the gates of hell, and as Master, He has risen on the third day!

Sunday of the Holy Forefathers, Troparion, Tone II –

Through faith Thou hast justified the Forefathers,/ betrothing through them the Church of the
gentiles./ These saints exult in glory/ for from their seed came forth a glorious fruit:/ She who bore
Thee without seed.// So by their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy upon us.

Kontakion, Tone VI –

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

St. Daniel the Stylite of Constantinople, Tone I –

Thou wast a pillar of patience, O venerable one,/ emulating the forefathers:/ Job, in afflictions; Joseph
in temptations,/ and the life of the incorporeal ones while in the body./ Entreat Christ God. O Daniel,
our father,// that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, Tone VIII "As first fruits" –

Having ascended thy pillar like a star of great radiance,/ thou didst illumine the world with thy
venerable deeds/ and didst dispel the gloom of deception, O father;// wherefore, we beseech thee: Shine
forth even now in the hearts of thy servants the unwaning light of knowledge.

COLOSSIANS 3:4-11

- ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.
- ⁵ Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.
- ⁶ Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,
- ⁷ in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.
- ⁸ But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.
- ⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,
- ¹⁰ and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
- ¹¹ where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.
- ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

LUKE 14:16-24

- ¹⁶ Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many,
- ¹⁷ and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.'
- ¹⁸ But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.'
- ¹⁹ And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.'
- ²⁰ Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'
- ²¹ So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.'
- ²² And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.'
- ²³ Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.'
- ²⁴ 'For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.' "

Prolog of Ohrid, December 24/December 11

https://www.ohrid-prolog.com/index.php?lang=en&prayer_date=2023-05-07

1. THE VENERABLE DANIEL THE STYLITE

Daniel was born in the village of Bethara near the city of Samosata in Mesopotamia of Christian parents, Elias and Martha. Through her tearful prayers, his barren mother received him from God, and as an only son he was dedicated to God from early childhood. Daniel embraced the monastic rank at the age of twelve, visited Simeon the Stylite, and was blessed by him. Desirous of solitude, Daniel left the monastery and withdrew to an abandoned pagan temple on the shore of the Black Sea. There he endured countless assaults from demons, but he conquered them all by perseverance, prayer and the sign of the Cross. Afterward he climbed up on a pillar. There he remained until his death, enduring both heat and cold, and attacks from both men and demons. Many disciples gathered around his pillar, and he directed them to eternal life by his example and his words. God rewarded His faithful servant with abundant grace while in this life, and he performed many miracles beneficial to men and prophesied future events. People from all parts crowded beneath his pillar, seeking help and counsel from the saint of God. Emperors and patriarchs as well as ordinary people came to him. Emperor Leo the Great brought his foreign guests, princes and nobles, and showed them St. Daniel on the pillar, saying to them: "Behold, the wonder in my kingdom!" Daniel foretold the day of his own death, instructed his disciples as a father to his sons, and took leave of them. At the time of his death, his disciples beheld angels, prophets, apostles and martyrs above his pillar. Having lived for eighty years, this holy angelic man entered into rest and took up his habitation in the Kingdom of Christ in the year 489 A.D.

2. THE VENERABLE LUKE THE STYLITE

Luke lived in Constantinople at the time of Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus. As a soldier, he participated in the war against the Bulgarians, in which he witnessed the death of many thousands of people, and from that war he emerged alive and unharmed. Seeing the finger of God in his deliverance, Luke scorned the vanity of the world and withdrew to a pillar near Chalcedon. There he lived a life of asceticism for forty-five years, cleansing his soul of all sinful desires and thoughts. Pleasing God, he entered into rest sometime between the years 970 and 980 A.D. and took up his habitation in a better life.

3. THE VENERABLE NICON THE DRY

As a monk in the Monastery of the Kiev Caves, he was enslaved by the Tartars. He lived for three years in captivity: shackled, tortured and mocked. When his kinsmen brought the money to ransom him from his master, he refused, saying: "If the Lord had wanted me to be free, He would not have delivered me into the hands of these lawless men." Once he told his master that Christ would free him in three days. The Tartar thought that this meant that his slave was going to escape, so he severed his tendons below the knees. However, on the third day, Nicon was indeed instantly carried to Kiev by an invisible hand. After a period of time, the Tartar came to Kiev and recognized Nicon, his former slave. He repented and was baptized. The former master became the servant and disciple of his former slave. Nicon was called "the Dry" because of the great austerity of his bodily fasting, and he was a great clairvoyant and miracle-worker. He entered peacefully into rest in the Lord on December 11, 1101 A.D.

4. THE HOLY MARTYR MIRAX

Mirax was an Egyptian. Deceived by a Moslem Emir, he embraced Islam. He later repented and entered a mosque with a cross. There he declared himself a Christian, calling upon the Moslems to forsake their falsehood and to accept the truth. He was tortured and beheaded in about the year 640 A.D.

THE VENERABLE DANIEL THE STYLITE

When holy Daniel desired to die
He taught his disciples thus:
"My dear children, the fruit of my labor,
Affix your heart to the Living God,
Contemplate in spirit the Heavenly Father.
Glorify the wondrous Creator with praise.
Let humility be the first of your virtues;
The humble in heaven are God's noblemen.
Then show obedience, such as befits the humble.
These are two adornments of every true believer.
The humble and the obedient keep hospitality:
Be hospitable and magnanimous.
These are three virtues, and still more I will say:
Fasting, vigils, poverty--the path to eternal happiness.
Here are six candles in the earthly darkness,

And the seventh is love, the greatest of all."
Thus the saint spoke, and imparted his blessings,
Then rendered his holy soul to the Lord.
O holy Daniel, inhabitant of heaven,
Implore Christ for the needs of us sinners.

REFLECTION

The Lord preserveth all them that love him (Psalm 145:20). The lives of the saints confirm this as clearly as the sun. Certain envious priests complained to Patriarch Anatolius about St. Daniel, slandering him and saying that he was a magician. In essence, they were envious of the exceedingly young ascetic, who surpassed them in all the virtues and attracted many people to himself by his way of life. The patriarch summoned Daniel and examined him regarding his faith and his way of life. When Daniel told him everything, the patriarch rose from his seat, embraced him, praised him, and dismissed him in peace. Several days later, Patriarch Anatolius became ill, summoned Daniel and asked him to pray to God for his recovery. Daniel prayed to God, and the patriarch was immediately restored to health. Since the patriarch wanted to reward Daniel somehow, the young saint begged him to forgive his slanderers as his reward. To this the patriarch replied: "How can I not forgive them when they are the authors of so much good, namely, that I now know you and have received healing through you?" Truly, the Lord preserves all who love Him, and He turns to their good the evil that men conceive against them.

While St. Nikon the Dry was a slave among the Tartars, his master became sick and was at the point of death. Seeing that he would soon die, he ordered his sons to crucify Nikon at the head of his grave after his death. St. Nikon, discerning the future, saw that his cruel master would be baptized and prayed to God for his restoration to health. Contrary to all expectations, the Tartar recovered. Thus, by prayer, Nikon saved himself from physical death and his master from spiritual death.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the covenant that God made with the righteous Noah (Genesis 9):

1. How God blessed Noah and his sons after the flood;
2. How He promised that there would never again be a universal flood;
3. How He established the rainbow as a sign of that covenant.

HOMILY on Lot

And Lot ... said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly (Genesis 19:7).

Lot, a righteous man among the unrighteous, lived in Sodom with his wife and two daughters. The faithful Abraham asked God: *Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?* (Genesis 18:23). God answered the faithful Abraham that not only would He not destroy the righteous, but if there were to be found ten righteous in that city, he would spare the entire city because of those ten. However, only one righteous man was found in Sodom--Lot--and he was a stranger. Just as before the flood there was only one righteous man in the world, Noah, so before the destruction of Sodom there was only one righteous man in that city, Lot. Lot was similar to his uncle Abraham in every virtue, notably in his obedience to God and his hospitality. The Sodomites hated him as a stranger and even more as a righteous man. *Brethren, do not so wickedly*, Lot exhorted them. He called the corrupt people his brethren in order to calm them and to remind them not to commit evil, in order to save them. But his brotherly words provoked them to even greater wrath. Lot was found worthy to have the angels of God visit him and deliver him from that corrupt city whose sins cried out to God. And the reprobates attacked the home of Lot to defile the sanctity of hospitality. *Brethren, do not so wickedly*, Lot implored them. But why would these brutes listen to a man if they did not fear God? That is why the angels of God punished them with blindness: *And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great* (Genesis 19:11). Then the angels led Lot from the city of the unrighteous and let loose a storm of brimstone and fire upon the city. Thus, the evil city perished, and the one righteous man in the city was saved. *Better is one righteous man than a thousand sinners* (Sirach 16:3).

O righteous God, Who never abandonest the righteous man, correct our unrighteousness and save us.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

Metropolitan Jonah requests that you send him the full name and general reason for intercessory prayer (such as health or illness, unemployment, family issues, military deployment to Afghanistan, etc.) for his pastoral care. Only the names of the living (and recently deceased) will be included in the prayer list in the weekly bulletin. He also requests that the faithful who have requested intercessory prayers for various persons let him know when there is no longer a specific need for prayer, so that we may keep the list current.

LIVING: Sarah, Emmanuel, Mark, Claudia, Katherine, Erika, Victoria, Michael, Tate, Renate, Dieter, Rebekah, Sofia, Ioannis, Anastasia, Elizabeth, Georgia, John, Elena, Alice, Matthew, Boris, Elizabeth, Davis (Columba), Moses, Emma, Kristin, Monk Sergius, Priest John, Priest David, Priest Costa, Priest Michael, Presbytera Cindy, Priest George, Presbytera Areti, Nun Aimiliane, Priest Charalambos, Monk Serapheim, Elizabeth, Katje, Rachel, Mandi, Clive, Claire, Rebecca, Janis, Paisley, George, Archpriest Alexander, Steven, Millicent, Archpriest Victor, Matushka Masha, Pdn. Patrick, Matushka Joanna, Matushka Sophia, Mother Theodora, Archpriest Alexander, James, Leonidas, Sophia, Maria, Larry, Bill, Modestos, Ephraim, Reader Moses, Jo Ann, Sarah, Paul, Brianna, Robert, Baby Nina, Charley & Alexandra, Irina & baby, Rebecca, Priest Alexander Laymon, Archpriest Michael Sekela, Fr. Filipe and his family, Irene and John, Inna and Emma, Ronin O'Neill, Anastasia and Mila, Brody (Anthony) Lessin, Sophia Stylianopoulos, Olga Petrova and the baby, Sarah Francis, Jeanine Karam, Christina Kendrat, Alexa, Valentina, Victor, Maria, Max, Mark, Elena, Anna, Benedict, Fr, Mark Grant and family

MEMORY ETERNAL: