

Iconography

Adult Spiritual Enrichment

December 13, 2020

CLASS 11

RAISING OF LAZARUS (APRIL 11)

Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday.

Visible triumphs are few in the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ. He preached a kingdom “not of this world.” At His nativity in the flesh there was “no room at the inn.” For nearly thirty years, while He grew “in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52), He lived in obscurity as “the son of Mary.” When He appeared from Nazareth to begin His public ministry, one of the first to hear of Him asked: “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46). In the end He was crucified between two thieves and laid to rest in the tomb of another man.

Two brief days stand out as sharp exceptions to the above—days of clearly observable triumph. These days are known in the Church as Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday. Together they form a unified liturgical cycle which serves as the passage from the forty days of Great Lent to Holy Week. They are the unique and paradoxical days before the Lord’s Passion. They are days of visible, earthly triumph, of resurrection and messianic joy in which Christ Himself is a deliberate and active participant. At the same time, they are days which point beyond themselves to an ultimate victory and final kingship which Christ will attain not by raising one dead man or entering a particular city, but by His own imminent suffering, death and resurrection.

“By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God!
Like the children with the palms of victory,
we cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death:
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!”

(Troparion of the Feast, sung on both Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday).

Lazarus Saturday

In a carefully detailed narrative, the Gospel relates how Christ, six days before His own death, and with particular mindfulness of the people “standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me” (John 11:42), went to His dead friend Lazarus at Bethany outside of Jerusalem (by about 2 miles). He was aware of the approaching death of Lazarus but deliberately delayed His coming, saying to His disciples at the news of His friend’s death: “For your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe” (John 11:14).

When Jesus arrived at Bethany, Lazarus was already dead four days. This fact is repeatedly emphasized by the Gospel narrative and the liturgical hymns of the feast. The four-day burial underscores the horrible reality of death. Man, created by God in His own image and likeness, is a spiritual-material being, a unity of soul and body. Death is destruction; it is the separation of soul and body. The soul without the body is a ghost, as one Orthodox theologian puts it, and the body without the soul is a decaying corpse. “I weep and I wail, when I think upon death, and behold our beauty, fashioned after

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the image of God, lying in the tomb dishonored, disfigured, bereft of form." This is a hymn of Saint John of Damascus sung at the Church's burial services. This "mystery" of death is the inevitable fate of man fallen from God and blinded by his own prideful pursuits.

With epic simplicity the Gospel records that, on coming to the scene of the horrible end of His friend, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). At this moment Lazarus, the friend of Christ, stands for all men, and Bethany is the mystical center of the world. Jesus wept as He saw the "very good" creation and its king, man, "made through Him" (John 1:3) to be filled with joy, life and light, now a burial ground in which man is sealed up in a tomb outside the city, removed from the fullness of life for which he was created, and decomposing in darkness, despair and death. As the Gospel says, the people were hesitant to open the tomb, for "by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days" (John 11:39).

When the stone was removed from the tomb, Jesus prayed to His Father and then cried with a loud voice: "Lazarus, come out." The icon of the feast shows the particular moment when Lazarus appears at the entrance to the tomb. He is still wrapped in his grave clothes and his friends, who are holding their noses because of the stench of his decaying body, must unwrap him. In everything stress is laid on the audible, the visible and the tangible. Christ presents the world with this observable fact: on the eve of His own suffering and death He raises a man dead four days! The people were astonished. Many immediately believed on Jesus and a great crowd began to assemble around Him as the news of the raising of Lazarus spread. The regal entry into Jerusalem followed.

Lazarus Saturday is a unique day: on a Saturday a Matins and Divine Liturgy bearing the basic marks of festal, resurrection services, normally proper to Sundays, are celebrated. Even the baptismal hymn is sung at the Liturgy instead of Holy God: "As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."

Note: The Commentary above provided by Very Rev. Paul Lazor.

This holy image appeared in the early Christian times. The Savior's disciples are depicted on the left side, next to Jesus Christ blessing the entrance to the cave. On the right side, there is Lazarus bound by the burial bonds. He comes out of his burial cave to meet his sisters, Martha and Mary, who are kneeling.

Orthodox Christians turn to the Raising of Lazarus icon with prayers to strengthen their faith. They ask for forgiveness for their sinful deeds and pray for the healing of ailments. The icon of the resurrection of Lazarus protects all believers from any evil and helps overcome life difficulties.

According to the V. Rev. Fr. Thomas Hopko, the Lazarene Miracle is the "climactic high point" of St. John's Gospel and the proof of Christ's divinity. It is also the act which serves as the catalyst of the events leading to Our Lord's arrest and Passion.

OTHER NOTES

The righteous saint Lazarus, also Lazarus the Four Days Dead, or Lazarus of Bethany (Latinized from the Hebrew: אלעזר, El'āzār, Eleazar - "God is my help" was a friend and one of the first disciples of Jesus Christ, and the first Bishop of Kition in Cyprus. He was resuscitated by Jesus Christ shortly before His triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem.

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The Church commemorates his feast on Lazarus Saturday, which together with Palm Sunday, hold a unique position in the church year as days of joy and triumph between the penitence of Great Lent and the mourning of Holy Week.

Lazarus is also commemorated on the fixed feast day of March 17, while the translation of his relics from Cyprus to Constantinople in the year 898 AD is commemorated on October 17.

BISHOP OF KITION

According to Scripture and the tradition of the Cypriot church, Lazarus was compelled to seek refuge away from Jerusalem to avoid the anger of the high priests and the pharisees, who wanted to kill him, ...the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed in Jesus (John 12:10-11). Many Christians too ... were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about. Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch ...; just like Stephen, Lazarus would have had to leave Judea to seek refuge in another country. This location was Kition in Cyprus.

When Apostle Paul and Apostle Barnabas travelled to Cyprus, they ordained Lazarus as the first Bishop of Kition. This is why all episcopal thrones in Larnaca have the icon of St. Lazarus instead of Christ, which is the standard custom of the church.

Another famous tradition related to Lazarus is the discovery of Mount Athos in 52 A.D. by the Theotokos. Lazarus was very close to the Virgin Mary and he was very grieved that he could not return to Jerusalem to visit her (he was still in fear of the Jews). The Theotokos learned of his sorrow and sent him a letter to comfort him. She asked that he might send a ship to her that she might visit him in Cyprus. With great joy, Lazarus sent a ship to the Holy Land to bring the Virgin Mary and John, the beloved disciple to Cyprus for a visit. However, on their journey, a great storm blew them off course and carried them to the shores of Ephesus and then the ship to the shores of Athos, Greece. Unaware that divine providence had brought her to this area, the Virgin Mary completely taken by the beauty of the area, prayed to her son that this could be her garden devoted to prayer to "fight the good fight of faith". Having converted, blessed and established a new Christian community from the local idolaters they set sail for Cyprus and met with Lazarus.

Further establishing the apostolic nature of Lazarus' appointment, was the tradition that the bishop's omophorion (1) and epimanikia (2) were presented to Lazarus by the Virgin Mary, who had woven it herself.

NOTE: (1) - In the Orthodox liturgical tradition, the omophorion is one of the bishop's vestments and the symbol of his spiritual and ecclesiastical authority. Originally of wool, it is a band of brocade decorated with crosses and is worn about the neck and around the shoulders. By symbolizing the lost sheep that is found and carried on the Good Shepherd's shoulders, it signifies the bishop's pastoral role as the icon of Christ. (2) - Epimanikia (singular epimanikion) are liturgical vestments. They are fabric cuffs, usually brocade, that lace onto the wrists of a bishop, priest, or deacon to contain the sleeves of the sticharion. There is usually a cross embroidered or appliquéd to the center.

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Little more is known about Lazarus after Our Lord's Resurrection and Ascension, except that during his thirty years after his resuscitation, he never smiled or joked except on one occasion, recorded in the Synaxarion. One day, he saw someone stealing a clay pot and he smiled saying, "the clay steals the clay".

The first tomb of Lazarus in Bethany remains as a site for pilgrims to this very day. The second tomb on the island of Cyprus, was found in Kition sometime in 890 A.D., with his relics inside, and bearing the inscription: "Lazarus, the Friend of Christ."

CHURCH OF ST. LAZARUS IN LARNACA AND RELICS

After St. Lazarus' tomb was found in Larnaca in 890 AD, Emperor Leo VI of Byzantium had Lazarus' remains transferred to Constantinople in 898. The transfer was apostrophized by Arethas, Bishop of Caesarea (Caesarea Palestinae), and is commemorated by the Orthodox Church each year on October 17.

In recompense to Larnaca, Emperor Leo had the Church of St. Lazarus erected over Lazarus' tomb, which still exists today. The marble sarcophagus can be seen inside the church under the Holy of Holies.

After the sacking of Constantinople by the Franks during the Fourth Crusade in 1204, the Crusaders carried the saint's relics to Marseilles, France as part of the booty of war. From there, "later on, they disappeared and up to the present day they have not been traced."

In the 16th century, a Russian monk from the Monastery of Pskov visited St. Lazarus's tomb in Larnaca and took with him a small piece of the relics. Perhaps that piece led to the erection of the St. Lazarus chapel at the Pskov Monastery.

On November 23, 1972, human remains in a marble sarcophagus were discovered under the altar, during renovation works in the church of Church of St. Lazarus at Larnaka, and were identified as part of the saint's relics.

In June 2012 the Church of Cyprus gave a part of the holy relics of St. Lazarus to a delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church, led by Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, after a four-day visit to Cyprus. The relics were translated to Moscow on June 11, 2012, and were given to Archbishop Arseniy of Istra, who took them to the Zachatievsky monastery (Conception Convent), where they were put up for veneration.

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PRAYER ON MOUNT OF OLIVES (GARDEN OF GETHSAMANE)

Jesus and his most trusted disciples had just completed the meal we call the Last Supper, where he told them that one of their tight-knit group would betray him to the authorities, and that he would be killed.

Now they moved away towards the Garden of Gethsemane.

This olive orchard was part of an estate at the foot of the Mount of Olives. It was bordered by the road coming up from the Kidron Valley, and was probably surrounded by a stone wall. It seems to have been open to the public and at Passover time it provided welcome relief from the crowded city.

Jesus and his disciples gathered there, as they must have done many times before. Their mood was sombre. They were frightened – for Jesus and for themselves.

The moving events in the Garden of Gethsemane dramatically and poignantly disclosed the human nature of Christ. The sacrifice He was to endure for the salvation of the world was imminent. Death, with all its brutal force and fury, stared directly at Him. Its terrible burden and fear - the calamitous results of the ancestral sin - caused Him intense sorrow and pain (Heb 5:7). Instinctively, as man He sought to escape it. He found Himself in a moment of decision. In His agony He prayed to His Father, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mk 14:36).

His prayer revealed the depths of His agony and sorrow. It revealed as well His "incomparable spiritual strength (and) immovable desire and decision . . . to bring about the will of the Father."

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Jesus offered His unconditional love and trust to the Father. He reached the extreme limits of self denial "not what I will" - in order to accomplish His Father's will. His acceptance of death was not some kind of stoic passivity and resignation but an act of absolute love and obedience. In that moment of decision, when He declared His acceptance of death to be in agreement with the Father's will, he broke the power of the fear of death with all its attending uncertainties, anxieties and limitations. He learned obedience and fulfilled the divine plan (Heb 5:8-9 "though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek.")

In the course of His agony, Jesus exhorted His disciples to watch and pray that they may not enter into temptation (Mt 26:41). This same admonition is applicable to every Christian in every generation.

Prayer connects us with Jesus, who, through His obedience became the unique and perfect worshipper of God. He becomes both the model as well as the subject of our prayer. Thus, with Christ always on our mind and in our heart we can neither be tempted nor can we perish, to paraphrase an ancient Christian text.

Prayer is the power that fuels the spiritual life. As breathing, eating, drinking, and thinking are essential to human existence, prayer is a fundamental element and activity of the Christian life. Authentic Orthodox spirituality is constituted by a vibrant prayer life rooted in the life of the Church, her faith and her sacraments; and related, as well, to the practice of fasting, which is seen primarily as obedience to and love for God, the transformation of the passions, and acts of charity.

Prayer is the most sublime experience of the human soul. Without it the soul is left cold and spiritless. It cannot enter into a sustained personal relationship with God.

Prayer is an act of faith. It brings us to the threshold of another world. Through it we reach and cross the ultimate frontier. We touch another world, which we come to experience as extraordinary peace, beauty, goodness, joy and trust. Prayer opens our life to a new reality which transcends us. We encounter the living God and converse with Him. The Holy One, who alone has existence, embraces us with His tender mercy, compassion and love. Divine light penetrates the depths of our soul to reveal our sins, purge our iniquities, heal our brokenness, illumine our intellect, strengthen our will, and gladden our heart.

The Betrayal

As we noted above, Judas betrayed Christ with a kiss, the sign of friendship and love. The betrayal and crucifixion of Christ carried the ancestral sin to its extreme limits. In these two acts the rebellion against God reached its maximum capacity. The seduction of man in paradise culminated in the death of God in the flesh. To be victorious evil must quench the light and discredit the good. In the end, however, it shows itself to be a lie, an absurdity and sheer madness. The death and resurrection of Christ rendered evil powerless.

On Great Thursday light and darkness, joy and sorrow are so strangely mixed. At the Upper Room and in Gethsemane the light of the kingdom and the darkness of hell come through simultaneously. The way of life and the way of death converge. We meet them both in our journey through life.

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Everyone born into this life is involved inevitably in the spiritual warfare, contending not against flesh and blood, "but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness" (Eph 6.12).

Matthew 26:36-46 "Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done." And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

Mark 14:32-42 "Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch." He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will." Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him. Then He came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

Luke 22:39-48 "Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as he was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. When He came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done." Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation." And while He was still speaking, behold a multitude, and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

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In this crucial moment they were failures, unable to pull themselves out of their sleepy stupor. They seemed oblivious to his suffering – overcome with the Passover meal, the wine, and the late hour. The weakness of the flesh should never be underestimated.

As he prayed, an ‘angel’ had come to him, giving him strength. Only this, God’s direct response, can account for the transformation that follows. He had been terrified of the future and had prayed. Now in the final moments in the garden, he was suddenly strong, resolute. He had asked God to save him from death. *God’s strengthening angel has responded, giving him courage to face what was coming.*

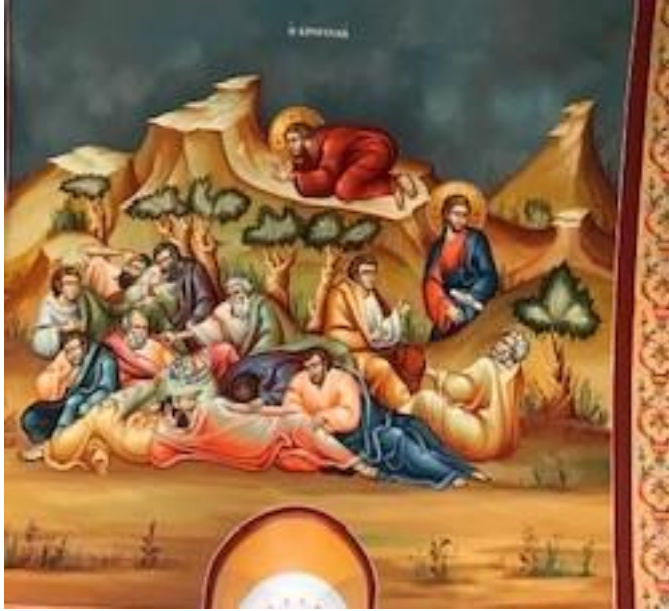
For the early Christians who needed strength in their own time of trial, this story provided encouragement. They sometimes failed Jesus, as the disciples did and would do again in the coming days. But they looked to Jesus’ example: fully aware of what was to come, he had nevertheless instructed his followers to ‘Get up. Let us advance to meet (our fate.)’

In the story of Adam and Eve, rebellion brought Death. In another garden, Gethsemane, submission to God’s will brought Life to Jesus’ followers.

“Go to Dark Gethsemane
Ye who feel the tempter’s pow’r
Your Redeemer’s conflict see
Watch with him one bitter hour
Turn not from his grief away
Learn of Jesus Christ to pray”

By James Montgomery

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ST. EUPHEMIA (SEPTEMBER 16)

(Note: The Holy Great-martyr Euphemia the All-praised, of Chaledon).

Euphemia was born in Chalcedon (ancient city, in Turkey near Istanbul). Her father, Philophronus, a senator, and her mother, Theodorisia, were devout Christians. Euphemia was a beautiful virgin in body and soul. When the Proconsul Priscus held a feast and offered sacrifices to Area in Chalcedon, 49 Christians avoided this foul sacrificial offering and hid themselves.

However, they were discovered and brought before Priscus. Among them was St. Euphemia. When the arrogant Priscus asked them why they defied the imperial decree, they replied: “Both the emperor’s and your command should be obeyed, if they are not contrary to the God of heaven; but if they are contrary to God, they should not only be disobeyed, but should also be opposed.”

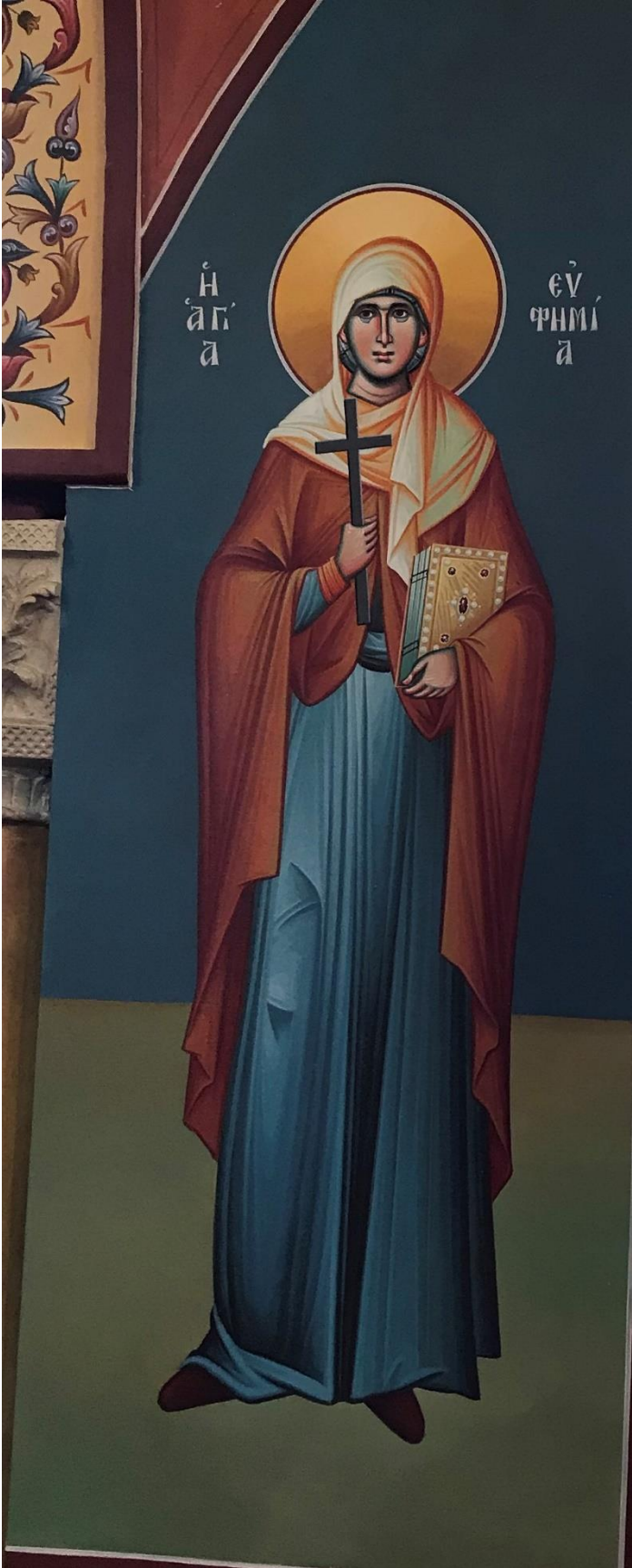
For 19 consecutive days, Priscus imposed various tortures on them. On the 20th day he separated Euphemia from the others and began to flatter her for her beauty, attempting to win her over to idolatry. As his flattery was in vain, he ordered that the virgin be tortured again. First, they tortured her on the wheel but an angel of God appeared to Euphemia and shattered the wheel. Then they threw her into a fiery furnace, but she was preserved by the power of God. Upon seeing this, two soldiers, Victor and Sosthenes, came to believe in Christ, for which they were thrown to the wild beasts, and thus gloriously ended their earthly lives.

Euphemia was then thrown into a pit filled with water and every kind of poisonous vermin; but she made the sign of the Cross over the water and remained unharmed. She was finally thrown

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to the wild beasts and, with a prayer of thanksgiving to God, gave up her spirit. Her parents buried her body honorably. Euphemia suffered in the year 304 and entered into eternal joy. She is also commemorated on July 11.

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ST. BASIL (JANUARY 1)

Basil was born during the reign of Emperor Constantine about 330 at Caesarea in Cappadocia. He came from a wealthy and pious family which gave a number of saints, including his mother Saint Emily (also styled Emilia or Emmelia), grandmother Saint Macrina the Elder, sister Saint Macrina the Younger and brothers Saints Gregory of Nyssa and Peter of Sebaste. It is also a widely held tradition that Saint Theosebia was his youngest sister, who is also a saint in the Church.

While still a child, the family moved to Pontus; but he soon returned to Cappadocia to live with his mother's relations, and seems to have been brought up by his grandmother Macrina. Eager to learn, he went to Constantinople and spent four or five years there. While still unbaptized, he spent 15 years in Athens, where he studied philosophy, rhetoric, astronomy, and all other secular sciences of that time. His colleagues there were Gregory the Theologian and Julian, later apostate emperor. Both Basil and Gregory were deeply influenced by Origen and compiled an anthology of uncondemned writings of Origen known as the Philokalia (not to be confused with the later compilation of the same name).

It was at Athens that he seriously began to think of religion, and resolved to seek out the most famous hermit saints in Syria and Arabia, in order to learn from them how to attain enthusiastic piety and how to keep his body under submission by asceticism.

In his mature years he was baptized in the Jordan River along with Ebulios, his former teacher.

After this we find him at the head of a convent near Arnesi in Pontus, in which his mother Emily, now a widow, his sister Macrina and several other ladies, gave themselves to a pious life of prayer and charitable works. Basil sided with those who overcame the aversion to the homoousios (**note 1**) in common opposition to Arianism, thus drawing nearer to Saint Athanasius the Great.

Note 1: "Homoousios" - 'same in being, same in essence', from ὁμός, homós, "same" and οὐσία, ousía, "being" or "essence") is a Christian theological term, most notably used in the Nicene Creed for describing Jesus (God the Son) as "same in being" or "same in essence" with God the Father (ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρὶ). The same term was later also applied to the Holy Spirit in order to designate him as being "same in essence" with the Father and the Son. Those notions became cornerstones of theology in Christianity, and also represent one of the most important theological concepts within the Trinitarian doctrinal understanding of God. **Homoousios**, in Christianity, the key term of the Christological doctrine formulated at the first ecumenical council, held at Nicaea in 325, to affirm that God the Son and God the Father are of the same substance.

He was ordained presbyter of the Church at Caesarea in 365, and his ordination was probably the result of the entreaties of his ecclesiastical superiors, who wished to use his talents against

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the Arians, who were numerous in that part of the country and were favoured by the Arian emperor, Valens, who then reigned in Constantinople.

In 370 Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, died, and Basil was chosen to succeed him. It was then that his great powers were called into action. Caesarea was an important diocese, and its bishop was, ex officio, exarch of the great diocese of Pontus. Hot-blooded and somewhat imperious, Basil was also generous and sympathetic. His zeal for orthodoxy did not blind him to what was good in an opponent; and for the sake of peace and charity he was content to waive the use of orthodox terminology when it could be surrendered without a sacrifice of truth.

With all his might he resisted the emperor Valens, who strove to introduce Arianism into his diocese, and impressed the emperor so strongly that, although inclined to banish the intractable bishop, he left him unmolested. To an imperial prefect, astonished at Saint Basil's temerity, he said, "Perhaps you have never before dealt with a proper bishop."

To save the Church from Arianism, Basil entered into connections with the West, and with the help of Athanasius, he tried to overcome its distrustful attitude toward the Homoousians. The difficulties had been enhanced by bringing in the question as to the essence of the Holy Spirit. Although Basil advocated objectively the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son, he belonged to those, who, faithful to Eastern tradition, would not allow the predicate homoousios to the former; for this he was reproached as early as 371 by the Orthodox zealots among the monks, and Athanasius defended him.

His relations also with Eustathius were maintained in spite of dogmatic differences and caused suspicion. On the other hand, Basil was grievously offended by the extreme adherents of Homoousianism, who seemed to him to be reviving the Sabellian heresy. He was Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia for almost 10 years.

He did not live to see the end of the unhappy factional disturbances and the complete success of his continued exertions in behalf of Rome and the East. He suffered from liver illness and his excessive asceticism seems to have hastened him to an early death.

Basil completed his earthly life 50 years after his birth. He was a great defender of Orthodoxy, a great light of moral purity, a religious zealot, a great theological mind, and a great builder and pillar of the Church of God.

Saint Basil had used all his personal wealth and the income from his church for the benefit of the destitute; in every center of his diocese he had a poor-house built. A lasting monument of his episcopal care for the poor was the Basiliad, a great institute he founded before the gates of Caesarea, which functioned as a combination of poorhouse, hospital, and hostel for the homeless.

The Church considers him one of the Three Holy Hierarchs, together with Saints Gregory the Theologian (Gregory Nazianzus) and John Chrysostom. Basil, Gregory the Theologian, and Basil's

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brother Saint Gregory of Nyssa are called the Cappadocian Fathers. He is also remembered on January 30 with the Three Holy Hierarchs. In Greek tradition, he is supposed to visit children and give presents every January 1. This festival is also marked by the baking of Saint Basil's bread (Gr. Vasilópita), a sweet bread with a coin hidden inside.

Basil fully deserved the title "Great". In liturgical services he is referred to as the "bee of the Church of Christ, which brings honey to the faithful and its stinger pricks the heretics."
Numerous works of this Father of the Church are preserved; they include theological, apologetical, ascetical, and canonical writings, as well as the Holy and Divine Liturgy named after him. This Divine Liturgy is celebrated ten times during the year: on the first of January, his feast day; on the eve of the Nativity of our Lord; on the eve of the Theophany of our Lord; on all Sundays of Great Lent except Psalm Sunday; on Great and Holy Thursday; and on Great and Holy Saturday. St. Basil reposed peacefully on January 1, 379, and entered the Kingdom of Christ.

HIS WRITINGS

The principal theological writings of Basil are his Treatise on the Holy Spirit (Lat. De Spiritu Sancto), a lucid and edifying appeal to Scripture and early Christian tradition to prove the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and his Refutation of the Apology of the Impious Eunomius, written in 363 or 364, three books against Eunomius of Cyzicus, the chief exponent of Anomoian Arianism. The first three books of the Refutation are his work; the fourth and fifth books that are usually included do not belong to Basil, or to Apollinaris of Laodicea, but probably to Didymus The Blind.

He was a famous preacher, and many of his homilies, including a series of Lenten lectures on The Six Days of Creation (Gr. Hexaëmeron), and an exposition of the psalter, have been preserved. Some, like that against usury and that on the famine in 368, are valuable for the history of morals; others illustrate the honor paid to martyrs and relics; the address to young men on the study of classical literature shows that Basil was lastingly influenced by his own education, which taught him to appreciate the importance of the classics as preparatory instruction.

His ascetic tendencies are exhibited in the Moralia and Regulae, ethical manuals for use in the world and the cloister respectively. Of the monastic rules traced to Basil, the shorter is the one most probably his work.

It is in the ethical manuals and moral sermons that the practical aspects of his theoretical theology are illustrated. So, for example, it is in his Sermon to the Lazicans that we find Basil explaining how it is our common nature that obliges us to treat our neighbor's natural needs (e.g., hunger, thirst) as our own, even though he is a separate individual. Later theologians explicitly explain this as an example of how the saints become an image of the one common nature of the persons of the Trinity.

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His three hundred letters reveal a rich and observant nature, which, despite the troubles of ill-health and ecclesiastical unrest, remained optimistic, tender and even playful. His principal efforts as a reformer were directed towards the improvement of the liturgy, and the reformation of the monastic orders of the East.

Most of the liturgies bearing the name of Basil, in their present form, are not primarily his work, but they nevertheless preserve the recollection of Basil's activity in this field in formularizing liturgical prayers and promoting church-song. One liturgy attributed to him is The Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, a liturgy that is somewhat longer than the more commonly used Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom; it is still used on certain feast days in the Church, such as every Sunday of Great Lent and January 1, on which his memory is celebrated.

Iconography

