

Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

October 29, 2023

Tone 4



21st Sunday After Pentecost

Martyr Anastasia of Rome

Divine Liturgy Readings

(Readings on Back)

- ♦ Galatians 2:16-20
- ♦ Luke 8:26-39

Announcements:

Thank You

To our parishioners who hosted the wonderful Journey to the Holy Land presentation last week! It was an edifying event with delicious food!

Annual Turkey Drive

We are looking for about 20 turkeys to be donated and cooked, to take to St Herman's House. See Fr Joseph or Sam Jacob for more details.

St. Herman House / FOCUS North America

Join St. Herman House – FOCUS Cleveland for our 11th Anniversary Event, featuring His Eminence Archbishop DANIEL as keynote speaker. Monday, Nov. 13. 6:30pm. Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Parma, OH. \$30 per person includes appetizers, refreshments and program attendance. Visit www.sainthermans.org/event/ to purchase tickets.

Cleveland Deanery Retreat

Join us for a retreat with Fr. Stephan Freeman, a Priest of the OCA, and Pastor Emeritus of St. Anne Orthodox Church in Oak Ridge, TN. He is the author books Face to Face: Knowing God Beyond Our Shame, and Everywhere Present: Christianity in a One-Story Universe. He also hosts the popular podcast, Glory to God, on Ancient Faith Radio.

Saturday, November 4. 10am—Vespers. St Nicholas Orthodox Church, Mentor, OH. A free-will offering will be taken. Please email Ken Walker - ealkerjoseph@gmail.com - if you will be at the Retreat.

This Week Ahead

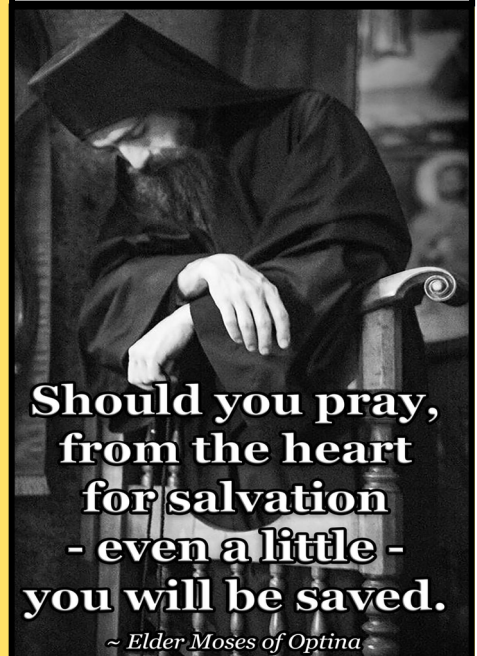
Saturday, November 4

6:00pm - Great Vespers

Sunday, November 5

9:00am - 3rd & 6th Hours

9:30am - Divine Liturgy



**Should you pray,
from the heart
for salvation
- even a little -
you will be saved.**

~ Elder Moses of Optina ~

Meditation on Today's Readings

One of the most challenging narratives in the Gospels is the healing of the Gadarene demoniac [Mark 5:1-20; Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-39]. This dramatic event, which reveals the power of Christ over the demons, will appear to the 21st century mind as either archaic or even primitive. The spectacle of a man possessed by many demons, homeless and naked, living among the tombs, chained so as to contain his self-destructive behavior, is not exactly a sight that we encounter with any regularity, to state the obvious. Add to this a herd of swine blindly rushing over a steep bank and into a lake to be drowned, and we must further recognize the strangeness of this event. This is altogether not a part of our world!



Yet, there is no reason to doubt the veracity of the narrated event, which does appear in three of the Gospels, though with different emphases and details—in fact there are two demoniacs in Saint Matthew's telling of the story! It is always instructive to compare the written account of a particular event or body of teaching when found in more than one Gospel. This will cure us of the illusion of a wooden literalism as we will discover how the four evangelists will present their gathered material from the ministry of Jesus in somewhat different forms. As to the Gadarene demoniac, here was an event within the ministry of Christ that must have left a very strong impression upon the early Church as it was shaping its oral traditions into written traditions that would eventually come together in the canonical Gospels.

Whatever our immediate reaction to this passage we can see behind the dramatic details the disintegration of a human personality under the influence of the evil one, and the reintegration of the same man's personhood when healed by Christ. Here was a man that was losing his identity to a process that was undermining the integrity of his humanity and leading to physical harm and psychic fragmentation. The

final detail that indicates this possessed man's loss of personhood is revealed in the dialogue between himself and Jesus.

"Jesus then asked him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Legion,' for many demons had entered him." To be named in the Bible is to receive a definite and irreducible identity as a person. It is to be "someone" created in the "image and likeness of God." It is the role of the evil one to be a force of disintegration. The "legion" inhabiting the man reveals the loss of his uniqueness and the fragmentation of his personality. Such a distorted personality can no longer have a "home," which is indicative of our relational capacity as human beings, as it is indicative of stability and a "groundedness" in everyday reality. The poor man is driven into the desert, biblically the abode of demons.

Then we hear a splendid description of the man when he is healed by Christ! For we hear the following once the demons left him and entered into the herd of swine, "Then the people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid."

This is clearly one of the most beautiful descriptions of a Christian who remains as a true disciple of the Master. This is the baptized person who is clothed in a "garment of salvation" and who is reoriented toward Christ, the "Sun of Righteousness." The image here is of total reintegration, of the establishment of a relationship with Christ that restores integrity and wholeness to human life. It is also an image of peacefulness and contentment.

Our goal in life is to "get our mind right," which describes repentance or that "change of mind" that heals all internal divisions of the mind and heart as it restores our relationship with others. Jesus commands the man "to return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." We, too, have been freed from the evil one "and all his angels and all his pride" in baptism. In our own way, perhaps we too can also proclaim just how much Jesus has done for us! - Fr. Steven Kostoff

Today's Saint

The Monastic Martyr Anastasia the Roman lost her parents when she was three years old, and was taken to be raised by the Igoumeness of a women's monastery, whose name was Sophia, a nun who had attained a high degree of spiritual perfection. She raised Anastasia in fervent faith, in the fear of God, and obedience. After seventeen years, Anastasia became known as a great ascetic, and she was very beautiful.

The Emperor Decius (249-251) began his persecution of Christians at that time. The city administrator, Probus, following the Emperor's orders, commanded that Anastasia be brought to him. Blessed by her Igoumeness to suffer for Christ, the young martyr Anastasia went out to meet the armed soldiers. Seeing her youth and beauty, Probus first tried flattery to make her deny Christ.

"Why do you waste your youth deprived of pleasure?" he asked. "What is to be gained by enduring tortures and death for the Crucified? Worship our gods, marry a handsome husband, and live with glory and honor."

While Saint Anastasia stood before the ruler, her mind stood before Christ, and with her spiritual eyes, she beheld the comeliness of her Bridegroom.

The Saint replied, "My spouse, my riches, my life and my happiness are my Lord Jesus Christ, and you cannot turn me away from Him by your deceit!"

Probus had her stripped of her clothing, in order to humiliate her. She told him, "You can have me whipped, beaten, and cut to pieces, and then my nakedness will be hidden by my wounds, and my blood will cover my shame."

Probus subjected Anastasia to horrible tortures. The holy martyr bravely endured all of them, glorifying and praising God. When she became thirsty she asked for some water, and a Christian named Cyril gave her a drink. She thanked him, but Probus had him beheaded.

Saint Anastasia's body was thrown outside the city limits to be eaten by wild animals, but the Lord did not permit her holy relics to be dishonored. By the instructions of a holy Angel, Igoumeness Sophia found Saint Anastasia's mutilated body. With the help of two Christians, she buried it in the earth.

Prayers Appreciated for:

Living:

Marge

Tina, Katherine,
Paula, Marianne,
Suleiman, Steve
Janet, Christina

Departed:

Tall Candles

Tall candles are given by
Ray Asik
in memory of all past and
current members of our
Parish Community.

WEEKLY READINGS

Monday, Oct. 30

Hieromartyr Zenobios

Colossians 2:13-20

Luke 11:29-33

Tuesday, Oct. 31

St. John Kochurov (1917)

Colossians 2:20-3:3

Luke 11:34-41

Wed, Nov. 1

Ss. Cosmas and Damian

Colossians 3:17-4:1

Luke 11:42-46

Thurs, Nov. 2

St. Marcan of Cyprus

Colossians 4:2-9

Luke 11:47-12:1

Friday, Nov. 3

St. Snandulia of Persia

Colossians 4:10-18

Luke 12:2-12

Saturday, Nov. 4

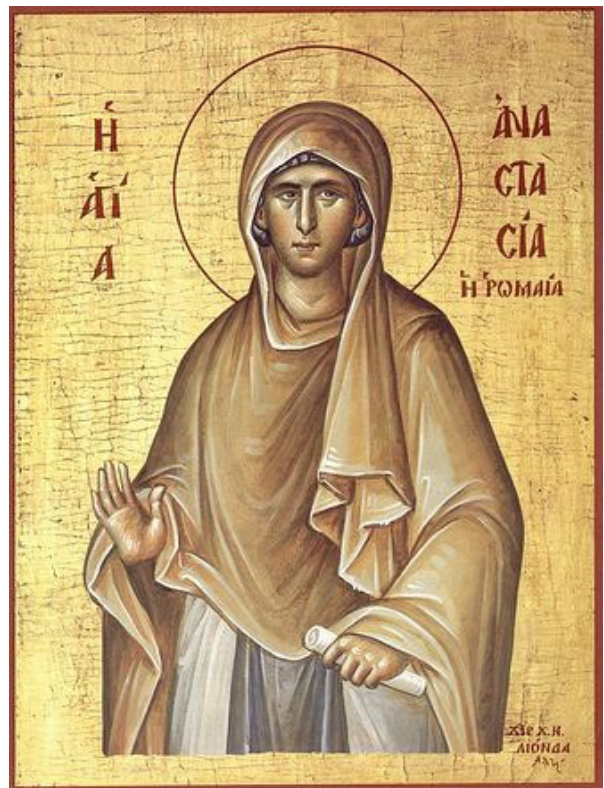
Hieromartyr Seraphim

(Samoilovich)

2 Cor. 5:1-10

Luke 9:1-6

Troparion - Your lamb Anastasia, calls out to You, O Jesus, in a loud voice: "I love You, my Bridegroom, and in seeking You I endure suffering. In baptism I was crucified so that I might reign in You, and I died so that I might live with You. Accept me as a pure sacrifice, for I have offered myself in love." Through her prayers save our souls, since You are merciful.



Today's Scripture Readings

Epistle: Galatians 2:16-20

Brethren, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Gospel: Luke 8:26-39

Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!" For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned. When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. They also who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned. Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

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