

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH Parish Newsletter

New Parish Center: 20937 Ashburn Rd., #110, Ashburn, VA 19 September 2020

Readings for the Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost—Tone VI

Marking the Beginning of the New Church Year. Begin the Weeks of Luke.

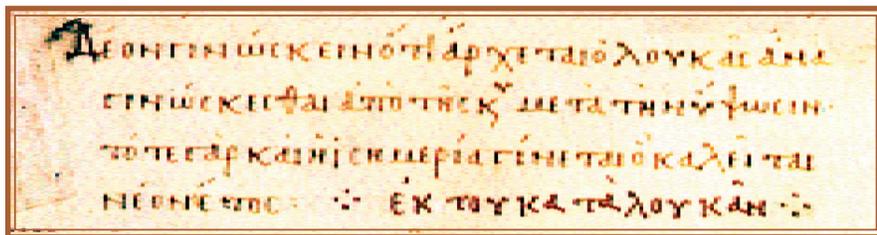
Almost always the Sunday before September 23, ancient fixed date for New Year in the Eastern Roman Empire and Christianized to mark the Conception of St. John the Baptizer (Lk. 1.5+). A thousand years ago at Constantinople, the New Year was marked with a penitential procession and prayers (cf. verses 2 and 3 of the Alleluia psalm). This ancient procession through town preceding the Divine Liturgy gave our modern Liturgy the daily antiphons, the Trisagios Hymn, and the Ékteny after the Gospel.

READING FROM THE PROPHECY OF JOEL (Joel 2.12–19).

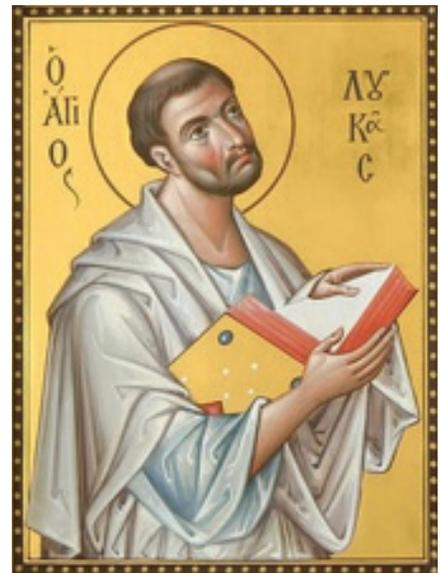
“Now—it is the LORD who speaks—come back to me with all your heart, fasting, weeping, mourning.”

Let your hearts be broken, not your garments torn, turn to the LORD your God again, for he is all tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in graciousness, and ready to relent. Who knows if he will not turn again, will not relent, will not leave a blessing as he passes, oblation and libation for the LORD your God?

Sound the trumpet in Sion!
Order a fast.



Detail, title page, Luke, *Apraktós* [meaning readings for Sundays] Gospel, XI/XII century (Athos, Iviron, unnumbered, fol. 100). The Greek reads: «One needs to know that Luke begins to be read from the Sunday after the Elevation [September 14], for just then the equinox is taking place; it is called New Year.» This year the equinox falls on Tuesday, September 22. (In Antiquity in the Church of Constantinople, the original fixed date of the Church New Year was September 23, Fall equinox in the Julian calendar and the birthday of the Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus.) Read about the Church New Year (and how it figured in determining the date of Christmas) in our Liturgy Book, pgs. 166–168, and pg. 63.



EVANGELIST LUKE

New ikon in a pre-iconoclasm style by the famous Russian ikonographer Fr. Zenón.

Proclaim a solemn assembly.
Call the people together.
Summon the community.
Assemble the elders.
Gather the children,
even the infants at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his bedroom
and the bride her bed.
Between vestibule and altar let the priests,
those ministers of the LORD, lament.
Let them say: “Spare your people, O LORD!
Do not make your heritage a thing of shame,
a byword for the nations.
Why should it be said among the nations,
‘Where is their God?’ ”

Then the LORD, jealous on behalf of his land, took pity on his people. The LORD spoke in answer to his people, “Now I send you wheat and wine and oil, until you have enough. Never again shall I make you a thing of shame for the nations.”

PROKIMENON, Tone III:

Great is our Lord and abundant in power; * his understanding is beyond measure.

PSALM 146

NOTE: The psalm sings the praises of God as the restorer of exiled Israel (1–6) who sustains the needy (7–11).

How good to sing to our God! How pleasant to praise the glorious one!

²The Lord rebuilds Jerusalem. He gathers together the exiles of Israel; ³he heals their broken hearts and binds their wounds....

⁵**Great is our Lord and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.** ⁶The Lord reassures the humble; he consigns the wicked to the world beneath.

⁷Sing to the Lord in gratitude; on the lyre make music to our God, ⁸for he makes the sky overcast with clouds; he prepares rain for the earth; he makes the mountains sprout grass and provides plants for man's use...

¹⁰He does not delight in the strength of horses nor value the fleetness of men. ¹¹But the Lord values those who revere him, those who rely on his strength.

Reader: Great is our Lord and abundant in power.
People: His understanding is beyond measure.

READING FROM PAUL'S FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

TIMOTHY MY SON: ^{2,1} First of all, I ask that supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings be offered for everyone, ² for kings and for all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life religious and moral in every way. ³ This is good and pleasing to God our saviour, ⁴ who wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus, himself a man, ⁶ who gave himself as ransom for all. This was the testimony at the proper time. ⁷ For this I was appointed preacher and apostle (I am speaking the truth, I am not lying), teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

ALLELUIA, Tone IV:

PSALM 64

NOTE: A hymn of thanksgiving sung by the community for a bountiful harvest. Humbly acknowledging that they are unworthy of God's favors (2–5), the people praise hymn for his power over all the earth (6–9), and thank him for the rains

that produce such abundant crops (10–14). Verse 13 links it to the New Church Year, while the opening verses inspire the penitential character of the day.

It is only right to praise you in Sion, O God! Vows to you shall be fulfilled, ²for you listen to prayer. **All flesh must lay its faults before you; ³though our faults overpower us, you blot them out.**

⁴Happy is the man you choose, who you invite to live in your courts: You fill his heart with the beauty of your house, with the holiness of your temple.

⁵You answer us with awesome deeds of righteousness, O God, our Saviour; you are the hope of the very ends of the earth, of those far beyond the seas....

⁹Make morning and evening rejoice! Make the rains come down in torrents, O God, to restore your people and your land! ¹⁰Bless it abundantly: let heaven's fountains overflow with water; with your rains provide for your family dwelling there.

¹¹Let the earth bring forth grain, to sustain the needy who settle there, for this is why you made it! ¹²Drench its furrows and soak down its ridges; loosen its clods with gentle showers, and bless it with fruitfulness!

¹³**Crown the year** [= *Rosh haShanah—Ed.*] with your bounty; wherever you pass, let there be plenty.

¹⁴Make the boundless meadows lush with rich growth, and clothe the hills in gladness!

¹⁵Fill the pastures with herds of cattle, and make a mantle of wheat stretch out through the valleys! And everywhere, let there be joy; everywhere, songs of praise!

READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE:

AT THAT TIME: ^{4,14} Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread throughout the whole region. ¹⁵ He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all. ¹⁶ He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read ¹⁷ and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: ¹⁸ *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, ¹⁹ and to proclaim a year accept-*

able to the Lord.²⁰ Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him.²¹ He said to them, “Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”²² And all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They also asked, “Isn’t this the son of Joseph?”²³ He said to them, “Surely you will quote me this proverb, *Physician, cure yourself*, and say, ‘Do here in your native place the things that we heard were done in Capernaum.’”²⁴ And he said, “Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place.²⁵ Indeed, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the sky was closed for three and a half years and a severe famine spread over the entire land.²⁶ It was to none of these that Elijah was sent, but only to a widow in Zarephath in the land of Sidon.²⁷ Again, there were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha the prophet; yet not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”²⁸ When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were all filled with fury.²⁹ They rose up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town had been built, to hurl him down headlong.³⁰ But he passed through the midst of them and went away.³¹ Jesus then went down to Capernaum, a town of Galilee. He taught them on the sabbath,³² and they were astonished at his teaching because he spoke with authority.

TROPARION^a for the New Church Year
Tone II

O designer and creator of all that is, * in your power you arranged the seasons and the times. * So now, bless this year we begin through your goodness, * give all your people lasting peace, * and by the prayers of the Theotokos, save us.

KONDAKION for the New Church Year
Tone II:

Enthroned on high, O Christ our God, * you are the designer and creator of all things, whether visible or hidden from our sight, * of day and night, of the seasons and the times. * Bless this year we now begin, * and preserve your people from all evil, O most merciful Lord.

Glory: Both now:

KONDAKION for the Church, Tone VII:

In this year of your favor,^{Lk. 4.19} Lord, * visit this vine your right hand has planted.^{Ps. 79.16} * In Alaska you cleared it a place; * it took root and spread through the land.^{Ps. 79.10} * Prune and cleanse us by your Word^{Jn. 15.3} * that we may bring forth the fruits of repentance.^{Acts 26.20} * Now as we mark this milestone of your grace, * put an end to all our divisions, * make us perfectly one,^{Jn. 17.23} * and show us true disciples, Lord,^{cf. Jn. 15.8} * for apart from you we can do nothing.^{Jn. 15.4,5}

THE ÉKTENY or FERVENT PRAYER
(Ancient Penitential Litany and Prayer)

Let us all say with our whole soul,
and with our whole mind let us say:
Lord, have mercy.

O Lord almighty! O God of our fathers!
We pray you. Hear us and have mercy.

Have mercy on us, O God,
according to your great mercy!

We pray you. Hear us and have mercy.

Again we pray:

For devout and Orthodox Christians.

For our Archbishop Tikhon.

For Emilia’s daughter Elizabeth, for Carlos’s son, John-Carlos, and for all who have asked for our prayers: we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, visitation, pardon, and remission of their sins.

For Orthodox Christians who are made to suffer on account of Christ, and we pray for those who persecute them.

For Orthodox Christians and indeed all men who are victims of war and civil strife [and terror], of hunger and want, of intolerance and injustice.

For physicians, nurses, care-givers, and all serving those infected with the virus; and for the thousands who have succumbed to the disease—and for all who will die today.

PRAYER OF THE ÉKTENY

Lord our God, accept this fervent prayer from your servants, and have mercy on us according to the greatness of your mercy. Send down your compassionate help upon us and upon all your people awaiting the rich mercy that comes from you.

For you are God, merciful and loving to man, and we render glory to you—to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

8 Ways that keeping your mortality in mind can change your life.

Cecilia Zinicola | Sep 12, 2020

It seems counter-intuitive, but accepting that each of us will die helps us live our lives more fully.

We don't usually talk about death. When we're asked about it, we may feel nervous or afraid, and we prefer not to get into the details. We put off thinking about it. But in fact, it's healthier to face it head-on, and treat death as a fact of life that each of us will experience at some point.

As a society, we've been pushing the idea of death aside, and today we live with less awareness of its inevitability. Technological advances make us think that death is something far away. It's true that developments in medicine, nutrition, and sanitation make it possible for people to live longer, but we tend implicitly to think of ourselves as practically immortal, believing that medicine, with all its advances, has an answer for everything.

Another reason we have distanced ourselves from death is that, like many other things, it has become industrialized and the experience has changed a lot. In earlier times, people died at home, where the wake was also held. The community participated and accompanied the family members of the deceased. Death was experienced more naturally.

Today many people die in hospital wards, alone, and sometimes far from their families. In addition, the current situation of the pandemic has led to the prohibition of goodbyes, funerals, and burials. This distances us even more from the reality of death and forces us to miss the rituals surrounding it, which are an important part of the human experience.

On a deeper level, accepting death is a blow to our ego. It hurts to imagine a future in this world without our existence, or to think about what the people we love will do without us. It forces us to realize that we are not indispensable and that if we never die, we will not leave space for new generations.

We also find it difficult to think about death because the end of our lives also marks the end of our hopes and projects in this world. If we instead viewed the reality of death as a teacher, our life would take on new meaning. All of our ideals, actions, and illusions would be lived with greater intensity.

Even if it's hard for us to understand at first, death

is something natural and necessary. If we were physically immortal, the things we do and the people we have relationships with wouldn't be as valuable to us. We'd reach a point where we'd have nothing left to do or say, and the bonds and moments we lived would not be as memorable, because we'd have an indefinite time available to us.

Why thinking about death can make your life happier.

Facing directly the fact that we will die helps us to live better. It's not about having negative or suicidal thoughts, but about having a healthy awareness of the final part of our earthly existence. If we learn from death, our lives will be filled with meaning, bringing us many benefits that will help us live better right now.

Here are 8 ways that keeping our death in mind can change our lives.

1

RECOGNIZING FEARS AND POSSIBILITIES

Awareness of death allows us to face our fears and to evaluate what resources we have to face them. Sometimes we feel that we're weak and that we're not going to be able to cope with a situation we're facing today. But if we accept our eventual death calmly, we can find our potential as human beings and see beyond the immediate situation.

2

FORGIVING AND RECONCILING

Death makes us rethink unresolved issues. If we find peace with ourselves and with others, if we forgive and let bygones be bygones, we can let go and have the strength to face the uncertainty of the future. Death encourages us to make peace with life, to take a weight off our shoulders and feel relieved of our baggage by knowing what we want to hold on to and what we want to give to others.

3

PUTTING OUR LIVES IN ORDER AND SEEKING BALANCE

The knowledge that we're going to die often gives us time to get our lives in order and be ready to say goodbye. It helps us avoid leaving unfinished business or things we meant to say but didn't. Instead we seek balance, prioritizing the important things, like spending more time with family and living a better quality of life.

4

NOT WASTING THE GIFT OF TIME

If we refuse to face the fact that we're mortal, we

may waste time doing things that we don't really want to do or that don't do us any good. We may postpone projects or leave things done halfway without fully taking advantage of them.

The awareness of death doesn't mean we should stop planning, but rather being selective and living our life to the full. How often do we sacrifice our happiness for a promise of something in the future that may never come? If today were our last day, how would we live it?

5

BEING THANKFUL

If we're aware of our mortality, we recognize the value of simple things like being able to walk. Many times we take for granted the things we have or can do: our independence, the use of our senses of sight and hearing, our ability to walk, and so forth.

When we're aware that we will eventually lose everything we have in this world, it changes our perspective. We give thanks if we wake up in the morning, can see the sun, and can move. We become more aware of life and its gifts, and we experience them with gratitude.

6

LIVING WITH MORE COMPASSION

Death opens us to the reality of pain and loss. When we open ourselves to compassion over the suffering

of others, we become better people and learn to live from another perspective — a more generous, kinder, and more selfless one. We want to understand, help and comfort those who are in pain or suffering.

7

INCREASED CAPACITY FOR LOVE

In light of the experience of death, words like resilience and patience take on more strength. These values that are sometimes referred to lightly are lived deeply when they are put into play. We become aware that love and compassion should guide our whole life. It's not a matter of feeling pity for others, which puts them below us, but of living compassion as something that unites and equalizes us.

8

MAKING LIFE WORTH LIVING

Knowing that we are going to die illuminates our lives from another perspective. It helps us live with purpose every day. It allows us to put things in proper perspective and be ourselves, recognizing ourselves as finite and vulnerable and knowing what we really want from life.

It gives us the opportunity to examine ourselves and make changes without losing hope. It also encourages us to take risks and do what really matters to us today, because the moment that we're living is full of value.

