

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE
PARISH OF ST. PARASKEVI, ST. BARBARA &
ST. JOHN THE MERCIFUL
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PROGRAMME NOVEMBER 2017



The Apolytikion of St. Nektarios (Nov 9):

Selybria's offspring and Aegina's guardian, the true friend of virtue, revealed in these last times, Nektarios let us, the faithful, praise as inspired servants of Christ; for he pours out healings of every kind for those who devoutly cry: Glory to Christ who gave you glory! Glory to Him who made you wondrous! Glory to Him who through you works healings for all!

PROGRAMME NOVEMBER 2017

Every Thursday Evening the program is as follows:

6pm: The St Ignatius children's group and choir (primary school age and up)

7pm: Paraklesis service to the Theotokos (in English)

7.45: Bible study group (for all ages), led by Fr Demosthenis

WEDNESDAY 1st NOVEMBER: **St David the Righteous of Euboea, Holy Unmercenaries Kosmas and Damian**, Matins and Divine Liturgy at Panagia Soumela, Keilor, 7.30-11.00am

SUNDAY 5th NOVEMBER: **5TH SUNDAY OF LUKE**, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-11.00am

WEDNESDAY 8th NOVEMBER: **Synaxis of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel**, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-10.00am

THURSDAY 9th NOVEMBER: **Saint Nectarios the Wonderworker**, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-10.00am

SATURDAY 11th NOVEMBER: **Saint Menas the Greatmartyr**, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-9.0am.

Evening: Celebratory service of Vespers for St John the Merciful, presided by His Grace Bishop Ezekiel, 7.00-8.00pm.

SUNDAY 12th NOVEMBER: ST JOHN THE MERCIFUL,

MONDAY 13th NOVEMBER: **St John Chrysostom**, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-10.00am

TUESDAY 14th NOVEMBER: **Apostle Philip, Gregory Palamas**, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-9.30am

THURSDAY 16th

FASTING FOR CHRISTMAS BEGINS- *In preparation for the great feast of the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we abstain from eating meat and dairy products from the 15th of November until the 25th of*

NOVEMBER: **Apostle and Evangelist Matthew**, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-9.30am

SUNDAY 19th NOVEMBER: **9TH SUNDAY OF LUKE**, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-11.00am

TUESDAY 21st NOVEMBER: **ENTRY OF THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE,**
Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-10.00am

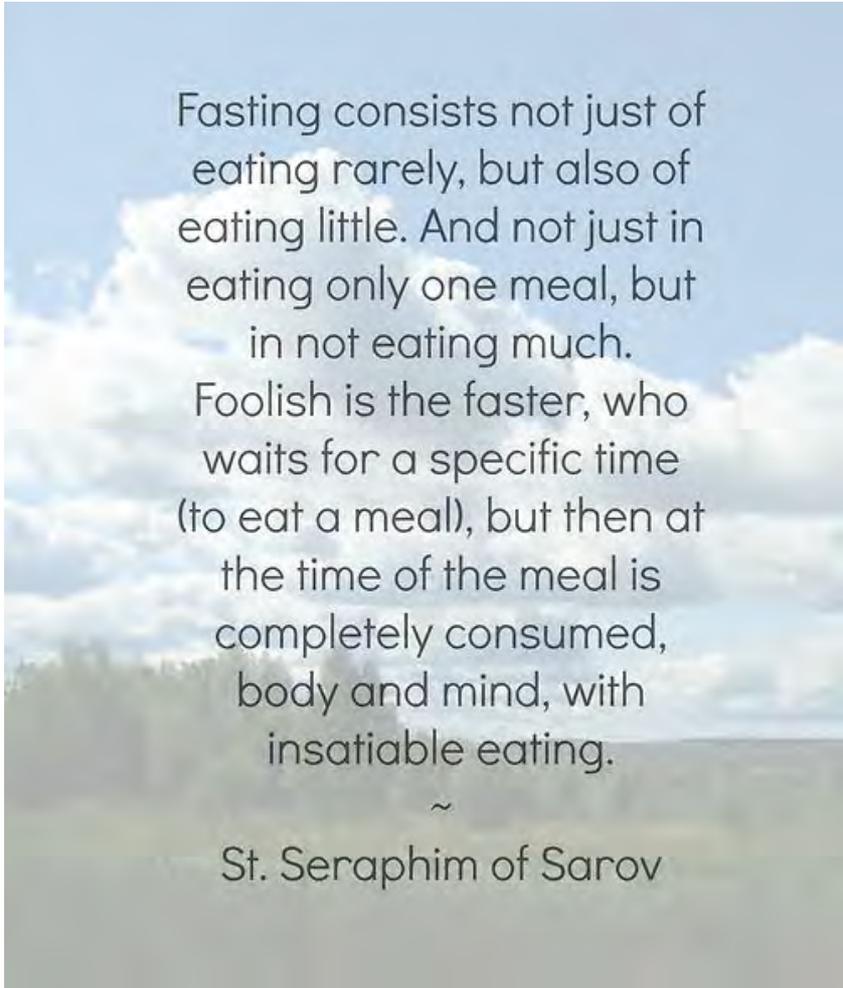
THURSDAY 23rd NOVEMBER: **EVENING: ENGLISH DIVINE LITURGY, 7.30-9.00PM**

SATURDAY 25th NOVEMBER: **Great Martyr Catherine,** Matins and Divine Liturgy,
7.30-10.00am

SUNDAY 26th NOVEMBER: **Saint Stylianos,** Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-
11.00am

WEDNESDAY 29th NOVEMBER: **St Philoumenos (the New Hieromartyr of Jacob's
Well),** Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-9.30am

THURSDAY 30th NOVEMBER: **Apostle Andrew the First Called,** Matins and
Divine Liturgy, AT THE PARISH OF SAINT ANDREW IN
SUNSHINE.



Fasting consists not just of
eating rarely, but also of
eating little. And not just in
eating only one meal, but
in not eating much.
Foolish is the faster, who
waits for a specific time
(to eat a meal), but then at
the time of the meal is
completely consumed,
body and mind, with
insatiable eating.

~

St. Seraphim of Sarov

Great Martyr Catherine of Alexandria
Commemorated on November 24

The Holy Great Martyr Catherine was the daughter of Constus, the governor of Alexandrian Egypt during the reign of the emperor Maximian (305-313). Living in the capital, the center of Hellenistic knowledge, and possessed of a rare beauty and intellect, Catherine received an excellent education, studying the works of the greatest philosophers and teachers of antiquity. Young men from the most worthy families of the empire sought the hand of the beautiful Catherine, but she was not interested in any of them. She told her parents that she would enter into marriage only with someone who surpassed her in nobility, wealth, comeliness and wisdom.

Catherine's mother, a secret Christian, sent her to her own spiritual Father, a saintly Elder living in a cave outside the city, for advice. After listening to Catherine, the Elder said that he knew of a Youth who surpassed her in everything. "His countenance is more radiant than the shining of the sun, and all of creation is governed by His wisdom. His riches are given to all the nations of the world, yet they never diminish. His compassion is unequalled."

This description of the Heavenly Bridegroom produced in the soul of the holy maiden an ardent desire to see Him. "If you do as I tell you," said the monk, "you will gaze upon the countenance of this illustrious man." In parting, the Elder handed Catherine an icon of the Theotokos with the divine Child Jesus on Her arm and told her to pray with faith to the Queen of Heaven, the Mother of the Heavenly Bridegroom, and She would hear Catherine and grant her heart's desire.

Catherine prayed all night and was permitted to see the Most Holy Virgin, Who said Her Divine Son, "Behold Thy handmaiden Catherine, how fair and virtuous she is." But the Child turned His face away from her saying, "No, she is ugly and unbelieving. She is a foolish pauper, and I cannot bear to look at her until she forsakes her impiety."

Catherine returned again to the Elder deeply saddened, and told him what she had seen in the dream. He lovingly received her, instructed her in the faith of Christ, admonished her to preserve her purity and integrity and to pray unceasingly. She then received the Mystery of holy Baptism from him. Again Saint Catherine had a vision of the Most Holy Theotokos with Her Child. Now the Lord looked tenderly at her and gave her a beautiful ring, a wondrous token of her betrothal to the Heavenly Bridegroom (This ring is still on her hand).

At that time the emperor Maximian was in Alexandria for a pagan festival. Therefore, the celebration was especially splendid and crowded. The cries of the sacrificial animals, the smoke and the smell of the sacrifices, the endless blazing of fires, and the bustling crowds at the arenas defiled the city of Alexandria. Human victims also were brought, the confessors of Christ, those who would not deny Him under torture. They were condemned to death in the fire. The saint's love for the Christian martyrs and her fervent desire to ease their sufferings compelled Catherine to speak to the pagan priest and to the emperor Maximian.

Introducing herself, the saint confessed her faith in the One True God and with wisdom exposed the errors of the pagans. The beauty of the maiden captivated the emperor. In order to convince her and to show the superiority of pagan wisdom, the emperor ordered fifty of the most learned philosophers and rhetoricians of the Empire to dispute with her, but the saint got the better of the wise men, so that they came to believe in Christ themselves. Saint Catherine made the Sign of the Cross over the martyrs, and they bravely accepted death for Christ and were burned alive by order of the emperor.

Maximian, no longer hoping to convince the saint, tried to entice her with the promise of riches and fame. Receiving an angry refusal, the emperor gave orders to subject the saint to terrible tortures and then throw her in prison. The Empress Augusta, who had heard much about the saint, wanted to see her. She prevailed upon the military commander Porphyrius to accompany her to the prison with a detachment of soldiers. The empress was impressed by the strong spirit of Saint Catherine, whose face was radiant with divine grace. The holy martyr explained the Christian teaching to them, and they were converted to Christ.

On the following day they again brought the martyr to the judgment court where, under the threat of being broken on the wheel, they urged that she renounce the Christian Faith and offer sacrifice to the gods. The saint steadfastly confessed Christ and she herself approached the wheels; but an angel smashed the instruments of execution, which shattered into pieces with many pagans standing nearby.

Having beheld this wonder, the Empress Augusta and the imperial courtier Porphyrius with 200 soldiers confessed their faith in Christ in front of everyone, and they were beheaded. Maximian again tried to entice the holy martyr, proposing marriage to her, and again he was refused. Saint

Catherine firmly confessed her fidelity to the heavenly Bridegroom Christ, and with a prayer to Him she herself lay her head on the block beneath the executioner's sword.

The relics of Saint Catherine were taken by the angels to Mount Sinai. In the sixth century,, the venerable head and left hand of the holy martyr were found through a revelation and transferred with honor to a newly-constructed church of the Sinai monastery, built by the holy Emperor Justinian (November 14).

Saint Catherine is called upon for relief and assistance during a difficult childbirth. Pilgrims to her monastery on Mt Sinai are given souvenir rings as a remembrance of their visit.



The incorrupt hand of Saint Catherine (at the monastery of Mt Sinai)

The Icon of Saint Catherine shows the scrolls as symbols for her wisdom, and she is holding a cross and palm leaves as a sign of her victory through her martyrdom for Christ her Bridegroom. The weapon of her torture (the wheel with spokes) is always present in her icons also.

**A Brief Life Of Saint NECTARIOS
Metropolitan Of Pentapolis,
Wonderworker Of AEGINA**

*S*t. Nectarios, earthly name was Anastasios, as he was called, was from a very poor family in nineteenth century Selybria, in Thrace. He attempted to board a ship to Constantinople to find work, but he had no money for a ticket. The engines of the ship roared, yet it would not move until young Anastasios was permitted aboard. En route, the sea once raged, but Anastasios dipped his cross, which contained a piece of the True Cross, into the water three times, praying "Silence! Be still." The waters became still, but he lost his cross. As the ship continued, a loud continuous knocking was heard from beneath the ship. When they arrived at their destination, the sailors found the cross stuck to the bottom of the ship, as if the holy Cross of our Lord led the ship... When he was 29 years of age, he became a monk on the island of Chios. The patriarch sent him to study theology in Athens, and he was ordained Priest Nektarios (when you become a monk your name is changed), and later the Bishop of Pentapolis.

However, owing to jealousy and alleged improprieties, he was removed from office, only to be rejected again in Athens and island of Euboiea. He suffered as a pauper, but he persevered, and his integrity and his wisdom shone through. The people of Euboiea embraced him. He became the Dean of the School of Theology in Athens in 1910 and helped begin a convent and became a spiritual father with healing powers for many throughout Greece. Ten years later, he was taken from Aegina to a hospital ward in Athens for the poor and incurable. He gave up his spirit there, and they prepared him for burial. His sweater was placed on the nearby bed of a paralytic, who suddenly regained his strength and walked. The room, which has since become a chapel, was filled with a beautiful fragrance for many days after his repose in the Lord our God. Healings are seen throughout the world to this day by the saint's holy prayers. He is considered the patron saint of those with cancer, heart trouble, arthritis, for those who are seeking a job, and epilepsy.

St. Nectarios lived from 1846 until 1920. On November 9th, (1920) St. Nectarios reposed in the Lord. The Feast day for St. Nectarios is 9 November.

Professor John E. Rexine, of Colgate University wrote the following:

"Widely known among the Orthodox as a great miracle-worker, particularly as a healer of every sort of disease, St. Nectarios was a many-sided personality. He was a prolific writer, theologian, philosopher, moralist, educator, poet, ascetic and mystic."

The above source on the life Saint Nectarios is from "THE ORTHODOX CALENDAR," Copyright 1995

FROM THE WRITINGS OF SAINT NECTARIOS...

SPIRITUAL TRAINING

Spiritual training (pneumatike gymnasia) is askesis for peity. It is most

valuable, "having promise for the life that now is, and for that which is to come." The efforts made for the sake of piety bring spiritual gladness. Theophylaktos says: "Train yourself for piety, that is, for pure faith and the right life. Training, then, and continual efforts are necessary; for he who trains exercises until he perspires, even when there is no contest."

Training accustoms one to be lenient, temperate, capable of controlling his anger, subduing his desires, doing works of charity, showing love for his fellow men, practicing virtue. Training is virtuous askesis, rendering one's way of life admirable.

Askesis is practice, meditation, training, self-control, love of labor.

FASTING

Fasting is an ordinance of the Church, obliging the Christian to observe it on sepecific days. Concerning fasting, our Savior teaches: "When thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father Who is in secret: and thy Father, Who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." From what the Savior teaches we learn (a) that fasting is pleasing to God, and (b) that he who fasts for the uplifting of his mind and heart towards God shall be rewarded by God, Who is a most liberal bestower of Divine gifts, for his devotion.

In the New Testament fasting is recommended as a means of preparing the mind and the heart for divine worship, for long prayer, for rising from the earthly, and for spiritualization.

PRAYER

TRUE PRAYER is undistracted, prolonged, performed with a contrite heart an alert intellect. The vehicle of prayer is everywhere humility, and prayer is a manifestation of humility. For being conscious of our own weakness, we invoke the power of GOD.

PRAYER unites one with GOD, being a divine conversation and spiritual communion with the Being that is most beautiful and highest.

*PRAYER IS FORGETTING EARTHLY THINGS,
AN ASCENT TO HEAVEN.
THROUGH PRAYER
WE FLEE TO GOD.*

PRAYER is truly a heavenly armor, and is alone can keep safe those who have dedicated themselves to God. Prayer is the common medicine for purifying ourselves from the passions, for hindering sin and curing our faults. Prayer is an inexhaustible treasure, an unruffled harbor, the foundation of serenity, the root and mother of myriads of blessings.