



*St. Ammon the Deacon, surrounded by his holy disciples,  
the Holy Forty Virgin Martyrs*

**Liturgical Guide for  
Friday, September 1, 2023**



## GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

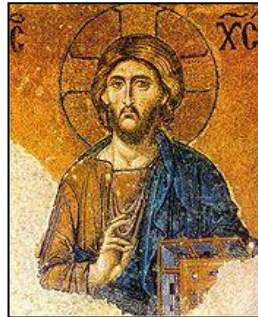
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople: [www.patriarchate.org](http://www.patriarchate.org)

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website: [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org)

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Website: [www.atlmetropolis.org](http://www.atlmetropolis.org)

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: [www.saintchristopherhoc.org](http://www.saintchristopherhoc.org)

### St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



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**Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis, *Chancellor***

### Liturgical Guide for Friday, September 1, 2023

**ON THIS DAY, THE CHURCH COMMEMORATES** the Indiction – the Ecclesiastical New Year; Symeon the Stylite(+459); Synaxis of the Recovery of the Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos of Miasenae; The 40 Holy Ascetic Virgin Martyrs of Thrace and their Teacher Ammon the Deacon; Holy Martyrs Calliste and Siblings: Euodus and Hermogenes; Righteous Meletius, The Struggler of the Muioupolis Mountain; Jesus (Joshua) of Navi; Nicholas of Kourtaliotis; and the Day of the Protection of the Environment or our Natural Surroundings. *Through their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.*

## **Welcome, Visitors and Newcomers, to our Parish!**

We invite you to enter your name, mail/email addresses in our Guest Register (near the entrance) if you are interested in joining and assisting with our mission's development. We want to keep you informed of our schedule and location of services. ***You and your family are welcome; we look forward to knowing you. We invite you and your family to join and assist us often!***

*Please consider that only baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians in canonical good standing may approach for Holy Communion. All are invited to partake of the Antidoron ("instead of the gifts") distributed at the conclusion of today's Divine Liturgy.*

<b>Take this Sunday Bulletin with you to <i>SHARE</i> with someone who is <i>not</i> here today.</b>
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## **SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG BEFORE/AFTER SMALL ENTRANCE**

### **1./2. Hymn for Indiction/Ecclesiastical New Year – (not in Hymnal):**

*It is sung after the Small Entrance.* O Fashioner of all creation, who made seasons and years by Your own authority, bless the crown of the year with Your goodness, O Lord, and preserve our rulers and Your city in peace, at the intercession of the Theotokos, and save us.

### **3. Hymn for Holy Theotokos Remembered Today– (not in Hymnal):**

*It is sung after the Small Entrance.* Rejoice, Maiden full of grace, O Virgin Theotokos; a haven and protection are you for all of mankind. From you did the Redeemer of the world become incarnate, only you are both a Mother and a Virgin. O Lady ever blessed and ever filled with glory, intercede with Christ God, beseeching Him to grant peace to the universe.

### **4. Hymn for St. Symeon the Stylite – (not in Hymnal):**

*It is sung after the Small Entrance.* You became a pillar of patience, O devout one, emulating the forefathers, Job in his sufferings and Joseph in his temptations, and the manner of the bodiless, though you were still in body. O devout father Symeon, intercede with Christ God, to save our souls.

### **5. Hymn Commemorating St. Christopher – (see handout):**

It is sung *after* the Small Entrance. Made comely with garments woven from your venerable blood, you stand before the Lord, the King of Heaven and earth, O famed Martyr Christopher. With the choirs of Angels and the Martyrs you chant, singing the thrice-holy hymn and most awesome praises. Thus, by your intercessions with God, save us, your servants.

**6. Kontakion for the Indiction/Ecclesiastical New Year - (not in Hymnal):**

*It is sung after the Small Entrance.* You, the Creator and the Lord of the ages, O God of all, truly transcending all essence, we earnestly entreat, that You will bless the year, and, O tender-loving Lord, in Your infinite mercy, only Master, save us all who worship and serve You, O our Redeemer, and who cry with fear, "For all Your servants, make fruitful the coming year."

**7. Special Communion Hymn for Today - (not in Hymnal):**

Bless the crown of the year, O Lord, with Your goodness. Alleluia.

**Scriptural Passages from Today's Orthros & Divine Liturgy**

<p><i>The Scriptures were not given us for this only, that we might have them in books, but that we might engrave them on our hearts.</i></p> <p>— St. John Chrysostom</p>
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**Epistle Reading During Divine Liturgy (1 Tim. 2:1-7)**

*First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, Who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, Himself human, Who gave Himself a ransom for all—this was attested at the right time. For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.*

## **Gospel Reading During Divine Liturgy (Luke 4:16-22)**

*When He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, He went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was His custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to Him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” And He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. Then He began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” All spoke well of Him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from His mouth. They said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?”*

### **St. Ammoun the Deacon and his holy disciples, the Holy 40 Virgin Martyrs**

*(continued from back cover)*



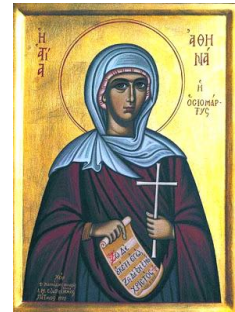
On the first day of September, which marks the opening of our ecclesiastical year, the Church opens its golden pages of martyrdom by celebrating the resolve of the forty women virgin ascetic martyrs who put to shame the torture mechanisms of Licinius. The forty women virgin martyrs lived in Adrianoupolis of Thrace, in northeast Greece, and they were disciples of Deacon Ammoun. During that time, around 305 A.D., the emperor of the eastern region of the Roman Empire was Licinius, a dreadful persecutor of Christianity. Licinius had instituted a decree for the annihilation of all Christians who refused to sacrifice to idols. The decree of this bloodthirsty tyrant soon reached all cities, towns, and villages. Christians were slaughtered like lambs, refusing to submit to his soul-destroying promises and choosing rather to die for the love of their heavenly bridegroom.

*St. Margaret*



During these horrible years, the forty virgin martyrs were apprehended and put to the test along with their deacon Ammoun. The names of these glorious Christian women are as follows: **Adamantine, Athena, Akrive, Antigone, Arivea, Aspasia, Aphrodite, Dione, Dodone, Elpinike, Erasmia, Erato, Ermeneia, Evterpe, Thaleia, Theano, Theano, Theonyphe, Theophane, Kalliroe, Kalliste, Kleio, Kleonike, Kleopatra, Koralia, Lambro, Margarita, Marianthe, Melpomene, Moscho, Ourania, Pandora, Penelope, Polymnia, Polynike, Sapfo, Terpsichore, Troada, Haido, and Harikleia.**

By their daily ascetic struggles, by their prayers, vigils, and fasting, the seed of faith rooted, sprouted, and blossomed in the fertile ground of the virgins' souls. Steadfast faith, precise keeping of Christ's commandments, and obedience to their pious spiritual father Ammoun, made them as pure as lilies. This purity invites and hosts the two theological virtues of humility and love, which further house the Trinity in the Christian heart.



*St. Athena*

The intimidations, threats, and tortures did not sway the virgins. The idolater archon Varos of Adrianoupolis did not sway the unshakable faith of this holy team of virgin martyrs. They united their godly prayers, and immediately and miraculously the priest of the idols was airborne. He remained suspended and hung in midair, thus punished for many, many hours, and finally he landed on the ground and breathed his last.

*St. Athena*



*St. Aspasia*

Deacon Ammoun was hanged, and had his ribcage opened with knives. After this, a red-hot iron helmet was placed on his head. The above tortures caused no apparent harm to this athlete of Christ, so he was transported to Heraklea of Thrace, to the tyrant Licinius, along with the holy virgins. Licinius ordered to have ten of the virgin martyrs burned by fire, and another eight beheaded, along with Deacon Ammoun. Another ten were put to death by the sword, being struck in the mouth or in the heart, thus giving up their spirit. Of those remaining, six were martyred by being forced to swallow sizzling hot iron marbles, and the last six were cut to pieces by knives.

The forty martyred women and the martyr Ammoun exercised their faith, hope, and love toward Christ in an amazing way. They proved to the world that the Christian Gospel is not some ideology, but the source of life and power. They proved indefatigably that the Church of Christ is a divine creation. The fools for Christ defeated the wise. The weak defeated the mighty. The words of St. John the Chrysostom find their full justification through the centuries: “The Church, under persecution, scores victories. When insulted, it becomes even more radiant. It receives injuries, but it does not succumb to the wounds. It sails through rough seas, but it does not sink. It fights, but it is never defeated. O man, there is nothing more powerful than the Church.”



*St. Aphrodite*



*St. Antigone*

With the unshakable and steadfast faith in the Resurrected Savior, the forty virgin martyrs did not simply show patience and perseverance through these various tortures. They didn’t simply display boldness and heroism, but a characteristic element of Christian martyrdom – the presence of joy, a joy quite inexplicable to the idolaters, and the cause of many conversions. Curious bystanders were often the eyewitnesses of a great marvel and profound mystery. People heavily injured, dismembered, severely beaten, hanging on a cross (or about to be hung), engulfed by flames were full of joy. Instead of mourning, weeping and chest-beating, they were glorifying God. The day of martyrdom was a day of joy. They were rejoicing

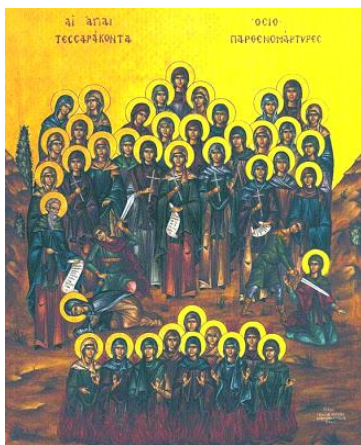
because they were deemed worthy to confess Christ, the cause of all joy. They irrigated the tree of the Church with their blood. There is no

greater sermon, there is no better way to show to the unbelievers and idolaters that Christ is the true God. The blood of one martyr would bring in dozens of new believers to the Church, often thousands.

Eusebius, the early church historian, informs us, "They didn't seem to worry when faced with persecution and all kinds of tortures, but they displayed fearless boldness through their faith in the God of all, and they welcomed their final decision of death with joy and laughter and great rejoicing. Therefore, they chanted hymns and offered thanksgiving to the God of all, up until their last breath" (Ecclesiastical History, Volume 8, 9:5).



*St. Adamantina*



*Icon of the Forty Holy Virgin Martyrs,  
with St. Ammoun the Deacon*

*Chronia Polla – Many Years - to our parishioners  
celebrating their Name Day today.*



["Follow" & "Like" our Facebook page.](#) Check for updates and photos.

On this the 20<sup>th</sup> Feast Day of the New Ecclesiastical Year of our St. Christopher's parish community, we continue to thank each of you for your presence and support. Although it may seem like we are just a handful of men, women and children, if we commit ourselves to serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we will experience the miracle of growth as the Holy Spirit brings others into His service to help us build His new church in the Peachtree City, Georgia area for the glory of God!





## Prayer for the Environment

“As Orthodox Christians, we use the Greek word **kairos** to describe a critical moment in time, often a specific historical period with lasting repercussions and eternal significance. For humankind and the planet as a whole, now is our kairos: the decisive time in our relationship with all of God’s creation, when we must respond in an opportune manner to protect life on earth from the worst consequences of human recklessness. May God grant us the wisdom to act promptly.”

– *His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*

**Note from Fr. George:** In 1989, the Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrius instituted a Day of Prayer for the Protection of the Environment, establishing it on September 1. In 2016, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew said, “Following for many years the catastrophic world developments in environmental matters, the Holy and Great Mother

Church of Christ, on its own initiative set the start of every ecclesiastical year as a day dedicated to Creation, to the environment, calling during this day upon the whole Orthodox and Christian world to raise a prayer and supplication to the Creator of all, to give thanks for the great gift of Creation, make supplications for the protection and safeguarding from every visible and invisible attack by man.” Toward that aim, I have collected various hymns from Great Vespers for us to offer the following prayer today as stewards of God’s natural environment:

O Creator of the Universe, Who from the beginning of time have set everything in its appropriate place, do not despise the works of Your hands, but look down from heaven upon this vineyard, O Lord, with a merciful eye, and restore it according to Your will, deflecting every destructive contrivance and corruption. For You are our Shepherd, our Deliverer, and our Savior, and in mercy and compassion it is Your aid we accept, glorifying You, the Master.

O Christ, Who out of nothing brought all things into existence and in ineffable wisdom, O Loving One, You granted everyone to precisely keep the purpose which You set for them in the beginning. Bless all creatures which You have brought into being, for You are a mighty Savior. To Your glory, You established laws, and You govern securely. We beseech You to maintain unfailing and whole, all elements which hold the earth together, and save the universe.

Lover of Mankind keep unharmed the environment that clothes the earth, through which, by Your will, we who inhabit the earth live and move and have our being, so that we, Your unworthy suppliants, may be delivered from destruction and ruin.

O Loving One, safeguard the earth unharmed and all its encompassing elements, in which, by Your will, we dwell, live, move and exist, that we, Your unworthy supplicants, may be delivered from ruin and destruction.

Gird all creation by the mighty power of Your loving kindness, O Savior, and deliver this earthly habitation from the threat of corruption; for we, Your servants, place our hope in You, O Christ.

Lord, grant peace to all nations and understanding in all things, that our lives may be tranquil. May we always keep Your laws, set by You in all creation for its immutable preservation and for the governance of the Universe.

With humble souls we all fall before You and beseech You, O Lord. Let Your Word of command deliver the earth in which we live from all harm and grievous destruction. Swiftly repel and dispel from earth the destructive currents of air. Let Your nod loose a flow of life-giving and refreshing breezes. Let Your mighty power, O Master, gird her with fortification, granting to all reconciliation, salvation, and divine mercy.

Look upon the works of Your hands with a compassionate eye, O merciful God, and rid the expanse of the atmosphere, O Lord, from dreadful ruin, death-bearing emissions, and poisonous contamination, by which danger and death threaten. Corruption comes into being through thoughtlessness; therefore, take pity on Your creation and grant prudence, also granting to all reconciliation, salvation, and divine mercy.



Hear us, O God our redeemer, the hope of all, at the ends of the earth or far away at sea, and show mercy O Master, towards our sins and have mercy on us. One with the Holy Spirit, O Word and Son without beginning, co-maker of all and co-creator of all things visible and invisible, bless the crown of the year, guarding in peace the multitudes of the Orthodox, at the prayers of the Mother of God and of all the Saints. For You are a good and loving God, and to You we give glory, to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.





## **COMMUNITY SCHEDULE** (CHECK WEB CALENDAR FOR MORE...)

**Friday, September 1 (Beginning of the New Ecclesiastical Year):**

**9:00 am    Divine Liturgy, & Doxology for the New Ecclesiastical Year, & Prayer for the Natural Environment**

Today, September 1<sup>st</sup>, as we start *a new ecclesiastical year*, let us join in praying for God's blessings upon us and our family and friends. The following three hymns can serve as our personal entreaties to God to work in our lives to preserve His Creation. As we confront the destruction of Hurricane Idalia, let us pray for the safekeeping of our brothers and sisters in harm's way. These hymns are from the Vespers for the Protection of the Environment as encouraged by our World Leader, Patriarch Bartholomew.

*For Your Name's sake, O Lord, I have waited for You. My soul has waited for Your promise, my soul has hoped in the Lord.* Lord, grant peace to all nations and understanding in all things, that our lives may be tranquil. May we always keep Your laws, set by You in all creation for its immutable preservation and for the governance of the Universe.

*Praise the Lord, all you nations; exalt Him, all you peoples.* Almighty Lord, Who created all things in wisdom and by Your almighty arm govern and maintain them, grant stability, that all creation may well endure and remain unharmed from all adverse acts. For You, O Master, have commanded that the works of Your hands remain steadfast until the end of time; for You spoke and it came into being, and they await mercy to avert all evil, and salvation for the human race, which glorifies Your most praised Name.

*Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and always, and forever and ever. Amen.* Look upon the works of Your hands with a compassionate eye, O merciful God, and rid the expanse of the atmosphere, O Lord, from dreadful ruin, death-bearing emissions, and poisonous contamination, by which danger and death threaten. Corruption comes into being through thoughtlessness; therefore, take pity on Your creation and grant prudence, also granting to all reconciliation, salvation, and divine mercy.

***Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!***

The following is an account of the **Forty Holy Virgin Martyrs who are celebrated on September 1st, along with St. Ammoun the Deacon**. It is taken from a longer article from the St. Nicodemos Publications site. Also scattered throughout are additional icons of some of the Forty Virgin Martyrs; many of the names of these Martyrs are popular Greek names. This resource is **reprinted from** <http://full-of-grace-and-truth.blogspot.com> **+Fr. George Tsahakis**

### ***The Forty Virgin Martyrs and Their Deacon Ammoun***

One of the prophecies about the life of virginity, very prevalent in the New Testament, can be found in the 44th Psalm of David. There, Prophet David sees his distant, precious daughter, the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and prophecies: “Virgins shall be brought to the king after her. With joy and gladness, they will be led to the temple of the king.” The life of the Theotokos, the Birthgiver of God, as a model and fortress of the virgins, propelled many souls to devote themselves to Christ totally.



*St. Ourania*

The Holy Spirit in the Epistles of St. Paul, especially in the beginning of 1 Corinthians, exalts the state of virginity: “Now concerning the things which you wrote to me, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.” In verse eight, St. Paul continues, “But I say to the unmarried and to the widows, it is good for them if they remain even as I am,” meaning celibate. A few verses down (v. 32) St. Paul says, “But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord how he may please the Lord. But he who is married cares for the things of the world how he may please his wife, or husband.” So according to these verses of St. Paul, it is very clear that virginity and celibacy is more conducive to a higher spirituality. This is not to say that holiness cannot be reached within marriage, that is also very possible. However, the great life of the Most Holy Theotokos, the Ever-Virgin, and the grace given to us in the New Testament and these great verses of St. Paul, spark a great love in Christians for a life of virginity and total devotion to the Lord.



*St. Penelope*

Many young women lived in the homes of their parents. Just like the daughters of the deacon Philip, they lived a life of virginity, prayer, and devotion to the early Church. Although we did not have organized monasticism before the fourth century, all the elements of the ascetical or monastic lifestyle flourished in the life of the Church and added to the Mother Church millions of martyrs. **- Continued inside Liturgical Guide**