



St. Maximus the Confessor – Feast Day is Today

Sunday, January 21, 2024



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

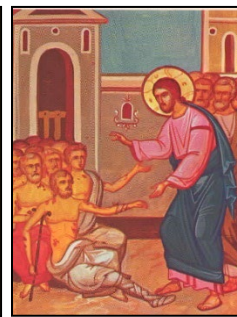
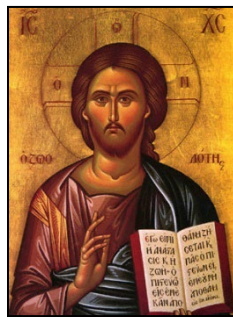
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople: www.patriarchate.org

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website: www.goarch.org

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Website: www.atlmetropolis.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: www.saintchristopherhoc.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



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Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis, Chancellor

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, January 21, 2024

ON THIS DAY, THE TWELFTH SUNDAY OF SAINT LUKE, WE REMEMBER Maximus the Confessor (+662); Neophytos the Martyr of Nicaea; Martyrs Neophytos, Agnes, Patroclus, Maximus the Greek and Eugene of Trebizond. *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.

Special Hymns Sung Before/After Small Entrance

1./2. Resurrectional Hymn (Plagal of the 4th Tone) – (Hymnal-pp126-7):

It is sung *before* and *after* the Small Entrance: From on high You descended, O merciful Lord. You accepted the cross and three days in the tomb to free us from the bondage of sin, O our life and resurrection. Glory to You, O Lord.

3. Hymn for St. Maximus the Confessor – (not in Hymnal):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: Guide of Orthodoxy and a sacred teacher of piety and dignity, luminary of the world, and God-inspired jewel of monastics, O wise Maximus, the Spirit's instrument: by your teachings you enlightened all. Intercede with Christ our God for the salvation of our souls.

4. Hymn Commemorating St. Christopher – (see music distributed):

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.

5. Kontakion sung in anticipation of the Presentation of the Lord (to be celebrated 2/2) (Hymnal-pp.250-253):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: For our salvation You took flesh and You sanctified the Virgin's womb; You blessed the aged Simeon as You lay resting in his arms; and having come to save us all, O Christ our God, to these troubled times, bring Your lasting peace. Give strong and undaunted faith to all Your people, O only lover of mankind.

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM TODAY'S ORTHROS & DIVINE LITURGY

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. – St. John Chrysostom

Gospel Reading During Orthros Service (John 21:15-25)

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time He said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to Him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know everything; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this He said to him, "Follow me." Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about him?" Jesus said to him, "If it is My will that he remain until I come, what is that to You? Follow me!" So the rumor spread in the community that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to You?" This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true. But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

Epistle Reading During Divine Liturgy (Col. 3:4-11)

⁴When Christ Who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. ⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). ⁶On account of

these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. ⁷These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. ⁸But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices ¹⁰and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. ¹¹In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!

Gospel Reading During Divine Liturgy (Luke 17:12-19)

At that time, as Jesus entered a village, He was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said: “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” When He saw them, He said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving Him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then said Jesus: “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” And He said to him: “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”

MEMORY VERSE (TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY):


“For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.”
(2 Cor. 4:15)

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

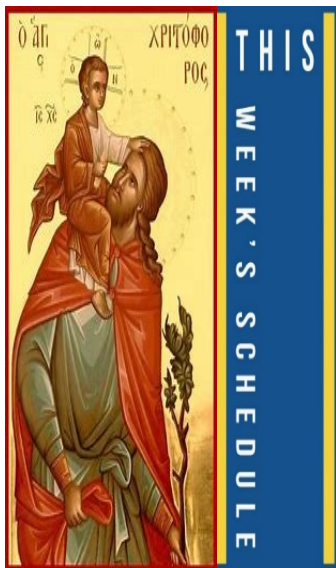
St. John Chrysostom offered the following consideration on acts of charity: Imagine a carpenter with the crudest of tools. It takes him many days to make a simple table; and its quality is so low that the price he obtains for it is poor. He has a choice: either he can spend all the money he earns on food and drink, or he can set some money aside, even if it means going hungry,

in order to buy better tools. If he does the latter, then he will soon be making good tables much more quickly, and so his earnings will quickly rise.

This choice is analogous to a spiritual choice that each of us must make. Either we can spend for our own pleasure all the wealth we possess, or we can set aside part of our wealth to give to others. If we do the latter, then we may sacrifice a few immediate, earthly pleasures; but the joy we earn for ourselves in Heaven far, far surpasses the pleasure we have lost on earth. Every act of charity on earth is an investment in Heaven.

 ["Follow" & "Like"](#) our Facebook page. Be sure to check our status for updates and photos.

On this the 988th Sunday 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! ***Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!***



January 21, 12th Sunday of St. Luke

7:45 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy, Parish Council Oath of Office

10:45 Religious Education Classes (*for all ages*)

Noon Parish Council Meeting

January 28, 15th Sunday of St. Luke

7:45 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy

10:45 Religious Education Classes (*for all ages*)

Noon Let's EAT!

St. Maximus the Confessor As A Model for Our Lives

(Continued from Back Cover)

"Perhaps it might happen that something useful to the soul will be revealed out of them. This will happen completely by the Grace of God to the one who reads with an uncomplicated mind, with the fear of God and with love. But if someone reads this or any other book whatever not for the spiritual profit but to hunt for phrases to reproach the author so that he might then set himself up in his own opinion as wiser than he, such a person will never receive any profit of any kind."

The same, of course, happens with audiences of spiritual discourses. Those wishing to be fed spiritually, to be supported and comforted, should listen with humility and fear of God. Further, they should pray for enlightenment from above to the one giving the discourse, and that God may open their minds that they may understand everything they hear. Conversely, if you are trying to hunt for phrases to isolate and thus criticize the speaker, they will never be benefitted.

Second, characteristic is all that Saint Maximus refers to regarding the word of God, at the end of the first hundred Chapters on Theology: "The manna which was given to the Israelite people in the desert is the word of God, which is sufficient for all those who delight to eat and changes taste depending on the difference of their desires, because it had every quality of spiritual food. That is why to those who are regenerated spiritually it becomes reasonable guileless milk. To the sick it becomes cabbage and enhances the strength of the soul that is sick. And to those who have trained the senses of their souls to distinguish good and evil, they are given solid food." He concludes saying: "The gifts one receives in this present life, even if they receive it at a perfect level, still it is something minimal and modest compared to future goods."

From the above it is clear that the word of God is spiritual manna, which has the potential to nourish all people without exception, having the ability to change milk into solid food, depending on the spiritual state of the one who listens to it or studies it. The Holy Fathers of our Church, who interpret Holy Scripture infallibly, we do not judge, but we listen to them or study their words with humility, fear of God and love. Thus we have the ability to feed ourselves spiritually, to support ourselves, and to gain spiritual antibodies that we may endure difficulties.

Source: *Ekklesiastiki Paremvasi*, "ΟΣΙΟΣ ΜΑΞΙΜΟΣ Ο ΟΜΟΛΟΓΗΤΗΣ", January 2008.
Translated by John Sanidopoulos.

The following reflection, "St. Maximus the Confessor As A Model for Our Lives" by Fr. George Papavarnavas is reprinted from www.johnsanidopoulos.com. **+Fr. George Tsahakis**

The venerable Maximus the Confessor was born in 580 A.D. in Constantinople to a noble family and made brilliant philosophical and theological studies. Around 610 Emperor Heraclius entrusted him with the position of his first secretary, which the Saint honored and brightened with honesty and integrity of character. After three or four years, however, he abandoned this much sought after position and became a monk at the Monastery in Chrysoupoli (Skoutari), on the other side of the Bosphorus, opposite Constantinople. In 618 he became a devoted disciple of Monk Anastasios, staying with him throughout his life and even was with him at his martyric death.

Saint Maximus spent all his life as a simple monk, although he was the most brilliant intellect of his time. He fought with bravery and zeal against the Monothelite heretics. The convening of the Lateran Synod in 649 by Pope Martin I condemned Monothelitism, due to the struggle and efforts of Saint Maximus, who went to Rome for this purpose. The decisions of this Synod were sent throughout the world. Saint Maximus, however, was arrested, tortured and exiled to Vizye in Thrace. Then they cut off his tongue and right hand and sent him to another exile to Lazica, on the eastern coast of the Black Sea. There he left his last breath at the age of 82, exhausted by his sufferings and old age. But he continues to teach and inspire through his writings, which exude the fragrance of the Holy Spirit. The most important of them are: "Ascetic Discourse", "400 Chapters on Love", "Questions and Responses", "100 Chapters on Knowledge", "Regarding Various Questions on Saints Dionysius and Gregory", "On Our Father", "Mystagogy" and more.

His life and deeds give us the opportunity to emphasize the following:

First, important and noteworthy is all that Saint Maximus writes in the preface to his "400 Chapters on Love", which he addressed to "Elpidius the Presbyter", who, as it appears, asked him for this discourse: "I request that you not be annoyed by anything that is said; I have simply fulfilled an obligation."

At first he clarifies that everything mentioned in this text are not reflections of his intellect, but selections from the wisdom of the Holy Fathers, whose words he investigated, and then tells the recipient of this discourse the way it should be studied to be benefited spiritually. While studying it, he will need to look for the benefit which comes from the words, overlooking the style which lacks charm, and to pray for the author. Out of humility he adds that the author of this essay is bereft of spiritual profit. Further, he emphasizes that the study of this essay must not be out of curiosity, but with the fear of God and love, because without the Grace of God one cannot see the depth of what is read to benefit from it.