



The Messenger

Sunday, September 24, 2023
Κυριακή, 24 Σεπτέμβριος

1st Sunday of Luke
Κυριακή Α' Λουκά

Weekly Worship Guide

The Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation • Atlanta, GA

Thecla the Protomartyr & Equal to the Apostles,

The Commemoration of the Miracle of the Theotokos Myrtiliotissis in Kythra Silouan of Athos, Stephen the Martyr, The Most Holy Theotokos of Palianis, Coprios the Righteous, Juvenaly & Peter the Aleut, New Martyrs of Alaska

Thecla the Protomartyr & Equal to the Apostles



The Holy Protomartyr and Equal of the Apostles Thekla was born in the city of Iconium. She was the daughter of rich and illustrious parents, and she was distinguished by extraordinary beauty. At eighteen years of age they betrothed her to an eminent youth. But after she heard the preaching of the holy Apostle Paul about the Savior, Saint Thekla with all her heart came to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and she steadfastly resolved not to enter into marriage, but rather to devote all her life to preaching the Gospel.

Saint Thekla's mother was opposed to her daughter's plans and insisted that she marry her betrothed. Saint Thekla's fiancé also complained to the prefect of the city about the Apostle Paul, accusing him of turning his bride against him. The prefect locked up Saint Paul in prison.

During the night Saint Thekla secretly ran away from her house, and she bribed the prison guards, giving them all her gold ornaments, and so made her way into the prison to the prisoner. For three days she sat at the feet of the Apostle Paul, listening to his fatherly precepts. Thekla's disappearance was discovered, and servants were sent out everywhere looking for her. Finally, they found her in the prison and brought her home by force.

At his trial Saint Paul was sentenced to banishment from the city. Again they urged Saint Thekla to consent to the marriage, but she would not change her mind. Neither the tears of her mother, nor her wrath, nor the threats of the prefect could separate Saint Thekla from her love for the Heavenly Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Her mother in a insane rage demanded from the judges a death sentence against her unyielding daughter, and Saint Thekla was sentenced to be burned. Without flinching, the holy martyr went into the fire and made the Sign of the Cross over herself. At this moment the Savior appeared to her, blessing her present deed, and inexpressible joy filled her holy soul.

The flames of the fire shot up high, but the martyr was surrounded by a light and the flames did not touch her. Thunder boomed, and a strong downpour of rain and hail extinguished the fire. The torturers scattered in fear. Saint Thekla, kept safe by the Lord, left the city and with the help of a certain Christian youth, searched for the Apostle Paul. The holy apostle and his companions, among whom was Saint Barnabas, were hidden in a cave not far from the city, praying fervently, that the Lord would strengthen Saint Thekla in her sufferings.

After this, Saint Thekla went with them preaching the Gospel in Antioch. In this city she was pursued by a certain dignitary named Alexander, who was captivated by her beauty. Saint Thekla refused his offer of marriage, and so she was condemned to death for being a Christian. Twice they set loose hungry wild animals upon her, but they would not touch the holy virgin. Instead, they lay down meekly and licked her feet.

The Providence of God preserved the holy martyr unharmed through all her torments. Finally, they tied her to two oxen and began to chase her with red-hot rods, but the strong cords broke asunder like cobwebs, and the oxen ran off, leaving Saint Thekla unharmed. The people began shouting, "Great is the God of the Christians!" The prefect himself became terrified, realizing that the holy martyr was being kept safe by the Almighty God, Whom she served. He then gave orders to set free the servant of God Thekla.

With the blessing of the Apostle Paul, Saint Thekla then settled in a desolate region of Isaurian Seleucia and dwelt there for many years, constantly preaching the Word of God and healing the sick through her prayer. Saint Thekla converted many pagans to Christ, and the Church appropriately names her as "Equal-to-the-Apostles." Even a pagan priest, trying to assault her purity and punished for his impudence, was brought by her to holy Baptism. More than once the Enemy of the race of man tried to destroy Saint Thekla through people blinded by sin, but the power of God always preserved this faithful servant of Christ.

When Saint Thekla was already a ninety-year-old woman, pagan sorcerers became incensed at her for treating the sick for free. They were unable to comprehend that the saint was healing the sick by the power of the grace of Christ, and they presumed that the virgin-goddess Artemis was her special helper. Envious of Saint Thekla, they sent their followers to defile her. When they came near her, Saint Thekla cried out for help to Christ the Savior, and a rock split open and hid the holy virgin, the bride of Christ. Thus did Saint Thekla offer up her holy soul to the Lord.

(www.oca.org)

Order of Hymns Following The Small Entrance

Ἀναστάσιμον Ἀπολυτίκιον. Ἦχος βαρύς.

Κατέλυσας τῷ Σταυρῷ σου τὸν θάνατον ἠνέωξας τῷ ληστῇ τὸν Παράδεισον· τῶν Μυροφόρων τὸν θρήνον μετέβαλες, καὶ τοῖς σοῖς Ἀποστόλοις κηρύττειν ἐπέταξας, ὅτι ἀνέστης Χριστέ ὁ Θεός, παρέχων τῷ κόσμῳ τὸ μέγα ἔλεος.

Ἀπολυτίκιον τῆς Θεοτόκου. Ἦχος δ'.

Ταχὺ προκατάλαβε.

Λαοὶ νῦν κροτήσωμεν, δεῦτε τὰς χεῖρας πιστῶς, καὶ ἄσωμεν ἄσμασι, τῇ Θεομήτορι, ἐν πόθῳ κραυγάζοντες· Χαίρε ἡ προστασία πάντων τῶν δεομένων· χαίρε ἡ σωτηρία τῶν τιμώντων σε πόθῳ· χαίρε ἡ τῷ παραλύτῳ τὴν ἴασιν βραβεύσασα.

Ἀπολυτίκιον τῆς Ἁγίας. Ἦχος γ'.

Θείας πίστεως.

Θείου κήρυκος διδασκαλίας, πόθῳ κτίστου σου ἀναφλεχθεῖσα, τῶν γεηρῶν ὡς ῥεόντων ἠλόγησας· καὶ σεαυτὴν ἱερὸν καλλιέργημα, τῷ Θεῷ δοῦσα ποινῶν κατετόλησας. Θέκλα ἔνδοξε, Παύλου τοῦ Θεοῦ συνέκδημε, τὸν σὸν Νυμφίον Χριστὸν ἰκέτευε, δωρήσασθαι ἡμῖν τὸ μέγα ἔλεος.

Ἀπολυτίκιον τοῦ Ναοῦ. Ἦχος δ'.

Σήμερον τῆς σωτηρίας ἡμῶν τὸ Κεφάλαιον, καὶ τοῦ ἀπ' αἰῶνος Μυστηρίου ἡ φανέρωσις, ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, Υἱὸς τῆς Παρθένου γίνεται, καὶ Γαβριὴλ τὴν χάριν εὐαγγελίζεται. Διὸ καὶ ἡμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ τῇ Θεοτόκῳ βοησωμεν· Χαίρε Κεχαριτωμένη, ὁ Κύριος μετὰ σοῦ.

Κοντάκιον. Ἦχος β'.

Προστασία τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀκαταίσχυντε, μεσιτεία πρὸς τὸν Ποιητὴν ἀμετάθετε. Μὴ παρίδης ἀμαρτωλῶν δεήσεων φωνάς, ἀλλὰ πρόφθασον, ὡς ἀγαθὴ, εἰς τὴν βοήθειαν ἡμῶν, τῶν πιστῶς κραυγάζοντων σοι· Τάχυνον εἰς πρεσβείαν, καὶ σπεῦσον εἰς ἰκεσίαν, ἡ προστατεύουσα ἀεὶ, Θεοτόκε, τῶν τιμώντων σε.

Resurrectional Apolytikion. Mode grave.

You destroyed death by Your Cross, You opened Paradise to the Robber. You turned the Myrrh-bearing Women's lament into joy, and You commanded Your Apostles to preach that You rose, O Christ God, granting the world the great mercy.

Apolytikion of the Theotokos. Mode 4.

Come quickly.

O come, all you people, and let us in faith clap our hands * and sing sacred songs to her who is the Mother of God, * and longingly cry aloud: * "Rejoice, O protection of all those who entreat you; * rejoice, the salvation of those who honor you with longing; * rejoice, O Lady who restored * the paralyzed man to health."

Apolytikion of the Saint. Mode 3.

Your confession.

All aflame with love for your Creator, * from the teachings of the sacred preacher, * you disregarded as fleeting all things mundane. * And being bold in the face of the penalties, * you gave yourself as a beautiful gift to God. * Thecla, glorious companion of the Apostle Paul, * we pray you entreat your Bridegroom, Christ, * and ask Him to grant us His great mercy.

Apolytikion of the Church. Mode 4.

Today is the beginning of our salvation, and the revelation of the mystery which was hidden from eternity. The Son of God becomes the Virgin's Son, and Gabriel announces the grace of this Good News. Let us also join with him, calling to the Theotokos: Rejoice, O Woman full of grace; the Lord is with you.

Kontakion. Mode 2.

A protection of Christians unshamable, intercessor to our Holy Maker, unwavering, please reject not the prayerful cries of those who are in sin. Instead, come to us, for you are good; your loving help bring unto us, who are crying in faith to you: Hasten to intercede and speed now to supplicate, as a protection for all time, Theotokos, for those who honor you.

Readings

1st Sunday of Luke
Κυριακή Α' Λουκά

Epistle (St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 3:10-15)

PROKEIMENON: God is wonderful among his saints.
VERSE: Bless God in the congregations.

Timothy, my son, you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, my sufferings, what befell me at Antioch, at Iconion, and at Lystra, what persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Gospel (Luke 5:1-11)

At that time, as Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all who were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

DIVINE LITURGY CONTINUES ON PAGE 51 OF THE DIVINE LITURGY BOOK

Reminders for Receiving Holy Communion

Holy Communion is offered in the Orthodox Church only to those individuals baptized and/or chrismated (confirmed) in the Orthodox Faith. To participate in Holy Communion one must be in good standing with the Church spiritually (for example, married people must have had their marriage blessed in the Church; and, all must be without grave sin on their hearts). For all Orthodox Christians, the proper preparation for Holy Communion must be observed: that is, examination of conscience, confession, reading the prayers for Holy Communion, and the proper fasting. If you have any further questions about this, please speak with the clergy. Women should remove all lipstick when approaching for Holy Communion.

Thank you.

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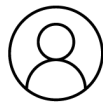
Welcome, everyone!

We extend a warm welcome to our visitors worshipping with us today in our Cathedral. You are invited to join us for our fellowship following the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy in Carlos Hall next to the Church. Thank you for your visit! Please stop by our hospitality table and sign the register in the Narthex.

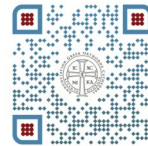
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