



ALL-MERCIFUL SAVIOR MISSION NEWSLETTER

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NINETEENTH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST, OCT. 30, 2005

civil date / church date



THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

Oct. 30 / Oct. 17	SUNDAY	19th of Pentecost. Tone 2. St. Lazarus the Four-Days-Dead.	Service 10 a.m.
Oct. 31 / Oct. 18	Monday	St. Luke the Apostle of the 70 & Evangelist.	
Nov. 1 / Oct. 19	Tuesday	St. John of Kronstadt in Russia. St. John of Rila, patron saint of Bulgaria.	
Nov. 2 / Oct. 20	Wednesday <i>Fast</i>	St. Artemius of Antioch, great-martyr.	
Nov. 3 / Oct. 21	Thursday	St. Hilarion the Great of Gaza in Palestine.	
Nov. 4 / Oct. 22	Friday <i>Fast</i>	St. Abercius (Averkys), bishop, equal-to-the-Apostles. The Seven Sleepers.	
Nov. 6 / Oct. 23	Saturday	St. James, Apostle, the Brother of Our Lord.	Vigil 6:30 p.m.

* *Fast, OW* means that oil and wine are allowed that day. **Fast, FOW* means fish is also allowed that day.

TEACHINGS OF ST. JOHN CASSIAN ON THE 8 PASSIONS--PART 4

... **Sorrows.** In our fifth struggle, we are faced with having to deflect the arrows of all-consuming sorrow, which, if they conquered us, would prevent us from seeing God, plunge our soul from the heights of its worthy stature, weaken and crush us. Sorrow will not allow us to pray with the necessary heartfelt animation, nor read the Holy books (a means of spiritual therapy), nor work diligently, nor be at peace and affable with people. Having taken away from us all powers of reasoning, sorrow will make us impatient and cantankerous, agitate our heart and make our soul appear inane and gloomy, crushing it with destructive depression.

Sometimes, this sickness is begotten from some type of passion: anger, lust or desire to become rich. At other times, without any apparent reason but through the actions of the cunning enemy, we are suddenly overwhelmed with such sorrow that we alter our attitude toward even our dearest individuals, so that anything they say to us, we regard as inappropriate and superfluous, unable to respond to them politely as our heart is filled with bitterness.

There is another, most frightful aspect of sorrow, which does not instill into the sinner an intention to change the lifestyle, but a destructive depression. It didn't allow Cain to repent after he murdered his brother, and forced a depressed Judas to hang himself after his betrayal.

The sorrow of this world is extremely complainant, impatient, cruel, obstinate and leads toward destructive depression. Having overwhelmed a person, it upsets him, distracts him from prayer, from every redeeming activity and from any act of repentance.

How to Overcome Sorrow. We can conquer ruinous sorrow if we try to enliven our soul with visions of future joy. In this way, we will be able to overcome the various forms of sorrow emanating from anger, from suffering losses, from having been offended, from spiritual disorders and that sorrow which brings us to depression. Being joyous in our vision of future blessings and remaining in this disposition, we will not lose heart when we experience unfortunate circumstances, nor exalt ourselves when we are happy — considering our circumstances to be worthless and temporary.

ON HALLOWEEN

Tomorrow is Halloween. In our days, this is a time when—often as not—the Devil himself, and his wicked legions of fallen spirits, are impersonated, depicted everywhere, joked about, and by some people even celebrated. Compounding the spiritual problems that are related to treating Satan as a non-threatening, fictitious character on the one hand, and

worshipping him on the other hand, there are pious myths which have been perpetuated by many Christians in our days, with the thought of fighting the evil one on this day which seems to commemorate him. However, untruth is never helpful in the end to our souls, and these myths need to be identified and the record set straight as we seek to follow and obey the Lord Who is called in Psalm 30 “the God of all truth.”

Myth: Halloween is a bad word and a bad thing. **In fact:** Halloween is a beautiful word which comes from the Old English title for the Vigil of All Saints Day (kept by ancient Irish Orthodox custom on Nov. 1)—All Hallow’s Eve. A “hallow” is a saint, just as “hallowed be Thy name” means “sanctified be Thy name.” Originally it was an observance of the Church when all the faithful fasted and kept the spirit of Lent, preparing their souls to celebrate All Saints. In this context, Halloween is a beautiful and sacred heritage of the Western part of the Orthodox Church. Only when it is twisted to serve non-Christian, faithless purposes does Halloween become bad. (Old Calendar Halloween is on Nov. 13.)

Myth: Halloween was originally a pagan feast involving the presentation of human sacrifices. **In fact:** There is no evidence of human sacrifice having been a part of the celebration of Beltane, the pagan Celtic festival which many believe gave rise to some of the modern traditions of Halloween—the jack o’lantern, for example (originally a hollowed-out turnip), or masquerading, or even trick-or-treat (the relation of which to Samhain is not clear). That said, it is true that pagan religions in Europe did involve occasional human sacrifices, which were already reported in the 1st century B.C. by historians. Apparently the origin of this myth about Halloween is fundamentalist Christians who do not know its history.

Myth: On Halloween the Devil has more power, so Christians should be afraid at this time. **In fact:** Christians should not cringingly fear the Evil One since Christ, by His victory on the Cross and His Resurrection on the third-day, has trampled and destroyed the (once more potent) power of the Devil. The main power remaining to the Devil is to present thoughts to our minds, which we are free in Christ to accept (in folly) or reject (in wisdom). The Devil does most of his harm by encouraging people to accept wrongful thoughts, often cloaking them as good thoughts. We must rely on the Holy Spirit to grant us the virtue of discretion so we do not accept these thoughts. It is true that Satanists are active at this time and for years the local Humane Society has cautioned Austinites who own black cats to bring them indoors starting several days prior to Halloween, since sometimes these poor animals are captured and mutilated on this occasion.

Myth: There is no Devil, he is a personification of evil. And there are no real demons; they are merely a symbol of bad thoughts or feelings. **In fact:** The Devil does exist, and he is a person. Demons exist, and they are actual beings. We read in Mark 5:1-16 that in the land of the Gerasens Our Saviour cast a legion of demons out of the body of a man, and that He permitted those demons to enter into a herd of swine, which ran headlong into the sea and were drowned. All this was to prove both the reality, and the presence, and the evil, and the quantity of the demons over which Our Lord exercised dominion. If we do not believe in the literal existence of the fallen angels, the demons or devils, then we will not be watchful and sober to sort out our thoughts. Some of our thoughts arise from within ourselves, some come from external sources in the world (advertising, for example), and yet other thoughts come to us from the evil spirits. A wise Christian can tell which kind of thought is being presented to his mind. So we should be on guard against the Devil, but not as if helpless before his power. The fact is, we are weaker than the Devil, but we have a champion, we have a bodyguard, and His name is Jesus Christ, “Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace” (Isaias 8:6). He will fight for us, and defeat the Devil for us, as long as we do not trust in our own strength or goodness but turn to Him in prayer. For the power of our Christ no demon, no worldly power, and no power of our own fallen natures, can withstand. To Him be praise and glory through all ages of ages! by Fr. Aidan Keller

NEWS

- Following our meeting after Liturgy last Sunday, Fr. Aidan arranged with our chapel’s property manager for us to remain in our chapel space month-to-month. This means the earliest possible move-out date would be Nov. 30.
- Today again there will be **Sunday School**, starting at noon. The service will last until 11:30, then there will be a chance for refreshments and for the kids to unwind a bit, before Mary-Martha and Maria begin the noon catechism. Please take some time to thank them for their efforts with the children, since the children of the church are our future!
- Yes, once again the **Western Saints Icon Project**, started by Fr. Aidan in 1998, has been expanded. Now 286 Western Saints are represented, up from 213 when Fr. Aidan restored the Project using All-Merciful Savior’s site.

SCRIPTURES THIS WEEK

Today.: 2 Corinthians 11:31-12:0; Luke 6:31-36

Mon. Colossians 2:13-20; Luke 9:18-22

Tue. Colossians 2:20-3:3; Luke 9:23-27

Wed. Colossians 3:17-4:1; Luke 9:44-50

Thu. Colossians 4:2-9; Luke 9:49-56

Fri. Colossians 4:10-18; Luke 10:1-15

Sat. 2 Corinthians 8:11; Luke 5:27-32

Troparion, tone 8. O All-Merciful Saviour, Thou Luminary like the sun: | Through the light of Thy radiance grant us eloquence, | that with pure conscience we may sing praises on Thy feast all-divine, | glorifying Thee the only-begotten Son, and the consubstantial Spirit; | for Thou givest us peace and great mercy.

Kontakion, tone 4. I committed every abomination, O All-Merciful Saviour, | and fell into the pit of despair. | Yet I groan from the depths of my heart | and cry to Thee, O Word: | Hasten, O Merciful One, | and quickly hep us, | for merciful art Thou!