



St. Vladimir Orthodox Church

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Venerable Euthymius the Great

January 20, 2019

Troparion – Tone 1

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: “Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Thy ^Kingdom!// Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou who lovest of mankind!”

Troparion – Tone 4

Rejoice, barren wilderness! Be glad, sterile desert that has never known the travail of birth! The man of desires, Euthymius, has multiplied thy sons; he has planted them in faith and piety. He has watered them with the Holy Spirit; they grow in self-denial and perfect virtue.// Through his intercessions, Christ our God, preserve Thy people in peace!

Kontakion – Tone 1

As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in glory, raising the world with Thyself. Human nature praises Thee as God, for death has vanished. Adam exults, O Master! Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage and cries to Thee:// “Thou art the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ!”

Kontakion – Tone 8

The wilderness rejoiced at thy birth, holy Father Euthymius. In thy memory, it brings a harvest of joy through thy many miracles. Pour the wonders on our souls as well and cleanse us from our sins, that we may sing: “Alleluia!”

Prokeimenon – Tone 1

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us as we have set our hope on Thee!

v: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous! Praise befits the just!

Prokeimenon – Tone 7

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

Venerable Euthymius the Great

Saint Euthymius the Great came from the city of Melitene in Armenia, near the River Euphrates. His parents, Paul and Dionysia, were pious Christians of noble birth. After many years of marriage they remained childless, and in their sorrow they entreated God to give them offspring. Finally, they had a vision and heard a voice saying, “Be of good cheer! God will grant you a son, who will bring joy to the churches.” The child was named Euthymius (“good cheer”).

Saint Euthymius’ father died soon after this, and his mother, fulfilling her vow to dedicate her son to God, gave him to her brother, the priest Eudoxius, to be educated. He presented the child to Bishop Eutroius of Melitene, who accepted him with love. Seeing his good conduct, the bishop soon made him a Reader.

Saint Euthymius later became a monk and was ordained to the holy priesthood. At the same time, he was entrusted with the supervision of all the city monasteries. Saint Euthymius often visited the monastery of Saint Polyeuctus, and during Great Lent he withdrew into the wilderness. His responsibility for the monasteries weighed heavily upon the ascetic, and conflicted

with his desire for stillness, so he secretly left the city and headed to Jerusalem. After venerating the holy shrines, he visited the Fathers in the desert.

Since there was a solitary cell in the Tharan lavra, he settled into it, earning his living by weaving baskets. Nearby, his neighbor Saint Theoctistus (September 3) also lived in asceticism. They shared the same zeal for God and for spiritual struggles, and each strove to attain what the other desired. They had such love for one another that they seemed to share one soul and one will.

Every year, after the Feast of Theophany, they withdrew into the desert of Coutila (not far from Jericho). One day, they entered a steep and terrifying gorge with a stream running through it. They saw a cave upon a cliff, and settled there. The Lord, however, soon revealed their solitary place for the benefit of many people. Shepherds driving their flocks came upon the cave and saw the monks. They went back to the village and told people about the ascetics living there.

People seeking spiritual benefit began to visit the hermits and brought them food. Gradually, a monastic community grew up around them. Several monks came from the Tharan monastery, among them Marinus and Luke. Saint Euthymius entrusted the supervision of the growing monastery to his friend Theoctistus.

Saint Euthymius exhorted the brethren to guard their thoughts. "Whoever desires to lead the monastic life should not follow his own will. He should be obedient and humble, and be mindful of the hour of death. He should fear the judgment and eternal fire, and seek the heavenly Kingdom."

The saint taught young monks to fix their thoughts on God while engaging in physical labor. "If laymen work in order to feed themselves and their families, and to give alms and offer sacrifice to God, then are not we as monks obliged to work to sustain ourselves and to avoid idleness? We should not depend on strangers."

The saint demanded that the monks keep silence in church during services and at meals. When he saw young monks fasting more than others, he told them to cut off their own will, and to follow the appointed rule and times for fasting. He urged them not to attract attention to their fasting, but to eat in moderation.

In these years Saint Euthymius converted and baptized many Arabs. Among them were the Saracen leaders Aspebet and his son Terebon, both of whom Saint Euthymius healed of sickness. Aspebet received the name Peter in Baptism and afterwards he was a bishop among the Arabs.

Word of the miracles performed by Saint Euthymius spread quickly. People came from everywhere to be healed of their ailments, and he cured them. Unable to bear human fame and glory, the monk secretly left the monastery, taking only his closest disciple Dometian with him. He withdrew into the Rouba desert and settled on Mt. Marda, near the Dead Sea.

In his quest for solitude, the saint explored the wilderness of Ziph and settled in the cave where David once hid from King Saul. Saint Euthymius founded a monastery beside David's cave, and built a church. During this time Saint Euthymius converted many monks from the Manichean heresy, he also healed the sick and cast out devils.

Visitors disturbed the tranquillity of the wilderness. Since he loved silence, the saint decided to return to the monastery of Saint Theoctistus. Along the way they found a quiet level place on a hill, and he remained there. This would become the site of Saint Euthymius' lavra, and a little cave served as his cell, and then as his grave.

Saint Theoctistus went with his brethren to Saint Euthymius and requested him to return to the monastery, but the monk did not agree to this. However, he did promise to attend Sunday services at the monastery.

Saint Euthymius did not wish to have anyone nearby, nor to organize a cenobium or a lavra. The Lord commanded him in a vision not to drive away those who came to him for the salvation of their souls. After some time brethren again gathered around him, and he organized a lavra, on the pattern of the Tharan Lavra. In the year 429, when Saint Euthymius was fifty-two years old, Patriarch Juvenal of Jerusalem consecrated the lavra church and supplied it with presbyters and deacons.

The lavra was poor at first, but the saint believed that God would provide for His servants. Once, about 400 Armenians on their way to the Jordan came to the lavra. Seeing this, Saint Euthymius called the steward and ordered him to feed the pilgrims. The steward said that there was not enough food in the monastery. Saint Euthymius, however, insisted. Going to the storeroom where the bread was kept, the steward found a large quantity of bread, and the wine casks and oil jars were also filled. The pilgrims ate their fill, and for three months afterwards the door of the storeroom could not be shut because of the

abundance of bread. The food remained undiminished, just like the widow of Zarephath's barrel of meal and cruse of oil (1/3 Kings 17:8-16).

Once, the monk Auxentius refused to carry out his assigned obedience. Despite the fact that Saint Euthymius summoned him and urged him to comply, he remained obstinate. The saint then shouted loudly, "You will be rewarded for your insubordination." A demon seized Auxentius and threw him to the ground. The brethren asked Abba Euthymius to help him, and then the saint healed the unfortunate one, who came to himself, asked forgiveness and promised to correct himself. "Obedience," said Saint Euthymius, "is a great virtue. The Lord loves obedience more than sacrifice, but disobedience leads to death."

Two of the brethren became overwhelmed by the austere life in the monastery of Saint Euthymius, and they resolved to flee. Saint Euthymius saw in a vision that they would be ensnared by the devil. He summoned them and admonished them to abandon their destructive intention. He said, "We must never admit evil thoughts that fill us with sorrow and hatred for the place in which we live, and suggest that we go somewhere else. If someone tries to do something good in the place where he lives but fails to complete it, he should not think that he will accomplish it elsewhere. It is not the place that produces success, but faith and a firm will. A tree which is often transplanted does not bear fruit."

In the year 431, the Third Ecumenical Council was convened in Ephesus to combat the Nestorian heresy. Saint Euthymius rejoiced over the affirmation of Orthodoxy, but was grieved about Archbishop John of Antioch who defended Nestorius.

In the year 451 the Fourth Ecumenical Council met in Chalcedon to condemn the heresy of Dioscorus who, in contrast to Nestorius, asserted that in the Lord Jesus Christ there is only one nature, the divine (thus the heresy was called Monophysite). He taught that in the Incarnation, Christ's human nature is swallowed up by the divine nature.

Saint Euthymius accepted the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon and he acknowledged it as Orthodox. News of this spread quickly among the monks and hermits. Many of them, who had previously believed wrongly, accepted the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon because of the example of Saint Euthymius.

Because of his ascetic life and firm confession of the Orthodox Faith, Saint Euthymius is called "the Great." Wearing by contact with the world, the holy abba went for a time into the inner desert. After his return to the lavra some of the brethren saw that when he celebrated the Divine Liturgy, fire descended from Heaven and encircled the saint. Saint Euthymius himself revealed to several of the monks that often he saw an angel celebrating the Holy Liturgy with him. The saint had the gift of clairvoyance, and he could discern a person's thoughts and spiritual state from his outward appearance. When the monks received the Holy Mysteries, the saint knew who approached worthily, and who received unworthily.

When Saint Euthymius was 82 years old, the young Sava (the future Saint Sava the Sanctified, December 5), came to his lavra. The Elder received him with love and sent him to the monastery of Saint Theoctistus. He foretold that Saint Sava would outshine all his other disciples in virtue.

When the saint was ninety years of age, his companion and fellow monk Theoctistus became grievously ill. Saint Euthymius went to visit his friend and remained at the monastery for several days. He took leave of him and was present at his end. After burying his body in a grave, he returned to the lavra.

God revealed to Saint Euthymius the time of his death. On the eve of the Feast of Saint Anthony the Great (January 17) Saint Euthymius gave the blessing to serve the all-night Vigil. When the service ended, he took the priests aside and told them that he would never serve another Vigil with them, because the Lord was calling him from this earthly life.

All were filled with great sadness, but the saint asked the brethren to meet him in church in the morning. He began to instruct them, "If you love me, keep my commandments (John 14:15). Love is the highest virtue, and the bond of perfectness (Col. 3:14). Every virtue is made secure by love and humility. The Lord humbled Himself because of His Love for us and became man. Therefore, we ought to praise Him unceasingly, especially since we monks have escaped worldly distractions and concerns."

"Look to yourselves, and preserve your souls and bodies in purity. Do not fail to attend the church services, and keep the traditions and rules of our community. If one of the brethren struggles with unclean thoughts, correct, console, and instruct him, so that he does not fall into the devil's snares. Never refuse hospitality to visitors. Offer a bed to every stranger. Give whatever you can to help the poor in their misfortune."

Afterwards, having given instructions for the guidance of the brethren, the saint promised always to remain in spirit with them and with those who followed them in his monastery. Saint Euthymius then dismissed everyone but his disciple Dometian. He remained in the altar for three days, then died on January 20, 473 at the age of ninety-seven.

A multitude of monks from all the monasteries and from the desert came to the lavra for the holy abba's burial, among whom was Saint Gerasimus. The Patriarch Anastasius also came with his clergy, as well as the Nitrian monks Martyrius and Elias, who later became Patriarchs of Jerusalem, as Saint Euthymius had foretold.

Dometian remained by the grave of his Elder for six days. On the seventh day, he saw the holy abba in glory, beckoning to his disciple. "Come, my child, the Lord Jesus Christ wants you to be with me."

After telling the brethren about the vision, Dometian went to church and joyfully surrendered his soul to God. He was buried beside Saint Euthymius. The relics of Saint Euthymius remained at his monastery in Palestine, and the Russian pilgrim Ighumen Daniel saw them in the twelfth century.

Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Epistle: Hebrews 13:17-21

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you. Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably. But I especially urge you to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Gospel: Luke 18:35-43

Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

Gospel: Luke 6:17-23

And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all. Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.

Service Schedule for the week of January 20

Today – 9:00 AM Sunday School, 9:45 AM Hours, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy followed by Coffee Hour in Daria Hall

Saturday January 26 – 5:00 PM Vespers followed by Confession

Sunday January 27 – 9:00 AM Sunday School, 9:45 AM Hours, 10:00 Divine Liturgy followed by the Annual Parish Meeting in Daria Hall

Weekly Giving

January 13 – 28 adults, 10 youth, \$1,211

Parish Announcements

There will be a Senior R Club meeting today during coffee hour.

The Ladies Altar Society will have a meeting during Coffee Hour on Sunday, February 10.

The sign-up sheet for House Blessing is in the back of the church. Please include your name, phone number, and your preferred date and time for Father's visit. All house blessings must occur prior to Great Lent, which begins on March 11.

Please sign up to host coffee hour during 2019. See Melody Stavisky or Michael Toth.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held next Sunday, January 27 after Divine Liturgy. It is important for all Voting Parishioners to be in attendance.

Bible Study classes will be held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at 7:00 PM in the church basement. The next classes will be held this Wednesday January 23 and Wednesday February 13. All are welcome to attend!

Next Sunday, January 27 before the Annual Parish Meeting, the Senior R Club will sell chicken parmigiana sandwiches. The sign-up sheet for sandwich orders is on the table in the back of the church – the last day to sign up is today. Thank you for your support!

There are two additional sign-up sheets in the back of the church. Vladika will be here on Friday February 1 and Saturday February 2 for the ordination of Father Volodymyr's brother, Bohdan, as a Deacon and to also bless the handicap lift.

Service schedule:

Friday February 1 – 6:00 PM Vespers followed by Lenten potluck meal in Daria Hall

Saturday February 2 – 9:30 AM Greeting of Vladika and Hierarchical Liturgy, followed by luncheon in Daria Hall

Sign-up sheets are for attendance as well as items needed for both the Lenten potluck meal and the luncheon.

Please remember to turn in your 2019 Stewardship Pledge Cards as soon as possible. They may be turned in to Nina Laushell, Father Volodymyr, or Herman Meyer. Thank you.