



St. Vladimir Orthodox Church

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Venerable Athanasius, founder of the Great Lavra and Coenobitic Monasticism on Mount Athos, and his six disciples July 5, 2020

Troparion – Tone 3

Let the heavens rejoice! Let the earth be glad! For the Lord has shown strength with His arm. He has trampled down death by death. He has become the first born of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of hell, and has granted to the world// great mercy.

Troparion – Tone 8

From thy youth thou didst receive Christ into thy soul, O ven' rable one, and above all didst desire to leave behind the turmoil of the world. With courage thou didst settle in the wilderness, where thou didst raise Children in obedience, the fruits of humility. Thus, as an abode of the Trinity, thou didst enlighten all who approached in faith, granting healing to all.// O our Father Sergius, pray to Christ God that our souls may be saved!

Kontakion – Tone 3

On this day Thou didst rise from the tomb, O Merciful One, leading us from the gates of death. On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices; with the Prophets and Patriarchs// they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy power.

Kontakion – Tone 8

Having risen from the earth today and shining like the sun, thy precious and incorrupt relics are as fragrant flowers, scented with miracles, granting healing to all the faithful, and making glad thy flock which thou didst wisely gather and tend. Now as thou standest before the throne of the Trinity, entreat God's help and grace for them and for all Orthodox Christians, so that we may sing: Rejoice, O divinely-wise Sergius!

Prokeimenon – Tone 3

Sing praises to our God, sing praises! / Sing praises to our King, sing praises!

v: Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!

Prokeimenon – Tone 7

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

Venerable Athanasius, founder of the Great Lavra and Coenobitic Monasticism on Mount Athos, and his six disciples

Saint Athanasius of Athos, in holy Baptism named Abraham, was born in the city of Trebezond. He was orphaned at an early age, and being raised by a certain good and pious nun, he imitated his adoptive mother in the habits of monastic life, in fasting and in prayer. Doing his lessons came easily and he soon outpaced his peers in study.

After the death of his adoptive mother, Abraham was taken to Constantinople, to the court of the Byzantine emperor Romanus the Elder, and was enrolled as a student under the renowned rhetorician Athanasius. In a short while the student attained the mastery of skill of his teacher and he himself became an instructor of youths. Reckoning as the true life that of fasting and vigilance, Abraham led a strict and abstinent life, he slept little and then only sitting upon a stool, and barley bread and water were his nourishment. When his teacher Athanasius through human weakness became jealous of his student, blessed Abraham gave up his teaching position and went away.

During these days there had arrived at Constantinople Saint Michael Maleinos (July 12), igumen of the Kyminas monastery. Abraham told the igumen about his life, and revealed to him his secret desire to become a monk. The holy Elder, discerning in Abraham a chosen vessel of the Holy Spirit, became fond of him and taught him much in questions of salvation. One time during their spiritual talks Saint Michael was visited by his nephew, Nicephorus Phocas, a military officer and future emperor. Abraham's lofty spirit and profound mind impressed Nicephorus, and all his life he regarded the saint with reverent respect and with love. Abraham was consumed by his zeal for the monastic life. Having forsaken everything, he went to the Kyminas monastery and, falling down at the feet of the holy igumen, he begged to be received into the monastic life. The igumen fulfilled his request with joy and tonsured him with the name Athanasius.

With long fasts, vigils, bending of the knees, with works night and day Athanasius soon attained such perfection, that the holy igumen blessed him for the exploit of silence in a solitary place not far from the monastery. Later on, having left Kyminas, he made the rounds of many desolate and solitary places, and guided by God, he came to a place called Melanos, at the very extremity of Athos, settling far off from the other monastic dwellings. Here the monk made himself a cell and began to live an ascetical life in works and in prayer, proceeding from exploit to exploit towards higher monastic attainment.

The enemy of mankind tried to arouse in Saint Athanasius hatred for the place chosen by him, and assaulted him with constant suggestions in thought. The ascetic decided to suffer it out for a year, and then wherever the Lord should direct him, he would go. On the last day of this year's length of time, when Saint Athanasius set about to prayer, a heavenly light suddenly shone upon him, filling him with an indescribable joy, all the thoughts dissipated, and from his eyes welled up graced tears. From that moment Saint Athanasius received the gift of tenderness, and he became as strongly fond of the place of his solitude as he had formerly loathed it.

During this time Nicephorus Phocas, having had enough of military exploits, remembered his vow to become a monk and from his means he besought Saint Athanasius to build a monastery, i.e., to build cells for him and the brethren, and a church where the brethren could commune of the Divine Mysteries of Christ on Sundays.

Tending to shun cares and worries, Saint Athanasius at first would not agree to accept the hateful gold, but seeing the fervent desire and good intent of Nicephorus, and discerning in this the will of God, he set about the building of the monastery. He built a large church in honor of the holy Prophet and Forerunner of Christ, John the Baptist, and another church at the foot of a hill, in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos. Around the church were the cells, and a wondrous monastery arose on the Holy Mountain. In it were a trapeza (dining area), a hospice for the sick and for taking in wanderers, and other necessary structures.

Brethren flocked to the monastery from everywhere, not only from Greece, but also from other lands, simple people and illustrious dignitaries, desert-dwellers having labored in asceticism for long years in the wilderness, igumens from many monasteries and hierarchs wanting to become simple monks in the Athos Lavra of Saint Athanasius.

The saint established at the monastery a cenobitic monastic Rule on the model of the old Palestinian monasteries. Divine services were served with all strictness, and no one was so bold as to talk during the services, nor to come late or leave the church without necessity.

The Heavenly Patroness of Athos, the All-Pure Mother of God Herself, was graciously disposed towards the saint. Many times he was privileged to see Her with his own eyes. By God's dispensation, there once occurred such a hunger, that the monks one after the other quit the Lavra. The saint remained all alone and, in a moment of weakness, he also considered leaving. Suddenly he beheld a Woman beneath an ethereal veil, coming to meet him. "Who are you and where are you going?" She asked quietly. Saint Athanasius from an innate deference halted. "I am a monk from here," Saint Athanasius replied, and spoke about himself and his worries.

"Would you forsake the monastery which was intended for glory from generation unto generation, just for a morsel of dry bread? Where is your faith? Turn around, and I shall help you." "Who are you?" asked Athanasius. "I am the Mother of the

Lord,” She answered, and bid Athanasius to strike his staff upon a stone. From the fissure there gushed forth a spring of water, which exists even now, in remembrance of this miraculous visitation.

The brethren grew in number, and the construction work at the Lavra continued. Saint Athanasius, foreseeing the time of his departure to the Lord, prophesied about his impending end and besought the brethren not to be troubled over what he foresaw. “For Wisdom disposes otherwise than as people judge.” The brethren were perplexed and pondered the words of the saint. After giving the brethren his final guidance and comforting all, Saint Athanasius entered his cell, put on his mantiya and holy kukolion (head covering), which he wore only on great feasts, and emerged after prolonged prayer. Alert and joyful, the holy igumen went up with six of the brethren to the top of the church to inspect the construction. Suddenly, through the imperceptible will of God, the top of the church collapsed. Five of the brethren immediately gave up their souls to God. Saint Athanasius and the architect Daniel, thrown upon the stones, remained alive. All heard the saint call out to the Lord, “Glory to Thee, O God! Lord, Jesus Christ, help me!” The brethren with great weeping began to dig out their father from the rubble, but they found him already dead.

Epistle: Romans 6:18-23

And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Epistle: Galatians 5:22-6:2

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Gospel: Matthew 8:5-13

Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.” And Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.” The centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.” And his servant was healed that same hour.

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 July 5 – services will be streamed live

Today – 9:45 AM Hours, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Saturday July 11 – 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy and 5:00 PM Vespers

Sunday July 12 – 9:45 AM Hours, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Weekly Giving

June 28 – 40 adults, 9 youth, \$2,467

Parish Announcements

Father Volodymyr will be serving Divine Liturgy on Saturday mornings at 10:00 AM. These services will not be streamed live. **Masks are required to be worn at this service**, so if you do not wish to wear a mask please do not attend. Again, if you are high risk or feeling ill, please do not attend any services.

Congratulations and God's Blessings to Lizabeth Kasmer, 2020 graduate of Saint Basil Academy. Lizabeth graduated with High Honors.

St. Vladimir Rummage Sale

We are planning a Rummage Sale in the near future – it's been a while! Cleaning out your closet, garage, shed? Think of us! Saleable items are welcome to be dropped off in Daria Hall and put in the coat room or on the stage. Please see Melody Stavisky or Father Volodymyr.

When venerating the icons, please only bow your head and refrain from kissing the icons in order to avoid the spreading of germs, which may transmit to a fellow parishioner and cause illness.

Receiving of Holy Communion:

Please keep your social distance while waiting to approach the Chalice.

Father will tilt the spoon into your mouth so there is no contact with your lips.

Do not wipe your mouth on the cloth.

Do not kiss the Chalice but you may bow your head.

The church has been set up for appropriate social distance seating. However, if you are feeling ill, please stay home. Also, those age 65 and over are still considered high risk and should make careful decisions about attending services. Father Volodymyr will continue to stream live Vespers and Sunday Divine Liturgy.

Thank you to everyone for their ongoing donations – please continue to send them to Father Volodymyr on a regular basis if you will not be attending services.

We pray for everyone's continued health and well-being.