

Archangel Gabriel Orthodox Church

Sunday, October 26th, 2008~19th Sunday after Pentecost~tone 2

5th of Luke

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Today we commemorate the **Great Martyr Demetrius** the Myrrh-gusher of Thessalonica. He was the son of a Roman proconsul in Thessalonica. Three centuries had elapsed and Roman

paganism, spiritually shattered and defeated by the multitude of martyrs and confessors of the Savior, intensified its persecutions. The parents of St Demetrius were secretly Christians, and he was baptized and raised in the Christian Faith in a secret church in his father's home,

By the time Demetrius had reached maturity and his father had died, the emperor Galerius Maximian had ascended the throne (305). Maximian, confident in Demetrius' education as well as his administrative and military abilities, appointed him to his father's position as proconsul of the Thessalonica district. The main tasks of this young commander were to defend the city from barbarians and to eradicate Christianity. The emperor's policy regarding Christians was expressed simply, "Put to death anyone who calls on the name of Christ." The emperor did not suspect that by appointing Demetrius he had provided a way for him to lead many people to Christ.

Accepting the appointment, Demetrius returned to Thessalonica and immediately confessed and glorified our Lord Jesus Christ. Instead of persecuting and

executing Christians, he began to teach the Christian Faith openly to the inhabitants of the city and to overthrow pagan customs and idolatry. The compiler of

his Life, St Simeon Metaphrastes (November 9), says that because of his teaching zeal he became "a second Apostle Paul" for Thessalonica, particularly since "the Apostle to the Gentiles" once founded at this city the first community of believers (1 Thess. and 2 Thess.).

The Lord also destined St Demetrius to follow the holy Apostle Paul as a martyr. When Maximian learned that the newly-appointed proconsul was a Christian, and that he had converted many Roman subjects to Christianity, the rage of the emperor knew no bounds. Returning from a campaign in the Black Sea region, the emperor decided to lead his army through Thessalonica, determined to massacre the Christians.

Learning of this, St

Demetrius ordered his faithful servant Lupus to distribute his wealth to the poor saying, "Distribute my earthly riches among them, for we shall seek heavenly riches for ourselves." He began to pray and fast, preparing himself for martyrdom.



When the emperor came into the city, he summoned Demetrius, who boldly confessed himself a Christian and denounced the falsehood and futility of Roman polytheism. Maximian gave orders to lock up the confessor in prison. An angel appeared to him, comforting and encouraging him.

Meanwhile the emperor amused himself by staging games in the circus. His champion was a German by the name of Lyaeos. He challenged Christians to wrestle with him on a platform built over the upturned spears of the victorious soldiers. A brave Christian named Nestor went to the prison to his advisor Demetrius and requested a blessing to fight the barbarian. With the blessing and prayers of Demetrius, Nestor prevailed over the fierce German and hurled him from the platform onto the spears of the soldiers, just as the murderous pagan would have done with the Christian. The enraged commander ordered the execution of the holy Martyr Nestor (October 27) and sent a guard to the prison to kill St Demetrius.

At dawn on October 26, 306 soldiers appeared in the saint's underground prison and ran him through with lances. His faithful servant, St Lupus, gathered up the blood-soaked garment of St Demetrius, and he took the imperial ring from his finger, a symbol of his high status, and dipped it in the blood. With the ring and other holy things sanctified by the blood of St Demetrius, St Lupus began to heal the infirm. The

emperor issued orders to arrest and kill him.

The body of the holy Great Martyr Demetrius was cast out for wild animals to devour, but the Christians took it and secretly buried it in the earth.

During the reign of St Constantine (306-337), a church was built over the grave of St Demetrius. A hundred years later, during the construction of a majestic new church on the old spot, the incorrupt relics of the holy martyr were uncovered. Since the seventh century a miraculous flow of fragrant myrrh has been found beneath the crypt of the Great Martyr Demetrius, so he is called "the Myrrh-gusher."

St Demetrius is regarded as a protector of the young, and is also invoked by those struggling with lustful temptations....

On this day, we also remember the **Great Earthquake at Constantinople**. In 740, at the time of the iconoclast emperor Leo the Isaurian, there was a terrible earthquake at Constantinople. Seeing this as God's just punishment for their sins, the people repented and prayed to the Most Holy Theotokos and to St Demetrius to help them. God had mercy on them, and the earthquake stopped.

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Hymns after the Little Entrance-
TROPARIA

Resurrection, tone 2:

WHEN YOU DESCENDED TO DEATH, O LIFE IMMORTAL,
YOU DESTROYED HELL WITH THE SPLENDOR OF YOUR GODHEAD!
AND WHEN FROM THE DEPTHS YOU RAISED THE DEAD,
ALL THE POWERS OF HEAVEN CRIED OUT://
O GIVER OF LIFE! CHRIST OUR GOD! GLORY TO YOU!

Earthquake, tone 8:

Christ our God, You look upon the earth and it trembles;
deliver us from the terrible threat of earthquakes;
and through the prayers of the Theotokos, send down upon us Your abundant mercy and save us.

Archangel Gabriel, tone 4:

O Supreme Commander of the hosts of Heaven, unworthy though we are, we ever entreat you, that by your supplications, you protect us with the shelter of the wings of your immaterial glory, preserving us who earnestly fall down and cry aloud: Deliver us from misfortunes, in that you are the commander of the hosts on high!

Demetrius, TONE 3:

THE WORLD HAS FOUND YOU TO BE A GREAT DEFENSE AGAINST TRIBULATION AND A VANQUISHER OF HEATHENS, O PASSION-BEARER.
AS YOU BOLSTERED THE COURAGE OF NESTOR, WHO THEN HUMBLING THE ARROGANCE OF LYAIOS IN BATTLE,
HOLY DEMETRIUS, ENTREAT CHRIST GOD TO GRANT US GREAT MERCY.

KONTAKIA

Resurrection, tone 2:

HELL BECAME AFRAID, O ALMIGHTY SAVIOR, SEEING THE MIRACLE OF YOUR RESURRECTION FROM THE TOMB!
THE DEAD AROSE! CREATION, WITH ADAM, BEHELD THIS AND REJOICED WITH YOU!//
AND THE WORLD, O MY SAVIOR, PRAISES YOU FOREVER.

EARTHQUAKE, TONE 6:

DELIVER US ALL FROM UPHEAVALS, AND FROM TERRIBLE AFFLICTIONS CAUSED BY OUR SINS, O LORD,
AND SPARE YOUR PEOPLE WHOM YOU HAVE PURCHASED WITH YOUR BLOOD, O MASTER.
DO NOT DELIVER YOUR CITY TO DESTRUCTION BY TERRIBLE EARTHQUAKES,
FOR WE KNOW NO OTHER GOD THAN YOU;
AND TO THOSE WHO CRY OUT YOU RESPOND:
"I AM WITH YOU AND NO ONE WILL BE AGAINST YOU.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

DEMETRIUS, TONE 2:

GOD, WHO HAS GIVEN YOU INVINCIBLE MIGHT,
HAS TINGED THE CHURCH WITH STREAMS OF
YOUR BLOOD, DEMETRIUS!
HE PRESERVES YOUR CITY FROM HARM, //
FOR YOU ARE ITS FOUNDATION!

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Theotokion, tone 6:

Steadfast protectress of Christians,
constant advocate before the Creator:
do not despise the cry of us sinners,
but in your goodness come speedily to help us who call
on you in faith.
Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O
Theotokos,
for you always protect those who honor you.

Prokeimenon, tone 6 (Earthquake):

O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance!
vs. To You, O Lord, I will call. O my God, do not be
silent to me!

& another, tone 7 (Martyr):

The righteous man shall rejoice in the Lord, and shall
hope in Him.

Epistle: Hebrews 12:6-13; 25-27 (Earthquake), 2
Corinthians 11:31-12:9 (Resurrection), and 2
Timothy 2:1-10 (Martyr)

Alleluia, tone 4 (Earthquake):

O God, You have cast us off, You have scattered us!
verse: You have made the earth to tremble, You have
broken it; heal its breaches, for it has been shaken!

& another, tone 4 (Martyr):

The righteous one shall flourish like a palm tree, and
shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

Gospel: Matthew 8:23-27 (Earthquake), Luke 16:19-31
(Resurrection), and John 15:17-16:2 (Martyr)

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens... The righteous shall
be in everlasting remembrance; he shall not fear evil
tidings. Alleluia!

Who receives Communion? The Eucharist, the "Sacrament of sacraments," is received by those who

- embrace what the Eucharist *means* in the Orthodox church, in a manner appropriate to your age and level of understanding
 - have expressed that assent by being received as living members of the Orthodox Church through the sacraments of baptism and chrismation
 - are pursuing growth in the Orthodox Christian way of life, utilizing the tools and fellowship of parish life and spiritual discipline
- If you have questions about any of this, let's talk!

Christ is in our midst! He is and ever shall be!

IF YOU ARE A VISITOR . . . WELCOME! Take a complimentary copy of the booklet, "Welcome to St. Gabriel Orthodox Church," at the chapel entrance. Please sign our guest book so that we can get to know you. Please join us in our coffee-fellowship, which will either take place here, or at a nearby park.

Regarding standing in church: Please stand as far forward in the Church as possible, leaving doorway area uncongested. Please reserve seats for those who need them most.

Sunday School, ages 3 and up, the "Holy Innocents." They join Hala immediately following the Gospel reading in the room adjacent to the chapel for a lesson. They re-enter the chapel when we sing the Creed. Parents who wish to accompany their children may. The Sunday School class is currently preparing for the Second Annual Bible Challenge. This "Bible Bowl" will focus on the Old Testament (Genesis - 2 Kings) and will be held during coffee fellowship, next Sunday, October 26th. Immediately following fellowship and weather-permitting, the children (accompanied by a parent or guardian) will celebrate at the Family Fun Center.

Schedule for this week:

There will be no midweek Vespers this week.

Upcoming:

Next **Sunday, November 2nd**, we will celebrate the **baptism of Cecilia Beth Strand**, daughter of Germanos and Sophia, sister of Melania Strand. This will take place at 9 am, before the start of Liturgy.

Sunday, **November 9th** is the date of our **annual all-parish meeting**.

+ + + GO IN PEACE + + +

Vonna and I thank all of you for the gracious and generous gift you presented to us last week. Thank you very much!

For a creative and interesting slant on interacting with the culture of Halloween, check out <http://transposzing.blogspot.com/2008/10/first-of-couple-of-posts-about.html>

Well worth it. I've often pondered our tendency to set ourselves in opposition even to aspects of our culture that derive from Christian roots (for example, Santa Claus). Rather than entrenching ourselves against them, claiming they are "from Satan," etc., why can't we exercise creativity in reminding people where they come from. If our ancestors in the faith could do this with *pagan* holidays--for example, teaching people that the true meaning of the Winter Solstice was found in worshipping Christ, the light of God who comes to us in our season of darkness--who are we to say we can't do this with *Christian* ones that have become obscured and distorted. If St. Innocent could see seeds of immortality in the customs of native Alaskans, and use these things to preach Christ, how can we fail to see the seeds of immortality in these even more explicitly (albeit, forgotten, with regard to their true and original meaning) Christian customs of our current culture?