

We have learned that even though in several places in Scripture it says we cannot see God, we see Him by inference in all that has been created by Him. We cannot see him with normal thought. We can grasp His Goodness. He can be grasped through His energies. This is the wonder and awe we experience when in nature.

But Gregory says there is more to the meaning of this Beatitude.

Three Brave Women



This weekly bulletin insert complements the curriculum published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This and many other Christian Education resources are available at <http://dce.oca.org>.



On August 3rd the Church honors three women saints. The first was a contemporary of Jesus Christ, and the other two lived much later.

The first of these women saints is Salome, not the girl who danced for Herod, but one of the myrrhbearing women who went to the tomb of Christ on the morning of the Resurrection. The second is the unnamed sister of nine Georgian brothers, who lived in the seventeenth century. The third is her mother, also unnamed.

Mark 16: 1 tells us that Salome was one of three women who took spices and oils to Jesus' tomb, planning to anoint His body in the customary Jewish way. She is traditionally identified as the mother of the disciples James and John, whose father was Zebedee. In Matthew 25: 56 we read that "the mother of Zebedee's sons" was looking on from afar, with two other women, as Jesus hung on the cross.

Showing dedication to Christ publicly by going to His tomb was a brave act. That's clear from the fact that the male disciples were afraid to do the same thing, and hid away instead.

The myrrhbearing women themselves weren't free of fear. They knew of public scorn for Jesus, who had died so ignominiously after promising so much. They were well aware that hostile, armed soldiers were guarding His tomb. But they were determined, and had a depth of love for Christ that soldiers could not threaten.

The two Georgian women, mother and daughter, also faced soldiers, but in more immediate and dangerous circumstances. The full name of the group of saints to which they belong is "9000 Martyrs of Merabda with the Nine Kherkheulidze Brothers with their Mother and Sister." The nine brothers belonged to the Georgian army.

The Georgians had managed to defeat the Persian troops of Shah Abbas in the spring of 1625. Their victory had not only done much to unite the country of Georgia, but had encouraged other peoples ruled and oppressed by the Persians; resistance began to spring up in various places.

An infuriated Shah Abbas sent 50,000 of his toughest troops to engage the 20,000 Georgian fighters camped at Merabda. Before the battle, the Georgians received Holy Communion, and the bishops who administered it joined them in the field to fight.

The day-long encounter, in sweltering heat, overwhelmed the Georgians. When the last of the Kherkheulidze brothers, who were banner carriers, was killed, their sister ran out to raise the banner herself. When she also fell, her mother picked up and waved the banner till she too was killed. They all died for the faith and for their motherland.

On this day we read I Corinthians 1: 18: "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." Whether facing scorn and hostility like Salome, or actual death in battle like the Georgians, three brave women show us the strength that faith in God's power can have.

St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Christian Church

108 East Main Street

PO Box 134

Clinton, CT 06413

Scripture Readings

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Matthew 14:14-22

Commemorations

Apostles Silas and Silvanus of the Seventy, and those with them: Crescens, Epenetus, and Andronicus (1st c.). Martyr John the soldier at Constantinople. Uncovering of the Relics of Ven. Herman of Solovétsky Monastery (1484). Hieromartyr Polychronius, Bishop of Babylon, and Martyrs Parmenius, Helimenas, and Chrysotelus—Presbyters, Luke and Moscius—Deacons, and Abdon, Sennen, Maximus and Olympius (ca. 251). Hieromartyr Valentine, Bishop of Interamna (Terni) in Italy, and Martyrs Proculus, Ephebus, Apollonius and Abundius, youths (ca. 273).

Information

Rev. Steven Hosking, attached

frsteve@stalexischurch.org

860.664.9434 (church)

860.866.5802 (message)

www.stalexischurch.org



Welcome to our Guests

We welcome all visitors to our Divine Liturgy and services. While Holy Communion may only be received by prepared Orthodox Christians, our non-Orthodox guests are welcome to participate in our prayers and hymns and to join us in venerating the Cross and receiving blessed bread at the conclusion of the Liturgy. Please sign our guest card and join us for refreshments and fellowship after the services.

Feel free to ask questions before or after the services. Any member of our Council or Congregation are glad to assist you. Literature about the Orthodox faith and this parish can be found in the narthex (back of the Church).

Our Parish Council Representatives are:

President - Susan Hayes

Vice President - Deborah Bray

Secretary - SubDeacon Joseph Brubaker

Treasurer - Susan Egan

Member at Large - James Pepitone

Member at Large - Demetra Tolis



Please continue to pray for...

Please continue to pray for...

Deborah, Robert, Ann, Daria, Dori, John, Evelyn, June, Nina, Joan, John, Alex, Alan, Luke, Kathryn, Anastasia, Glenn, Veronica, Darlyne, Irene, Nancy, Dionysian, Elena, Jevon, Ivan and Joscean. And for...John, Jennifer, Nicholas, Isabel, Elizabeth, John, Jordan, Michael, Lee, Eva, Neil, Gina, Joey, Michael, Madelyn, Sofie, Katrina, Olena, and Valeriy.

Memory Eternal to Ann Shillo.

This week we celebrate:

Michael Kuziak and Susan Davis, on the occasion of their birthdays.

This week's services and events

Tuesday, August 1, 2017
Beginning of the Dormition Fast

Wednesday, August 2, 2017
Translation of the relics of St Stephen to Constantinople

Thursday, August 3, 2017
No morning service or evening study

Saturday, August 5, 2017
5:30p - Reader's Vespers

Sunday, August 6, 2017 - Transfiguration of the Lord
9:30a - Divine Liturgy
Fr Sergei Bouteneff, celebrant
Blessing of fruit

Announcements

There will be no daily services or study this week. Should you need the services of a priest while I'm gone, please contact the CT Dean, Fr John Hopko (860-582-3631 : terryvilleorthodoxchurch@gmail.com). Fr Sergei Bouteneff will be the celebrant for the Liturgies.

There will be no printed bulletin for Sunday, August 6th. The online bulletin will be sent out as usual.

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.

Of this Beatitude Saint Gregory of Nyssa states:

We have now climbed great heights. In this beatitude we are promised "for they shall see God." But John says, "no man hath seen God at any time."(John 1:18)

St Gregory writes: "This is the slippery, steep rock that affords no basis for our thoughts, which the teaching of Moses, too, declared to be so inaccessible that our mind can nowhere approach Him. For all possibility of apprehension is taken away by this explicit denial, No man can see the Lord and live.(Exod 33:20) Yet to see the Lord is eternal life."

What does Jesus mean when he promises we will see God? Gregory says, "Hence the man who sees God possesses in this act of seeing all there is of the things that are good. By this we understand life without end, eternal incorruption, undying beatitude. With these we shall enjoy the everlasting Kingdom of unceasing happiness; we shall see the true Light and hear the sweet voice of the Spirit; we shall exult perpetually in all that is good in the inaccessible glory."

Jesus tells us here that seeing God depends on having a pure heart. But if the effort is impossible as Moses says, what's the use, Gregory asks. The Lord surely would not tell us to do something that is impossible.

First Gregory reasons the Divine nature is beyond all mental concepts. Therefore the way to knowledge of Divine Essence cannot be through thought. So how do we grasp what is not know by mental concepts?

Gregory writes, "Since such is He whose nature is above every nature, the Invisible and Incomprehensible is seen and apprehended in another manner. Many are the modes of such perception. For it is possible to see Him who has made all things in wisdom by way of inference through the wisdom that appears in the universe. It is the same as with human works of art where, in a way, the mind can perceive the maker of the product that is before it, because he has left on his work the stamp of his art. In this, however, is seen not the nature of the artist, but only his artistic skill which he has left impressed on his handiwork. Thus also, when we look at the order of creation, we form in our mind an image not of the essence, but of the wisdom of Him who has made all things wisely. And if we consider the cause of our life, that He came to create man not from necessity, but from the free decision of His Goodness, we say that we have contemplated God by this way, that we have apprehended His Goodness—though again not His Essence, but His Goodness. It is the same with all other things that raise the mind to transcendent Goodness, all these we can term apprehensions of God, since each one of these sublime meditations places God within our sight."

Hence it is clear through what has just been said that the Lord speaks the truth when He promises that God will be seen by those who have a pure heart; nor does Paul deceive when he asserts in his letters that no one has seen God nor can see Him. For He is invisible by nature, but becomes visible in His energies, for He may be contemplated in the things that are referred to Him.

continued, in part on the back... the complete discussion is available in the bulletin.