SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST

NOVEMBER 15, 2026 — 8TH SUNDAY OF LUKE

HOLY MARTYRS GURIAS, SAMONAS AND HABIBUS

During the persecution against Christians under the emperors Diocletian (284-305) and Maximian (305-311), the two friends Gurias and Samonas, preachers of the word of God, were arrested in the city of Edessa.

The Saints refused to offer sacrifice to the gods, and boldly confessed their faith in Christ. For this they were subjected to cruel tortures: they were beaten, hung up by their hands, heavy weights were tied to their feet, and they were cast into a stifling prison.

The Martyrs endured everything with steadfastness and Samonas uttered a prayer to the Lord, which one of the witnesses to their death wrote down:

O Lord my God, against whose will not a single sparrow falls into the snare. It was You Who made room for David in his sorrow (Ps. 4:1), Who proved the Prophet David stronger than lions (Dan. 6), and granted a child of Abraham to be victor over torture and flames (Dan. 3, 14). You know also, Lord, the infirmity of our nature. You see the struggle set before us. Our foe strives to snatch us, the work of Your right hand, away from You and to deprive us of the glory which is in You. With Your compassionate eye watching over us, preserve in us the inextinguishable light of Your Commandments. Guide our steps by Your light, and make us worthy of Your Kingdom, for You are blessed unto ages of ages.

By night, they took the Martyrs out beyond the city and beheaded them. Christians buried their holy bodies with reverence.

After some years, the last pagan emperor, Licinius (311-324), began a persecution against Christians. Habibus, a deacon of the Church of Edessa whom the emperor ordered to be arrested for his zealous spreading of the true Faith, presented himself before the executioners when he learned they were searching for him. The Saint confessed his faith in Christ and was sentenced to be burned alive. The Martyr went willingly into the fire and with a prayer surrendered his soul to the Lord. When the fire went out, the mother and relatives of the Saint found his body unharmed. They buried the Martyr next to Sts. Gurias and Samonas.

Patrons of Honorable Marriage

After the death of the Saints, numerous miracles were wrought by them for those who entreated their help with faith and love. Once, a certain Gothic soldier, sent to serve at Edessa, took the pious virgin Euphemia as his wife. Before this the barbarian vowed to her mother Sophia at the graves of the Martyrs Gurias,

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HYMNS OF THE SMALL ENTRANCE

Resurrectional Apolytikion.

Grave Mode.

By means of Your Cross, O Lord, You abolished death. * To the robber You opened Paradise. * The lamentation of the myrrh-bearing women You transformed, * and You gave Your Apostles the order to proclaim to all * that You had risen, O Christ our God, * and granted the world Your great mercy.

Verse 2: Let heaven and earth praise Him.

By means of Your Cross, O Lord, You abolished death. * To the robber You opened Paradise. * The lamentation of the myrrh-bearing women You transformed, * and You gave Your Apostles the order to proclaim to all * that You had risen, O Christ our God, * and granted the world Your great mercy.

CHOIR:

Entrance Hymn. Mode 2.

Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ. Save us, O Son of God, risen from the dead. We sing to You, Alleluia.

Hymns after the Entrance.

Resurrectional Apolytikion.

Grave Mode.

By means of Your Cross, O Lord, You abolished death. * To the robber You opened Paradise. * The lamentation of the myrrh-bearing women You transformed, * and You gave Your Apostles the order to proclaim to all * that You had risen, O Christ our God, * and granted the world Your great mercy.

For the Saints.

Mode pl. 1.

You have given us the miracles of Your holy Martyrs as an impregnable fortress, O Christ our God. At their entreaties, frustrate the plots of foreign enemies, and strengthen our nation, for You alone are good and benevolent.

Apolytikion of our Patron

Mode Pl. 1

The holy Apostle, the All-hymned Luke, * who is acknowledged by the Church of Christ * as the recorder of the Acts of the Apostles, * and the splendid author of the Gospel of Christ. * Let us praise with sacred hymns as a physician, * who heals the infirmities of man, * and the ailments of nature, * who cleanses spiritual wounds, and prays unceasingly for our souls.

Kontakion.

Mode 4. You who were lifted.

The Savior's most pure and immaculate temple, the very precious bridal chamber and Virgin, who is the sacred treasure of the glory of God, on this day is introduced into the House of the Lord, and with herself she brings the grace in the divine Spirit. She is extolled by the Angels of God. A heavenly tabernacle is she.

READINGS

The Epistle
Twenty-Fourth Sunday
Eph. 2:14 – 22

Brethren, Christ is our peace, he who made both [groups to be] one and tore down the wall of separation. He abolished in his flesh the enmity which is the law of commandments with its decrees, so that he might create in himself one new humanity instead of two, making peace. He reconciled both [groups] to God in one body, through the cross, by which he destroyed that enmity. He came and preached peace to you who were far off and also to those who were near. Through him, we both have access to the Father in one Spirit. And so, you are no longer strangers and foreigners! Instead, [you are] fellow citizens with the saints, and members of God's household, being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Jesus Christ himself is the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, fitted together, grows into a holy sanctuary in the Lord. In him, you too are built up into a dwelling place of God in [the] Spirit.

The Gospel
Eighth Sunday of Luke
Lk. 10:25 – 37

At that time, an expert in the law stood up and put Jesus to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" The man answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." Jesus said to him, "You have answered correctly. Do this, and you will live." But the lawyer, desiring to justify himself, asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Then Jesus answered, "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes and beat him. Then they went away, leaving him half dead. By chance, a certain priest was going down that way. But when the priest saw him, he passed by on the other side. In the same way, a Levite also came to the place, but when he saw the beaten man, he [also] passed by on the other side. Now a certain Samaritan was traveling and arrived at the spot where the man was. When the Samaritan saw the wounded man, he was moved with compassion, came to him, and wrapped his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. He placed the man on his own animal and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he was leaving, he took out two denarii and gave them to the host, saying to him, 'Take care of him. Whatever you spend beyond that, I will pay you back when I return.' Now which one of these three do you think seemed to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" The lawyer replied, "The one who showed mercy on him!" Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

UPCOMING SERVICES

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, SAINT MATTHEW THE EVANGELIST, ORTHROS / DIVINE LITURGY, 8:30AM
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS, ORTHROS / DIVINE LITURGY, 8:30AM
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, GREAT VESPERS, 5PM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

There will be a General Assembly today after Divine services. All stewards in good standing are invited to attend.

CHRISTMAS CARD FUNDRAISER

Please donate to the annual Philoptochos Christmas card fundraiser. See flyer for details.

ANGEL WREATH GIFTS

Our parish is sponsoring a single parent family for the Holidays. Thank you to all who took a tag! Please bring unwrapped gifts back by November 29. Please give gift cards to Karen or Presvytera. Thank you!

ADVENT TREAT EXCHANGE

On Sunday, Dec. 6 Philoptochos is hosting our annual Advent treat exchange. Please bring 12 or more individually wrapped vegan items. See flyer for more details.

FOOD BANK

Thank you to all who continue to generously donate items for the Food Bank. We recently donated 117 pounds for our neighbors facing food insecurity.

CATECHISM CLASS

The next class will be held on Sunday, Nov. 29. See class schedule for more details and assignments.

2027 CALENDARS

2026 donors and stewards may pick up their 2027 calendars in the Narthex. Please only take the envelope with your name on it. Thank you for your continued support!

REMINDER ABOUT PROPER ATTIRE

1. Wear modest clothing that does not distract others from worship. 2. WOMEN: Dresses and skirts (of at least knee-length) are the traditional Church clothing for women. Blouses / tops should cover the shoulder and the stomach. Lipstick or lip balm should not be worn, and makeup is strongly discouraged. 3. MEN: Men should wear dress pants and polo / button-down shirts – no tshirts, including no shirts with writing or images. Denim pants are acceptable, work jeans are discouraged. 4. CHILDREN should be dressed for Church in their best clothing. Sloppy dress and play-clothes sends the wrong message to youngsters. 5. EVERYONE: Please wear closed toe shoes. Sandals should be worn with socks. Please do not wear brightly colored sneakers, or shoes with lights in them. No bare feet in Church. Shorts are never permitted, even for children. Tattoos should be covered, as much as possible. Hats are not worn inside the Church.

Samonas and Habibus that he would do his spouse no harm, and would never insult her, but would always love and cherish her.

At the completion of his service in Edessa, he took Euphemia with him back to his native land. It turned out that he had deceived her, for he already had a wife at home, and Euphemia became her slave. Her evil husband threatened to kill her if she revealed to anyone that they were married. Euphemia suffered much abuse and humiliation. When she gave birth to a son, the jealous Gothic woman poisoned him. Euphemia turned with prayer to the holy Martyrs Gurias, Samonas and Habibus, the witnesses to the perjurer's oath, and the Lord delivered Euphemia from her suffering and miraculously returned her to Edessa, where she was welcomed by her mother.

After a certain while the Goth was again sent to serve in Edessa. The whole city learned of his misdeeds after he was denounced by Sophia. The Goth was executed by order of the prefect of the city.

In an Akathist, the Holy Church addresses the martyrs: "Rejoice, Gurias, Samonas and Habibus, Heavenly Patrons of honorable marriage." We pray to them for deliverance from family turmoil, and from marital difficulties, especially where one spouse hates the other without cause.

SAINT KYNTION, BISHOP OF SELEUCIA

Our Venerable Father Kyntion (Quinctian), Bishop of Seleucia, was one of the 318 Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Synod that gathered in Nicaea, of Bithynia. Having become an ascetic and also a wonderworker, he reposed peacefully.

SAINTS JUSTINIAN AND THEODORA, EMPERORS OF THE ROMANS

Saint Justinian, a major figure in the history of the Roman state, was also a great champion of Orthodoxy, a builder of churches and an ecclesiastical writer. He is said to be of Slavic descent, perhaps born in Bulgaria. During his reign (527-565) Byzantium won glory with military victories in Persia, Africa and Italy, as a result of which paganism was decisively routed among the Germanic Vandals and Visigoth tribes. By command of the emperor Justinian the pagan schools in Athens were closed. Justinian sent John, the Bishop of Ephesus, throughout the regions of Asia Minor with the aim of spreading Christianity. John baptized more than seventy thousand pagans.

The emperor gave orders to build ninety churches for the newly-converted, and he generously supported church construction within the Empire. His finest structures of the time are considered to be the Monastery at Sinai, and the Church of Hagia Sophia at Constantinople. Under Justinian many churches were built dedicated to our Most Holy Lady Theotokos. Since he had received a broad education, Justinian assiduously concerned himself with the education of clergy and monks, ordering them to be instructed in rhetoric, philosophy and theology.

The right-believing sovereign devoted much attention and effort to the struggle with the Origenists of his time, who then were reviving the Nestorian heresy. To counter their heretical speculations, the Church hymn "O Only-Begotten Son and Word of God" was composed, and Justinian commanded that it be sung in the churches for the sake of Orthodox unity. From

that time to the present day, this hymn is sung at the Divine Liturgy before the Small Entrance after the second Antiphon.

At the command of the sovereign, the Fifth Ecumenical Synod was convened in the year 553, censuring the teachings of Origen and affirming the definitions of the Fourth Ecumenical Synod at Chalcedon. He also attempted to secure religious unity within the Empire through his (unsuccessful) dialogues with the Monophysites.

The holy Emperor Justinian wished to have orderly rule and law within the realm. Under his guidance and supervision a complete compendium of Roman law was compiled. It has come down to us as a law codex known as the Justinian Codex. These laws of Justinian are included in all the variants of the Russian collections of Canon Law.

In his personal life, Justinian was strictly pious, and he fasted often. During Great Lent he would not eat bread nor drink wine. He is also remembered for promoting the idea of "symphony" between Church and State. The holy Emperor Justinian died in the year 565.

The Empress Theodora, who died in the year 548, was also numbered among the saints with her husband. She was at first a notorious harlot and actress, and an adherent of the Monophysite heresy, but then she repented. After becoming empress, she led a virtuous life, maintaining purity of both soul and body. She provided wise counsel for her husband during his reign, and she also saved his throne during the Nika riots of 532 by her political intelligence and expertise.

HOLY MARTYR DEMETRIOS OF THRACE

St. Demetrios of Thrace (Feast Day - November 15)

Verses

Demetrios is beheaded at the hands of the executioner,

In the land of the athletes of the Lord he dances.

Saint Demetrios lived during the reign of Emperor Maximian (286-305), and was from the village of Davoudio, which was near the city of Amapasos. When he was brought before the pagan governor Pomplius for being a Christian, he boldly proclaimed his faith in Christ our God. And through the Holy Spirit he taught everyone who stood around there about the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, His unspeakable economy, as well as His all around goodness and philanthropy, and he also taught them about the deceptiveness of idolatry, and how the idols are deaf and dumb together with those who worship them.

This enraged the governor, and he ordered for Demetrios to be beheaded by the sword. Having been perfected in this manner, his desire was fulfilled and he received a heavenly crown from Christ. Pious Christians then took his body and buried him with honor and reverence, and shortly thereafter his grave became a source of miracles.

SAINT PAISIUS VELICHKOVSKY: A GREAT HESYCHAST FATHER

Based on the article by John A. McGuckin

Saint Paisius Velichkovsky was one of the most influential spiritual fathers of modern Orthodoxy. His revival of hesychasm—the tradition of inner stillness and unceasing prayer—transformed monastic life throughout Eastern

Europe. Through his translations of the Church Fathers, his guidance of monastic communities, and his emphasis on spiritual eldership, he established a movement whose influence continues today.

Early Life and Monastic Formation

Born in Poltava, Ukraine, in 1722, Paisius was raised in a priestly family. From childhood he loved Scripture, the lives of the saints, and the writings of the Fathers. At thirteen he entered the Kiev Theological Academy, but found its scholastic approach unsatisfying. Drawn toward asceticism and prayer, he left in 1740 to pursue monastic life.

After entering several Ukrainian monasteries, he received the name Platon upon becoming a rasophore monk in 1741. Seeking deeper spiritual formation, he traveled to the Romanian principalities, where monasticism flourished. There he encountered experienced spiritual fathers, particularly Starets Basil of Poiana Mărului, who introduced him to the Prayer of the Heart.

In 1746, Paisius departed for Mount Athos. Unable to find an experienced spiritual guide, he initially embraced solitude, devoting himself to prayer and patristic study. In 1750, Starets Basil encouraged him to establish a brotherhood and tonsured him into the Lesser Schema. Paisius accepted his first disciple, Bessarion, and gradually gathered Romanian and Slavonic monks.

Mount Athos and the Recovery of the Fathers

Ordained in 1758, Paisius became the spiritual leader of a growing brotherhood at the Skete of St. Elias, renowned for its beautiful services and disciplined life.

Recognizing the scarcity of experienced spiritual elders, Paisius turned to the ancient Fathers as reliable guides. Initially collecting Slavonic manuscripts, he learned patristic Greek to recover more accurate texts. With his disciples, he translated works by Gregory of Sinai, Hesychius, Diadochus of Photiki, Symeon the New Theologian, and Peter of Damascus.

His efforts encountered opposition from monks who criticized his emphasis on hesychastic prayer and adaptations of monastic observances. Paisius defended his practices through Scripture and the Fathers, insisting that authentic tradition required spiritual renewal rather than empty formalism.

The Revival of Monasticism in Moldavia

In 1764, Paisius returned to Moldavia with sixty-four monks and settled at Dragomirna Monastery. There he established a rule combining the teachings of Basil the Great, Theodore the Studite, and Nil Sorsky. His community emphasized poverty, obedience, attentive participation in divine services, spiritual instruction, and constant prayer.

He regularly instructed the brethren through readings and explanations of patristic texts. Under his direction, Dragomirna became a center of translation and spiritual formation, eventually housing approximately 350 monks.

Following the Austrian annexation of Bucovina, Paisius moved to Secu Monastery in 1775 and subsequently to Neamț in 1779. His community eventually numbered around 700 monks, making Neamț a major Orthodox monastic center. The monastery also welcomed pilgrims and assisted the poor.

The Philokalia and the Jesus Prayer

Paisius's greatest literary achievement was collecting, correcting, and translating patristic writings on prayer. He organized teams preparing texts in Romanian and Slavonic, making the Greek Fathers accessible to new generations.

Following the publication of the Greek *Philokalia* by Saints Macarius of Corinth and Nicodemus the Hagiorite in 1782, Paisius translated much of the collection into Slavonic. His *Dobrotolyubie*, published in St. Petersburg in 1793, became instrumental in reviving hesychasm throughout Russia and the Slavic Orthodox world.

The *Philokalia* presented the Prayer of the Heart as central to Christian spiritual life. Through the invocation, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner," the believer seeks purification, inner stillness, and communion with Christ. For Paisius, this prayer expressed repentance, humility, and continual remembrance of God.

Spiritual Eldership and the Common Life

Central to Paisius's teaching was spiritual guidance. He believed that only those who had struggled against the passions and acquired humility, discernment, and experience of prayer could safely guide others. Recognizing the scarcity of such elders, he urged continual study of Scripture and the Fathers, together with counsel from experienced brethren.

His distinctive achievement was integrating hesychastic prayer into communal monasticism. Traditionally associated particularly with solitary ascetics, contemplative prayer became central to the common life under his direction.

His monastic rule united liturgical offices, personal prayer, spiritual reading, obedience, and manual labor. Although he respected solitude, he considered it suitable for relatively few. He particularly valued smaller communities gathered around an experienced elder, where common discipline and personal spiritual development could flourish together.

For Paisius, outward observance and inward prayer were complementary. The monastery was a spiritual school where brethren learned repentance, humility, obedience, and communion with God.

His Enduring Spiritual Legacy

In 1790, Paisius received the Great Schema and was elevated to Archimandrite. He reposed on November 15, 1794, and was buried at Neamț Monastery.

His disciples carried his teachings into Russia and Ukraine, restoring spiritual eldership and influencing the Optina elders, Saints Seraphim of Sarov, Ignatius Brianchaninov, and Theophan the Recluse.

Through this movement, the Jesus Prayer spread beyond monasteries to lay Christians. *The Way of a Pilgrim* reflects this inheritance, presenting continual remembrance of Christ amid ordinary life.

Saint Paisius renewed Orthodox spirituality by uniting patristic teaching, spiritual fatherhood, communal monasticism, and the prayer of the heart, transmitting the hesychastic tradition to succeeding generations.