

***MARTYRS AGATHOPODES THE DEACON,
THEODULUS THE READER, AND THOSE WITH
THEM, AT THESSALONICA***

Holy Martyrs Agathopodes and Theodulus lived during the reign of emperor Diocletian (284-305) and were among the Church clergy; Deacon Agathopodes was very old, and St. Theodulus very young. Both distinguished themselves by righteous life and piety. Once, St. Theodulus had a vision in his sleep — a person in radiant garb placed an object in his hand. When he awoke, he held a beautiful ring with the image of the Cross, and he realized this was a sign of his future martyrdom. By the power of the Cross depicted on the ring, the saint healed many sick and converted pagans to faith in Christ.

When Diocletian issued an edict of persecution against Christians, many attempted to hide; but Agathopodes and Theodulus fearlessly continued to proclaim the Gospel. Governor Faustinus of Thessalonica heard of this and brought them in for trial. He flattered St. Theodulus to persuade him to renounce Christ and offer sacrifice to pagans, but the saint replied he had long ago renounced error and that he pitied Faustinus. The governor offered him a choice: the fortunes of life ... or immediate death. St. Theodulus said he would certainly choose life, but life eternal, and that he did not fear death. Faustinus was also unable to convince St. Agathopodes to renounce Christ, so the two saints were imprisoned. They continued to preach the Word of God, and many prisoners were converted to Christianity.

Faustinus tried several times to persuade and threaten the saints into betraying the Faith, but they remained steadfast. While in prison, they prayed fervently and both had the same dream. They were in a ship, in danger of being wrecked in a storm. The waves cast them up on shore, arrayed in white clothing. The saints told each other about the vision, and they gave thanks to God for their impending martyrdom.

In the morning they declared to Faustinus: “We are Christians and we are prepared to undergo any suffering for Christ.” Faustinus ordered them cast into the sea. St. Agathopodes exclaimed, “This shall be for us a second Baptism, which will wash away our sins, and we shall come to Christ in purity.”

The bodies of the saints were washed up on shore. They were dressed in radiant garb, but the ropes and stones used to weight them down were gone.

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***HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH
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THE TRINITARIAN

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V. REV. ALEXANDER GARKLAVS, PASTOR

Divine Liturgy at 9:00 A.M.
Church School Every Sunday at 10:45 A.M.
(During the Months of September thru May)

Vespers - Every Saturday - 5:00 P.M.
Choir Rehearsals Every Thursday at 7:30 P.M.
Michael N. Pilat, Choir Director

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BULLETIN 23 - VOLUME LVII

TONE 1

APRIL 5, 2020

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

St. Mary of Egypt

Martyrs Agathopodes the Deacon, Theodulus the Reader, and those with them, at Thessalonica;
Ven. Publius of Egypt; Sts. Theonas, Simeon and Phorbinus, of Egypt;
Ven. Mark the Anchorite, of Athens; St. Plato the Confessor, of Studion;
Ven. Theodora of Thessalonica;
Translation of the Relics of St. Job, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

“Without stain was God’s image preserved in you, O holy mother, Mary, for you took up your cross and followed the Lord. By word and example you taught us to live in the spirit while still in the flesh, so that, now, you rejoice with the angels of heaven.”

Troparion, Tone VIII

“Your holy martyrs Agathopodes and Theodulus, and those with them, O Lord, through their sufferings have received incorruptible crowns from You, our God. For having Your strength, they laid low their adversaries, and shattered the powerless boldness of demons. Through their intercessions, save our souls!”

Troparion, Tone IV

TODAY’S EPISTLE: HEBREWS 9:11-14
GALATIANS 3:23-29

TODAY’S GOSPEL: MARK 10:32-45
LUKE 7:36-50

HOLY WORSHIP THIS WEEK:

ALL WORSHIP SERVICES HAVE BEEN CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

Daily Scripture Readings

Monday, April 6 (St. Tikhon)	Isaiah 48:17-49:4	Genesis 27:1-41	Proverbs 19:16-25
Tuesday, April 7 (St. Tikhon)	Isaiah 49:6-10	Genesis 31:3-16	Proverbs 21:3-21
Wednesday, April 8	Isaiah 58:1-11	Genesis 43:26-31; 45:1-16	Proverbs 21:23-22:4
Thursday, April 9	Isaiah 65:8-16	Genesis 46:1-7	Proverbs 23:15-24:5
Friday, April 10	Isaiah 66:10-24	Genesis 49:33-50:26	Proverbs 31:8-31
Saturday, April 11	Hebrews 12:28-13:8	John 11:1-45	

WEEKLY OFFERINGS:

We ask that you do not forget to continue your financial support of the parish. The best way would be to mail in your contributions using your regular donation envelopes.

PASCHA FLOWERS:

Donations for “Pascha Flowers” are also needed; we plan to have some flowers in the church in anticipation of our returning during the Paschal season.

HOLY WEEK SERVICES:

It is still uncertain if Fr. Alexander will be able to hold services during Holy Week. He will make announcements via email and our website as the decisions are made.

PALM SUNDAY:

Fr. Alexander will bless palms and pussy willows, and availability will be announced. If you are not currently driving or leaving your house, the palms will be at church when we return to our regular schedule.

PRAYER LIST:

Mimi Matheis continues to update and publish our Prayer List. Please contact her if you know of people in need of prayers for their health. Email Mimi at: mamatheis@earthlink.net or call 440-886-6945.

PARISHIONER “SUNSHINE”:

Dianna Kall continues our Sunshine program with cards to parishioners in need. Contact Dianna at 216-741-2888; or email dkall@ameritech.net

“OPEN TO ME THE DOORS OF REPENTANCE”

“Open to me the doors of repentance, O Giver of Life.” Once again, through the mercy of God, we have come to those days during which the Church directs our thoughts, feelings and desires to the doors of repentance.

Indeed, the doors of salvation.... How should man stand before God were it not for these doors? What kind of human truth might be compared with Divine Truth? (“For all truth is as nothing before Thee” - from the rite of Holy Unction).

Some are afraid of the Great Lent. This time seems to them too gloomy, strict, joyless. These are those who do not know the sweetness of repentance, the joy of liberation from the sinful weight of the soul. The fast is “the spring of the soul.” Just as nature comes alive under the life-giving rays of the spring sun, so too the warmth of repentance warms and enlivens the human soul.

The fast means knowing oneself, one’s weaknesses, one’s old nature — the body of sin.

And for this reason, it is connected with bodily abstinence, with the famous rules of spiritual hygiene, with “the wearing out of that which wears us out.” Only the way of spiritual experience reveals to us in full measure the sense and meaning of fasting. And above all these things, there is the crown of sincere repentance, fervent turning to God, the Father of mercies, love, of a new grace-filled life.

If only we, brethren, could turn away from the rubbish heap of our life, which has been darkened “by vain attachments,” to the Lord, Holy and Life-Giving! For the Kingdom of God is within us.

One must only remove the main obstacle - sin. This struggle with sin requires great patience and perseverance. But in it, in this struggle, is also given the joy of victory; different horizons are revealed which are accessible only to those hearts which are being purified from sinful foulness.

And so, the doors of repentance are before us. The Church calls us to them. Let us open our hearts. The time of spiritual renewal is upon us—a time, which each of us must take advantage of.

Hieromonk Methodius

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY

Bulletin 23 – Volume LVII

April 5, 2020

EXILE

“Exile” is one of the central themes of Great Lent. Actually, exile is one of the central themes of Christian Spirituality! Life is a never-ending journey, from one temporary residence to another. In “Hebrews” we are told that “here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come” (Hebrews 13:14). Lent being the season that we are to get our priorities in order, the theme of exile is emphasized. It is introduced to us two weeks before Lent, on the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. That is when we begin to hear verses from Psalm 137, “By the waters of Babylon.” It is the lamentation of the homesick Jews who were exiled to Babylon in the 6th century BC. That psalm is connected to the story of the Prodigal Son, which is about exile, but of a different sort. The young son, feeling rich with his inheritance, was only too eager to get away from home. Only when money runs out and he is forced to work in the fields to feed swine does he realize that he is exiled from home. In one of the hymns that day we hear, as if the Prodigal Son himself says, “I was enslaved to strangers, an exile in the land of corruption and I was filled with shame.”

On the Sunday before Lent begins, Cheesefare Sunday, the Church presents to us the story of the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. It is the very first exile! As a consequence of their disobedience, our fore-parents are exiled into the cold, cruel world, condemned to work by the sweat of their brows, to suffer pain and anguish. It appears that there is no going back. With heart-wrenching sadness, the gate is sealed as an angel stands guard.

With Adam and Eve, exile becomes our condition as well. Because it is such, Our Lord Himself submits to voluntary exile for 40 days. We symbolically reproduce His 40 days in the desert in our experience of Great Lent. In the early Church, monastics would literally go to deserts and caves, exiling themselves for prayer and fasting, returning “home” to their monasteries on Palm Sunday for Holy Week. An example of exile of an entirely different order is that of St. Mary of Egypt. Her going off into the Judean desert was an exile of exceptional degree. It was a spiritual achievement of such magnitude that the Church honors her every year on this Fifth Sunday of Great Lent.

Together with millions of others throughout the world, we are experiencing a very different kind of exile right now. The outbreak of the corona virus has forced people to remain confined to their homes. As a situation that is world-wide in scope, this has no historical precedence. Not all are observing Great Lent, but for us who do this crisis is truly to be regarded as an experience of spiritual and psychological exile. The displacement from ordinary life and situations is uncomfortable and undesirable. But in the spirit of the stories we recounted, we can see that here is the opportunity to encounter holiness, to reaffirm spiritual integrity and fortitude, to get closer to God and to become a better person.

Fr. Alexander Garklaus