

MARTYRS GALACTEON AND HIS WIFE, EPISTEMIS

The city of Emesa was governed by a Syrian named Secundus, a merciless and zealous persecutor of Christians. To intimidate them, he displayed instruments of torture on the streets. The slightest suspicion of belonging to “the sect of the Galilean” was enough to be arrested and tortured. Despite this, many Christians voluntarily surrendered, in their desire to suffer for Christ.

An old man named Onuphrius concealed his monastic and priestly dignity beneath beggar’s rags. He walked from house to house, begging alms. When he saw the possibility of turning people away from paganism, he preached about Christ.

Onuphrius came to the magnificent house of Kleptophon and Leukippe, a rich couple saddened by their childlessness, despite their many offerings to pagan gods. Onuphrius consoled Leukippe, telling her of the one true God, His omnipotence and mercy. Hope filled her soul; she believed and accepted Holy Baptism. Soon a dream revealed she would bear a son who would be a true follower of Christ. She revealed the secret to Kleptophon and persuaded him to be baptized. They named the baby Galacteon and raised him in the Christian Faith. His fine education allowed him an illustrious career, but he sought a monastic life of prayer.

When Galacteon turned 24, his father resolved to marry him; they found a beautiful and illustrious girl named Episteme. The son did not oppose the will of his father, but by the will of God, the wedding was postponed. Visiting his betrothed, Galacteon revealed his faith to her. He converted her to Christ and secretly baptized her himself, as well as one of her servants, Eutolmius.

They decided to devote themselves to monastic life. They hid away on Mount Publion, where there was a monastery for men and one for women. For several years they struggled in work, fasting, and prayer. Episteme had a vision; she and Galacteon stood in a wondrous palace before a radiant King who bestowed golden crowns on them. This prefigured their impending martyrdom.

The pagans became aware of the monasteries and sent soldiers. The monks and nuns hid in the hills, but Galacteon remained in his cell, reading Holy Scripture. When Episteme saw him being taken away in chains, she followed. The saints endured terrible torments, while supplicating and glorifying Christ. Their hands and legs were cut off, their tongues cut out, and they were beheaded.

Eutolmius secretly buried the bodies of the martyrs. He later wrote an account of their virtuous life and glorious martyrdom.

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HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

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Divine Liturgy on Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

Vespers on Saturdays at 5:00 p.m.

BULLETIN 1 - VOLUME LXI

TONE 5

NOVEMBER 5, 2023

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*Martyr Galacteon and his wife, Epistemis, at Emesa;
Apostles Patrobus, Hermes, Linus, Gaius, and Philologus, of the Seventy;
St. Gregory, Archbishop of Alexandria;
Repose of St. Jonah, Archbishop of Novgorod*

Let us the faithful honor these two betrothed athletes, Galacteon and modest Epistemis. Their ascetic labors blossomed into martyrdom, therefore we cry to them: "Glory to Him who has strengthened you! Glory to Him who has crowned you! Glory to Him who through you grants healing to all!"
Troparion, Tone IV

Holy Apostles Patrobus, Hermes, Linus, Gaius, and Philologus, entreat the merciful God to grant our souls forgiveness of transgressions.

Troparion, Tone III

By sharing in the ways of the apostles, you became a successor to their throne. Through the practice of virtue, you found the way to divine contemplation. O inspired one of God, by teaching the word of truth without error, you defended the Faith, even to the shedding of your blood. Hieromartyr Gregory, entreat Christ God to save our souls.

Troparion, Tone IV

TODAY'S EPISTLE: GALATIANS 6:11-18

TODAY'S GOSPEL: LUKE 8:41-56

HOLY WORSHIP THIS WEEK:

Monday, November 6

6:15 p.m. Akathist; St. Matthew Church in North Royalton

Saturday, November 11

5:00 p.m. Great Vespers

WELCOME GUESTS!

We are very glad you have come to worship the Holy Trinity with us this morning! Please participate in the services at your comfort level. Our greeters will kindly assist you with whatever questions or needs you may have. During each Sunday service we offer Holy Communion. If you are a practicing Orthodox Christian and have come prepared to receive Christ's Body and Blood through fasting and prayer, please come forward to partake. All guests are invited to come forward at the end of the service to greet Fr. Christopher and receive the blessed bread. Please stay after the Divine Liturgy for coffee hour in the Fellowship Hall so we can get to know you better!

Families with children: we encourage children of all ages to be present and participate as they are able during worship. We know sometimes kids need a break, so please take good advantage of our Rest and Refocus Room located on the south side of the lobby/narthex when coming in the main entrance. If you have pre-school and school age children, we invite you to send them to Church School directly after the Divine Liturgy throughout the academic year. May God bless you!

Daily Scripture Readings can be found in the St. Tikhon's Wall Calendar or at www.oca.org/readings.

COMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER:

- 5, TODAY Program with Fr. Simon Menya
- 6, Monday 6:15 p.m. Akathist and prayers for sanctity of life at St. Matthew Church
- 9, Thursday 7:00 p.m. Choir rehearsal
- 12, Sunday Second Sunday Food Sale
- 13, Monday 7:00 p.m FOCUS St. Herman House event at HTOC
- 15, Wednesday 6:30 p.m. Nativity Fast begins; Holy Unction Service at St. Matthew Church
- 19, Sunday 11:00 a.m. Catechism Book Study

NORTHERN UGANDA PROGRAM:

We welcome Fr. Simon Menya today! Fr. Simon will share information about the Northern Uganda Self-Sufficiency Project during Coffee Hour. Please join us. Donations can be made at: nussp.org

PRAYER SERVICE FOR SANCTITY OF LIFE:

St. Matthew Church invites all to attend a prayer service at 6:15 p.m. tomorrow, the evening before the vote on Issue 1 in Ohio. The service will be the Akathist Hymn to our Sweetest Lord Jesus Christ with the intercessory litany and prayer concerning the abortion issue.

BOOK STUDY:

Fr. Christopher is offering classes covering Let Us Attend: A Journey Through the Orthodox Divine Liturgy by Fr. Lawrence Farley. Books are available in our bookstore, or order online. Remaining classes are Nov. 19 (Ch. 5-8); Dec. 10 (Ch. 9-12); Dec. 17 (Ch. 13-Conclusion).

RETREAT:

St. Nicholas Church in Mogadore is hosting a Pan-Orthodox “3ETREAT” Dec. 9 for youth and anyone who cares about young people. Please see the bulletin board for details and registration information.

COFFEE HOUR:

Our refreshments are hosted by the Table of Eight.

MEMORIAL PRAYERS:

There will be a one-year Memorial Service for Mary Ann Moga on Sunday, Nov.12, at 11:15 a.m.

FOCUS PROGRAM:

On Monday, Nov. 13, 7:00 p.m., HTOC will host a benefit on behalf of St. Herman House FOCUS Cleveland. His Eminence Archbishop Daniel will present “Encountering Christ on Our Daily Pilgrimage.” Tickets are \$30. Doors will open at 6:30 for appetizers and fellowship.

FOOD SALE:

Our monthly Food Sale will be next Sunday, November 12. Please bake or cook items to donate.

ZOE HOUSE:

ZOE House is always looking for more volunteers, usually 2-hour shifts or more each week. Substitutes who can be available often with less than a day’s notice are especially needed. Talk with Joanne Stoyka, Barbara Chandler, or Susan Range to find out more about this opportunity.

NUT ROLL ORDERS FOR CHRISTMAS:

Pick up your order form for nut rolls (\$15/ea) at coffee hour; or call or text Rita Bellack (330-204-9513). Last date to order is Nov. 26. Nut rolls will be ready Sunday, Dec. 12.

FLOWERS:

The flowers today are offered by Eric and Marjorie Evanoff in blessed memory of Carl Evanoff on his birthday.

COVERS:

The covers today are offered by the Stoyka Family in blessed memory of mother Anna Stoyka.

GIFTS WE OFFER TO THE LORD WE LOVE

REGULAR COLLECTION	10/22	10/29
BUILDING FUND	\$ 2121.00	\$ 2915.00
CANDLES	182.00	75.00
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FUNDS	150.00	166.00
LOCAL CHARITIES	732.00	980.00
SECOND SUNDAY FOOD SALE, 10/15	50.00	
TRANSITIONAL DESIGN—RUMMAGE SALE	500.00	
COFFEE HOUR, 10/15; 10/22	122.50	
	58.00	109.00

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the command of God our Savior
and of Christ Jesus our hope;
1 Timothy 1:1*

What are two common words used to describe oneself in online accounts? 1. Profile - which is a view of half of one's face, and 2. Persona - the mask we put on when presenting ourselves to others. How fitting these words have become for online settings like social media where we can only show parts of ourselves and mask our true identity. Certainly we can find ways to hide ourselves or mask ourselves in any social setting whether in-person or online. However, as much as the internet puts us in contact with people across the world, it also allows us to more easily put forward a different or polished identity. We are often good at putting our best self forward with the words and pictures we post. At the same time, the degrees of anonymity and lack of seeing other people's full face allow us to be way more critical and judgmental and also much more willing to post deeper and more private thoughts online than we might ever imagine in person.

Bloggers, YouTubers, and influencers in many ways can choose to be as public and transparent or as private as they want. It's even quite easy to find any number of social media pages, video channels, and websites claiming to be Orthodox, but then scant on the details of the person who posts the content and what jurisdiction and parish they are from. Are they even part of the canonical Orthodox Church? If so, for how long? And what is their role in the church? We shouldn't be shy to seek out this information. Such "Orthodox" web presences can be informative, but at worst can be polarizing, misleading, divisive, and misrepresentative. The Lord calls us to be watchful.

Saint Paul in his introduction to his first letter to Saint Timothy, however, is forthright regarding his identity. He is an apostle, one who was sent out by Christ Jesus and sent out to proclaim Christ's gospel. It was not and is not a small thing to make a claim that one is an apostle or even a believer in Christ Jesus. Namely, it is a statement that the prophecies of the Christ/Messiah of the Old Testament are fulfilled in the man Jesus and not another. And to be sent out means there is something to proclaim and to do. With Jesus being the Christ, the anointed one, there is a response that must be made to a claim that Jesus Christ is a King among kings and a Lord among lords and his reign will be eternal. There is the opportunity to ally with the proclamation of his kingdom and reign, the opportunity for salvation in God. And there is hope for being an heir with Christ in the never-ending kingdom.

Such hope made Paul bold to state who he was and what he was commanded by God to do. We need boldness in this world, and we need those who are not shy to be public about their faith. That boldness so often comes from being formed in the faith by communal worship, prayer, living together in community, and patient and diligent study.¹ These are the settings we learn to be truly ourselves with God, learn to remove our masks before him who knows all things and sees all things. I think most of us also need to curb our online commenting, learn to be more humble, and to seek out real interactions with people face-to-face instead of hiding behind our profiles and personas. May we with St Paul continue our formation in Christ's Church; may the Lord make us into faithful and true apostles by his grace; and may we share in the hope of Jesus the Christ and his kingdom!

Fr. Chris

¹ When Paul becomes a Christian, he does not immediately go out and proclaim his new perspective on his faith. He takes time to be formed in Damascus for 3 years. And his first missionary journey probably didn't take place until at least a decade after his conversion.