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Priest Silviu Bunta

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Week of February 11, 2024

Sunday, February 11

THIRTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Ieromartyr Blaise,
Bishop of Sebasteia (ca. 316). Tone 3.

9:00am Matins

10:00 The Divine Liturgy of St. John the Golden-mouth

11:45 Sunday school

12:00pm Fellowship

This Sunday's Hymns & Readings

Tone 3. Troparion of the resurrection

Let the heavens rejoice! Let the earth be glad! For the Lord has shown strength with His arm. He has trampled down death by death. He has become the first born of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of hell, and has granted to the world great mercy.

Tone 4. Troparion of the ieromartyr

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. O Hieromartyr Blaise, entreat Christ God to save our souls!

Tone 3. Kontakion of the resurrection

On this day You rose from the tomb, O Merciful One, leading us from the gates of death. On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices; with the Prophets and Patriarchs they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Your power.

Tone 2. Kontakion of the ieromartyr

Godly shoot, unfading flower, most fruitful branch of Christ the Vine, God-bearing Blaise, fill with joy those who in faith honor your memory as you unceasingly intercede for us all

Tone 3. Prokeimenon

Sing praises to our God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!

Epistle: 1 Timothy 1:15-17

Tone 3. Alliluias

In You, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be put to shame.
Be a God of protection for me, a house of refuge in order to save me!

Gospel: Matthew 15:21-28

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

This week's schedule

Monday, February 12. St. Meletius, Archbishop of Antioch (381).

1:00-3:00pm Fr. Silviu office hours

Tuesday, February 13. Saints Martinian, Zoe, and Photina of Caesarea in Palestine (5th c.).

Wednesday, February 14. Ven. Auxentius of Bithynia (ca. 470). Repose of St. Cyril, Equal-to-the-Apostles and Teacher of the Slavs (869).

3:00-5:00pm Fr. Silviu office hours

6:00-7:00pm Ninth Hour and Daily Vespers

Thursday, February 15. Apostle of the Seventy Onesimus (ca. 109).

Friday, February 16. St. Nicholas, Equal-to-the-Apostles, Archbishop of Japan (1912).

Saturday, February 17. Great Martyr Theodore the Recruit (ca. 306).

5:00-5:45pm Adult education class with Fr. Kyril

6:00-7:00pm Ninth Hour and Great Vespers

7:00-7:30pm Choir practice

Announcements

The relics of St. Ephrem of Katounakia

Four years ago Fr. Silviu has received relics of St. Ephraim of Katounakia from some Athonite monks. This venerable saint was a disciple of St. Joseph the Hesychast, lived on the Holy Mountain, and died in 1998. He was a close friend of Elder Aimilianos of Simonopetra. St. Ephraim's feast day is February 27. Therefore, during the entire week of Feb 25-March 2 Fr. Silviu will display the holy relics where the confession stand is. Know how we Orthodox venerate relics: on weekdays we make full prostrations before them, usually two, then we kiss them, then we make another full prostration. On Sundays we make bows instead of prostrations. Please do not forget to venerate them after you venerate the icons!

Quote of the Week

Just the fact that I am praying and seeking the mercy of God shows that I love Him, that I believe in Him, that I believe that He is my Saviour, so that my life just cannot be useless or on the wrong track. But it is also true that it is in prayer that I get the fixation that I do not believe or that I am achieving nothing; and this alone already testifies to the power of prayer, which the Devil so much fears. That is why he goes about sowing falsehood in our path as he did with Adam and Eve, just to throw us off course so that we cannot have any link with God. In consequence, what we experience as 'spoilage' or 'failure', our temptation and our problem is in reality a defeat for the Devil. This is because when the Devil lay in ambush for Christ to raise Him up on the cross and then cast Him down into Hades in order to smother Him, the Devil's ambush became the pit into which he himself has fallen, so that once and forever he stopped having the slightest hope that he might ever achieve anything. It is precisely these problems and these difficulties of ours—these ambushes of the Devil—into which he himself will fall. They are the stones that he throws

at us, only to see them fall on his own head; they are, we might say, the beginnings of our own redemption and salvation. Feeling ourselves useless for not achieving anything is like my belching in front of you, causing you to back away from the odour that rises up from my tainted stomach. In just that way, our great problem is really only a whiff of the presence of the Devil in our prayer: it is the self-loathing which he himself feels, an 'eructation' from within him. For us to see it in that way is a defeat for him on our part. So, when I experience difficulty in prayer, this is a sign that I am being called by God, so that I may say, "Dear God, give the Devil a good clout over the head!" But what if my difficulty comes from my own weakness or my infirmity, from my attempts at self-defence or my wanton words? These things are not immune from the presence and the activity of the Devil, just as all that is good and makes for a perfect gift is not unrelated to the actions of a God Who is generous with His gifts. Thus, when I have my 'problems' (blockage, trial, sin) in prayer, I should know that at that moment I am dealing with the Devil's scheming. I must then, in my own way, endeavour to 'put him out of joint'; when this has been done to perfection, he will simply vanish, like smoke (Ps 67.3; Ps 36.20).

(excerpt from Elder Aimilianos, *On Prayer*, Ormylia Publications, 2020, pp. 31-33)