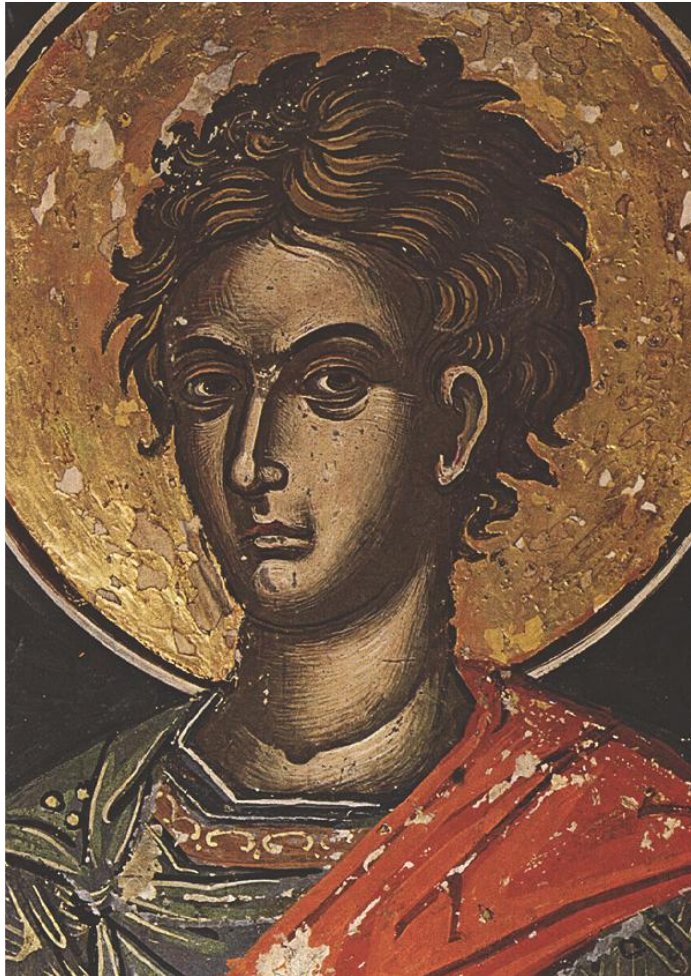


HOLY ANGELS BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH



The Holy Martyr Nestor of Thessalonica, companion of St. Demetrius

October 27, 2024

23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

The Holy Martyr Nestor of Thessalonica, companion of St. Demetrius

# October 27, 2024

## Schedule of services for the week of October 27 – November 3

**Saturday, November 2** – *The Holy Martyrs Acindinus, Pegasus, Aphthonius, Elpidophorus and Anempodistus*

- 9:00 AM – Divine Liturgy & Panahida; + Jonathan Russos - req: Karen Roussos
- 4:00 PM – Confessions
- 5:00 PM – Great Vespers

**Sunday, November 3** – *24<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost; The Holy Martyrs Acepsumus, bishop; Joseph, priest; and Aithalas, deacon; Commemoration of the Dedication of the Church of the Holy Great Martyr George in Lydda, wherein his precious body was placed*

- 7:30 AM – Matins
- 9:00 AM – Divine Liturgy

“Return to your house and proclaim what great things God has done for you.” Our healing Lord brings redemption and breaks the chains of sin, demonic possession and anything that may be in our way to grow in holiness. You may have a story of salvation that can be shared with the world by responding to it in the monastic or ordained life! To learn more about this, contact the Vocations Office at 206-329-9219 or email: [vocations@ephx.org](mailto:vocations@ephx.org)

### **O Physician of Souls and Bodies, we pray for:**

Pope Francis, Barbara Alexander, Maria Amaro, Peter Andre, Fr. Christopher Andrews, Harry and Virginia Bowden, Kim Camplisson, Patrick Carmack, Fr. Andriy Chirovsky, Julia Camberos, Dennis Cline, Amy Cohn, Vivian Corr, Maria Cruz, Joe Danscuk, Fr. Daniel Dozier, Gabriel Espedal, Ana Fandrey, Karen Foto, Christine Galgano, Janet Greenwell, Deborah Harris, Michael Havens, Martha Hill, Doris Huber, Rebecca Huber, Melissa Hunter, Taylor Kessler, Subdcn Paul Kilroy Jamie Kohanyj, Juan Lopez, Pauli Martin, Mila Mina, Linda Moffit, Maryann Nagrant, Julia Ohnysty, Genevieve Paquette, Sylvia Pasnak, Fr. Lee Perry, Anthony Porrello, Nina Porrello, Peter Porrello, Fr. Robert Rankin, Margaret Raya, Maha Salazar, Gretchen Sharpe, Karen Simonich, Debbie Stark, Tava Tomc, Hong Truong, Pat Walsh, Maria Zhukova, Gianna, Nicole, Subdcn Eddie and his wife Viane.

## *THE CHURCH AND MISSION*

*By Alexander Schmemmann*

To recover the missionary dimension of the Church is today's greatest imperative. We have to recover a very basic truth: that the Church is essentially Mission, that the very roots of her life are in the commandment of Christ: “Go therefore and teach all nations” (Matt. 28:19). A Christian community that would lose this missionary zeal and purpose, that would become selfish and self-centered, that would limit itself to “satisfying the spiritual needs of its members”, that would identify itself completely with a **nation, a society, a social or ethnic group** - is on its way to spiritual decadence and death, because the essential spiritual need of a Christian is precisely that of sharing the life and the Truth with as many men and women as possible and ultimately with the whole world. Mission thus is the organic need and task of the Church in the world, the real meaning of Church's presence in history between the first and the second advents of her Lord, or, in other terms, the meaning of Christian history. Obviously not all members of the Church can go and preach in the literal sense of the word. But all can have a concern for the missionary function of the Church, feel responsible for it, help and support it. In this respect each diocese, each parish and each member of the Church are involved in the missionary ministry.

## Martyr Nestor of Thessalonica

*Commemorated on October 27*

The holy Martyr Nestor was very young in age, handsome in appearance, and he was known to the holy Great Martyr Demetrios (October 26), for he had instructed Nestor in the faith.

The Emperor was visiting Thessaloniki, and he built a high platform in the midst of the city so that a gigantic barbarian named Lyaios could wrestle there and be seen by everyone. Beneath the platform many spears and other sharp weapons were placed pointing upward. When Lyaios defeated his opponents, he threw them down onto the spears and they died. Many Christians were forced to fight Lyaios, and were killed. When Nestor saw how Emperor Maximian rejoiced over the victories of his champion, he disdained his pride. Seeing the miracles of Saint Demetrios, however, he took courage and went to the prison where the holy Martyr was confined, and fell at his feet.

“Pray for me, O Servant of God Demetrios,” he said, “that by your prayers, God may help me to beat Lyaios,

and put an end to him who brings reproach upon the Christians.”

The Saint, after sealing Nestor with the Sign of the Cross, told him that he would prevail over Lyaios, and then suffer for Christ. Nestor mounted the platform without fear and exclaimed: “Help me, O God of Demetrios.” After he defeated Lyaios, he hurled him down onto the spears, where he gave up his wretched soul.

Maximian became enraged and ordered that both Nestor and Demetrios should be put to death. Saint Demetrios was stabbed with spears, and Saint Nestor was beheaded. Thus, by his example Saint Nestor teaches us that in every human challenge we must say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do to me.” (Psalm 117/118:6, Hebrews 13:6).

### THE UNMERCENARY HEALERS

On the November 1<sup>st</sup>, the Church celebrates the memory of the Unmercenary Healers and Physicians Cosmas and Damian. These are the saints that are especially known for being in the medical field and for being gifted with the power of healing. The saints healed always in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. They also used the medical procedures and medications of their day. The hymnology of the day mentions these saints by name:

*the Apostle and Evangelist Luke, the excellent healer of the infirm; of Antipas, Charalampus and Blaise, the most honored hieromartyrs; Spyridon and Modestus, the all-splendid luminaries of the Church; the three pair of divinely wise saints Cosmas and Damian, who shared the same name and the same ways; Cyrus and the glorious John; the divine Panteleimon and Hermolaus; the Nun-Martyr and deliverer from depression, Maria of Gatchina; Luke the Archbishop and Surgeon of Crimea.*

Like all of the saints these Unmercenary Physicians dedicated themselves to God, becoming the first missionary physicians of the

Christian Church. They preached the Christian Faith and treated the sick without accepting any payments or rewards for their services. They also gave to the poor whatever earthly possessions they had. Living in terrible poverty for God’s love, all were renamed “Unmercenary” which means “not influenced by financial gain”.

Seeing their humility, sacrifices, and dedication, God blessed them with the special gift of working miracles. The saints used God’s gift to cure all kinds of diseases through the holy name of Jesus Christ. They cured lepers, made the paralyzed to walk, drove off evil spirits, healed the blind, and even raised the dead. All these wonders were performed by the power of God, through the prayers of these saints.

Hundreds of years after their death, Christians still turn to these saints for healing of their illnesses and for comfort for their souls. The saints continue to perform miracles by interceding to our Lord Jesus Christ for those who pray with faith.

# A COMMUNION OF PERSONS

Alexander Kalomiros – *Nostalgia for Paradise*

The Church is the Kingdom of God which appeared in force at the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ on Mount Tabor. The Kingdom of God is the communion of persons, the participation of personal creatures in the Divinity of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. God offers this participation absolutely free. And it is so unimpeded and complete that it extends the life of God to all who taste of it according to their own receptiveness. It extends the uncreated light, the power, and the love of the Three Persons to all. This is called *theosis* (divinization, glorification) in the language of Eastern Christian theology: the complete participation in body and soul, by grace, in the life of the Divine Persons.

*Theosis*, therefore, is not an individual or private matter but a communal one. On the one hand, it is the communion of each creaturely person with the Persons of the Holy Trinity, and on the other, it is our communion with the persons who are our brothers and sisters. There is Love and Light in this communion (*koinonia*). This is true Life.

The Kingdom of God is the congregation of persons who gather together in one mind and one heart. There is one common ground on which the creaturely persons, people, gather together with the Uncreated Persons, the Holy Trinity. And that ground is the Person of Jesus Christ, Who alone shares perfectly and completely in the uncreated nature of God as well as in the created nature of mankind and, by extension, of the angels. He is the Love and Great Will of God, who wishes to have other persons share in His Life. Christ gives purpose to the Creation because the outpouring of the love of God was realized in Him and in His union with personal creatures and, through them, with the whole of Creation.

The Church, therefore, is the gathering (*synaxis*) of persons whom Christ binds together and sustains. Christ is never alone; He is ever united with the Father and the Holy Spirit, for God is not an individual but a union of Persons. **So, if we wish to be united with Him, we cannot attain it as individuals but as a communion of persons.** Unity with the Communion of Divine Persons is possible only for a communion of persons. Even if we are as few as two or three united in the bond of Christ's love, with our guardian angels and patron

saints, we actualize the Church, the local as well as the universal Church, and the fulfillment of the communal Life of God and Creation.

Christ told this to us and revealed it on Mount Tabor. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." The entire mystery of the Church and its very essence are hidden in these words. This is the secret of the catholicity of the local Church and of the unity of all the local Churches. The secret and mystery are the *theandric* (God-manly) Person of Christ. He is the point where the vertical and horizontal members of the Cross, Divinity and Creation, meet and are united. For, it is through Him that the Light and Life of God are imparted to Creation.

In this union that is fulfilled by the will of the Divine Love there are natures and persons. The "individual," however, is a monstrous creation by the fall—the result of the revolt against God. As love for God contains within it love for one's neighbor, hatred for God also contains within it hatred for one's neighbor. The revolt against God divided persons into isolated, airtight and impenetrable compartments called individuals. To enter the Kingdom of God, we must cease being individuals and become persons again. People are persons because they exist in a communion with other persons. The catalyst and bridge in that communion is Christ, and the result is called the Church, the tangible, specific local Church, with its known brethren in a defined place.

Christ does not ask us to love mankind. He does not ask us to love people in the abstract. That kind of love is easy because it is imaginary, just as the notion of mankind is imaginary. **Christ asks us to love the concrete person before us**, our neighbor, with all his virtues and all his visible faults. That's why the Church does not exist outside the tangible congregation of specific people. The Church consists of concrete parishes, those small local Churches, and lives in them, just as the body lives in all of its cells and is composed of them. As the abstract idea of man takes flesh and bone and exists in real people, likewise the Church takes flesh and exists in the parish and the monastery. And just as each man is not merely a fragment of human nature but contains in himself human nature in its entirety, the parish is not a fragment of the Church but

contains in itself her full catholicity with the totality and fullness of the gift of God.

The true parish is a community of love among concrete persons; this is the parish *in Christ*. Today, unfortunately, there is the worldly, city parish church, which is only an assembly of individuals who remain isolated in the crowd, alone and impenetrable in the gathering.

How did we arrive at such a state of lifeless parishes, of assemblies of individuals today? Why didn't we perceive this condition as a negation of the Church, since the Church is the communion and relationship of persons? When those relationships and that communion are abolished, it means that for some reason the common ground on which persons meet is absent. Christ is absent.

**If the gathering of the Church is to have divine life and be a communion of persons, it must be in the Name of Christ.** "In the Name of Christ" means in His unseen and mystical presence. Christ identified Himself as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Therefore, even if the assembly calls itself the Church and it has all of her outward marks, it is not the Church of Christ if its existence and life are not founded on the only Way, the only Truth, the only Life. Because, there is also a false Christ. One that is not the Way but merely one of many ways. One that is not the Truth but merely one of many and varied truths. One that is not the Life but merely one amidst many that are equally good and valid.

**The Church of Christ is found only where gatherings are in the true Name of the true Christ.** It is the synaxis of souls who thirst untringly for the absolute truth and abhor the idols that the world and the guile of the evil one place before us. And many of those idols have "Jesus Christ" written on them... **The Church is the gathering of the faithful in the True Faith who have made the decision to die for the Faith.**

The decision by the faithful to die to this world is an indispensable prerequisite of genuineness. Without it, Christian faith cannot exist. "He who loses his life for My sake and My Gospel shall save it." (*Mk. 8:35*) If a man is to remain faithful to Christ, he must first be resolved that he may become an outcast and an excommunicant, hated and rejected like a foreign body by the worldly community. Even under the best conditions, the latter will merely endure him with polite and civilized magnanimity. But anyone who seeks the

honor of men cannot possibly be faithful, according to Christ's own words: "How is it possible for you to believe, who receive glory from one another and seek not the glory which is from the only God?" (*Jn. 5:44*) **How is it possible for us to be Christians without pain and sacrifices? Without some kind of martyrdom? Without self-denial? Without going against the currents and winds and trying like a straight arrow to stay on the one and only path to the one and only target without giving up the struggle, even for just a brief moment?**

When the man who was born blind declared to the Jewish Sanhedrin that his healer was a man of God and not a sinner as they wanted to hear, the leaders of the people of God "put him out." (*Jn. 9:1-41*) The confession of faith that he made with no reservations estranged him from the official religion of his countrymen. At that moment, the poor courageous man did not yet know who it was that he was confessing and to what eternal glory his present disgrace was to lead him. But after he was cast out of the community, Jesus met him and revealed who He was and guided him to His Kingdom. The same happens with us. When our faith and our confession of it liberate us from the company of the guileful, we begin to know the refreshing aura of grace.

The healed blind man spoke spontaneously, without sinful hesitation, heeding only his heart which was confessing the truth. He did not tremble at the fact that he would be left without priests, high priests, or rabbis. He knew that he was losing the religion of his forefathers and that something had severed it from the Truth. He chose the Truth. But the Truth had passed his forefathers' religion by, and without the Truth, that religion was left to decay. And the Truth took the blind man with Himself to incorruptible eternity.

Let us run to salvation "naked," as it were, without a worry, and unashamed, the way Adam first walked in Paradise. Let them put us in "prison" as they did Joseph. God will free us and glorify us eternally as He did Joseph. Let us always remember the merchant who paid with all of his earthly possessions and bought the Pearl of Great Price (*Mt. 13:46*).

# YOUTH ARE STILL NOT THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

*blogs.goarch.org*

*Published Date 10/20/15 11:00 AM (emphasis added)*

Sometimes I fear that the Church has gotten very good at freaking out about (and totally misunderstanding) cultural shifts. We oversimplify complex problems and, like an Orthodox BuzzFeed, reduce our challenges to the one reason young people aren't attending Church.

*Well, it's because of the temptation of our time.*

*Well, it's because they don't have a voice in our communities.*

*Well, it's because they don't understand what the Liturgy is actually about.*

By blaming our troubles on an easy-to-state problem, we allay our anxiety and tell ourselves that we know what needs to be fixed. So we go about wracking our brains, thinking of new ways to solve the over-simplified sound bite and bring young people back to Church (while also increasing overall tithing to fund our parish's awesome new children's ministry).

Frankly, I'm tired of alarmist responses to the absence of young people from the Church. I'm even more tired of looking to one or two ministries to cauterize the gaping hole in the Body of Christ as She continues to bleed her young.

The problem of losing young people from the Church is not a problem with young people. Instead, it's a symptom of a larger systemic problem, or rather, larger systemic **problems**.

I have been reminded this week that problems are rarely as simple as we would like them to be, as evidenced by the fact that even Jesus Christ encountered someone who was beset by **any number of troubling spirits**.

In the Gospel reading on Sunday, we see Christ encounter a demonically possessed man. He is possessed by not one demon, not two demons, but by the super-unspecific "many." So "**many**," in fact, that the man tells Christ,

"It's easier if you just call me **Legion**."

The Scriptures this week show us that problems are very often "many." This lesson is essential to those of us (myself included) who may be tempted to isolate "one bad spirit" within the current landscape of the life of the Church.

One such reductionist story is based in the belief that young adults just need somewhere to hang out with other Christian young people. We tend to think that if we could just somehow convince young people that Eastern Christianity is super cool, by carefully putting together the right mix of fun activities and programs, then maybe our Church would "have a future."

Indeed, we look at the Church and worry about whether or not it even has a future because we don't see very many young people in the pews.

I get it; I really do.

But we need to take a step back and reassess.

**There isn't just one problem to fix, and we delude ourselves if we think there is.**

We are, sadly, a religious community possessed by any number of spirits that led us away from Christ: **the spirit of secularism, the spirit of fear, and the spirit of immaturity.**

We are, sadly, plagued by legion.

While the Church is truly the Mystical Body of Christ and Her liturgical and theological expressions do not in any way reflect a secularist mindset, our modern ideas of what it means to be the church are possessed by a **spirit of secularism**.

Our idea of church is more organizational than mystical.

In other words, **we often conflate faithfulness with participation.** While participation is a prerequisite for faith, we cannot believe that they necessarily accompany one another.

Our minds are far too occupied with imminent (“this worldly”) expressions of faith. We spend more time talking about “going to church” or “learning about the church” rather than experiencing **an active and living Faith in a Person and cultivating an inclination toward His eternal, transcendent Kingdom.** Nor do we invite young people into this living Faith and relationship, in both of which Christ is Center.

Instead, we confuse our ideas of faithful participation with religious socialization. But they aren’t the same.

This conflation of faith with participation has led directly to our being possessed by **a spirit of fear.** Because we have come to presume that **faith equals loyalty or participation,** we are afraid about what happens when our young people go away to college and begin to participate in and support groups that are more successful at garnering their loyalty than the Church.

Our response to this has been to launch college ministries and young adult programs that seek to “be relevant” to young adults. But the problem is that they are largely **reactionary, attempting to use the very population they have lost to win over other members of that same population.** Instead of forming people in Christ, we’re devising tricks to raise attendance.

We are possessed by this **spirit of immaturity. We are preoccupied with being youthful.** We assume that a Church with a youthful spirit is a thriving Church, so we struggle to sell ourselves as hip and not out of touch. Christ, however, has made it clear to us that it is not the youthful spirit that guides the Church, but rather it is the **Holy Spirit.**

We have spent so much time worrying about how we can bring back the young people we have lost, worrying about how we can have a **more youthful spirit and cultural relevance, yet we have neglected the Holy Spirit of God and the culture of His Kingdom.**

**Truly. We are a people possessed.**

And no amount of programming, no amount of strategic planning, no amount of relevant young adult or youth group speakers is going to change this. No amount of awesome educational resources will cure us of our spiritual confusion.

**Only Christ can cast out these spirits.**

We must turn to Christ and **repent of our preoccupation with earthly metrics of success and visions for ministry.** We must not view young people as the future of the Church that we perpetually stand in danger of losing. We must instead remember that the Church **already has a Future that is sealed in Christ.**

The Church’s Future is the Kingdom of God, and we must incline ourselves toward it, seeking to manifest Christ’s reality in our midst. There is no single or simple problem to be solved. In the face of this legion of struggles, we must lean into Christ’s Kingdom, directing ourselves, one another, and all our lives unto Christ, trusting that as we seek Christ and His Kingdom, everything will be added to us, **even young people** (Matt. 6:33).

*Christian is a Young Adult Ministries Coordinator for Y2AM. He is a husband, father, mover, shaker, coffee drinker, sandal wearer, and CrossFitter. Christian has his MA from Azusa Pacific University in Marriage and Family Therapy and is working toward a second MA in Children, Youth, and Family Ministry from Luther Seminary. Christian and his family live in Phoenix, Arizona.*

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### Parish Advisory Council:

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### Finance Council:

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### Bless, O Lord, the worship and Stewardship of your faithful servants:

Adult tithes: \$1542.00; Loose Change: \$81.00; Church Usage \$200.00; Non-Parishioners: \$25.00;

**Total: \$1848.00**

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**Vocation Icon:** This week: Bankston Family  
Next week: Fatima Rodriguez

**Please sign up in the narthex to host the vocation icon.**

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PHOENIX

SUBSCRIBES TO THE

*Charter for the Protection of  
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*The Eparchy, within all its parishes, institutions and programs, is committed to assuring a safe environment in ministry for its children and vulnerable adults that conforms to the Charter for Protection of Children and Young People.*

*For additional information regarding the eparchial Safe Environment Program or to report any incidents of concerns, please contact:*

*Fr. Dcn. Michael Hanafin*

*Victim Assistance Coordinator*

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