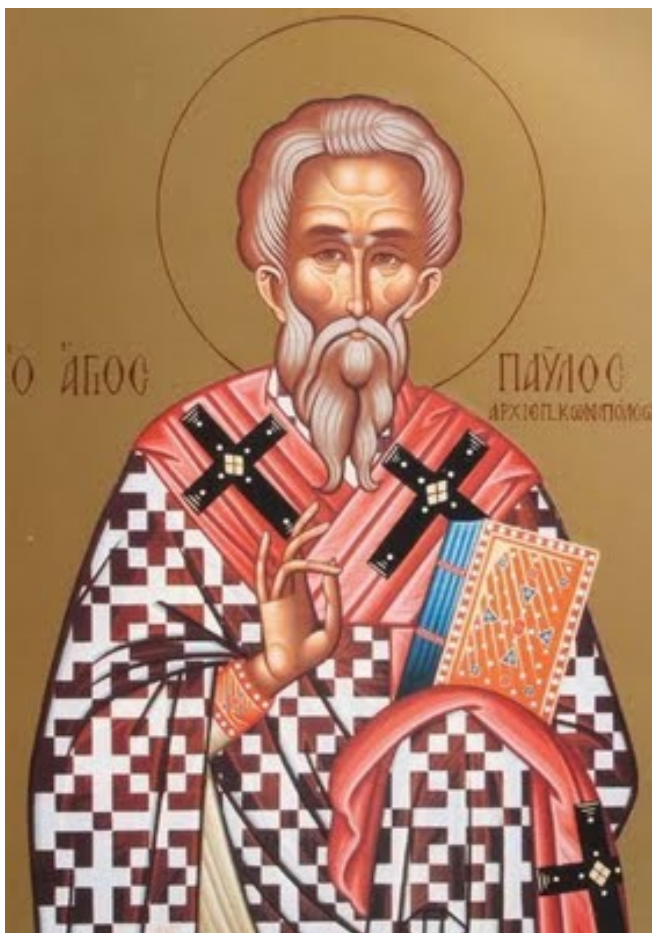


St. Anna Greek Orthodox High School Newsletter

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Saint Paul the Confessor, Patriarch of Constantinople



When Blessed Patriarch Alexander lay on his deathbed, the sorrowing faithful asked him who he would have follow him as the chief shepherd of the spiritual flock of Christ. He said: "If you desire a shepherd who will teach you and who will shine with virtues, choose Paul; but if you only want a suitable man, externally adorned, choose Macedonius." The people chose Paul. Unfortunately, this was not accepted by the Arian

heretics, nor was it accepted by Emperor Constantius, who was then in Antioch. Paul was soon deposed, and fled to Rome with St. Athanasius the Great. In Rome, Pope Julian and Emperor Constans received them warmly and upheld them in their Orthodox Faith. Emperor Constans and Pope Julian saw to it that Paul was returned to his throne, but when Emperor Constans died the Arians raised their heads again, and Patriarch Paul was banished to Cucusus in Armenia. Once, as Paul was celebrating the Divine Liturgy in

exile, he was attacked by the Arians and strangled with his omophorion, in the year 351. In 381, during the reign of Emperor Theodosius, Paul's relics were transferred to Constantinople, and in the year 1236 they were translated to Venice, where they still repose. His beloved priests and notaries, Marcian and Martyrius (October 25), suffered soon after their patriarch.

St. John of Kronstadt: *When you pray to God— you converse with Him face to face; therefore, converse with Him as with a king, face to face; likewise, converse with the heavenly Queen, and the angels and saints as though face to face, and do not, on any account, at that time, allow your heart to be occupied by and attached to anything irrelevant, for say: Would you, when speaking with a king or queen, be occupied at that time with anything irrelevant or unimportant; would you, for instance, at such a time, look out of the window and watch passers-by, or would you look at the objects in the room, and so on? Would not this be the greatest offence to the royal majesty? How dare we then, do so, and much worse when we converse with the Lord?*

The Venerable Barlaam of Khutyn, the Miracle-worker

Barlaam was born and raised as a Christian in Novgorod the Great. After the death of his parents, he was tonsured a monk and devoted himself to a life of strict asceticism. He founded a monastery on the bank of the Volkhov River, at a place where a heavenly light appeared to him. Barlaam was a great miracle-worker both during his life and after his death: he saw into the secrets of men's hearts, expelled unclean spirits and healed all sicknesses. After his repose, a servant of Prince Vasili Vasilievich became gravely ill and begged to be taken to the saint's grave. He further instructed them that, if he should die on the way, they should carry his dead body to the saint. And thus it happened—he died on the way and they carried him dead to the monastery, where he returned to life, stood up and prostrated before the grave of the saint. In the year 1471, Tsar Ivan the Terrible ordered that the saint's grave be dug up. As soon as they began to dig, a flame sprang from the grave and flared up along the walls of the church. The Tsar was so frightened that he ran out of the church and, in his haste, forgot his staff, which is still preserved beside the grave of the saint. The commemoration of this miracle is celebrated on the Friday after the Sunday of All Saints.



Galatians 2:16-20

BRETHREN, you know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Saturday afternoon and I am burning the collected trash from underneath the altar at St. Anna's. There isn't very much trash inside the old oil barrel; it's maybe just below the half-way mark, but the heat that the burning trash puts off is tremendous. And what's even more surprising to me is how long it continues to burn and put off heat. Even with most of the trash consumed, the flames still burn with enough vigor to singe the hair off of the back of my careless hand. Might be a metaphor about prayer or sin in there somewhere if you look hard enough to find it.

On a side note: We talked last Sunday about the practice of yoga, hence the inclusion of the letter from the Holy Metropolis of Piraeus on page 4. Should be pretty self-explanatory.

Seraphim's Soapbox

Luke 8:41-56

At that time, there came to Jesus a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue; and falling at Jesus' feet he besought him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying. As he went, the people pressed round him. And a woman who had had a flow of blood for twelve years and had spent all her living upon physicians and could not be healed by anyone, came up behind him, and touched the fringe of his garment; and immediately her flow of blood ceased. And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the multitudes surround you and press upon you!" But Jesus said, "Some one touched me; for I perceive that power has gone forth from me." And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace." While he was still speaking, a man from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more." But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she shall be well." And when he came to the house, he permitted no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. And all were weeping and bewailing her; but he said, "Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise." And her spirit returned, and she got up at once; and he directed that something should be given her to eat. And her parents were amazed; but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

*see back page for commentary on this passage



HOMILY: on the Head of the Church and the Body of Christ

And gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body (Ephesians 1:22-23). Headless humanity is given a head in the Lord Jesus, risen from the dead. The body separated from the head is grafted to its head, part by part, member by member. Not all men are the body-only those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. All are called, but only those who respond are received under the Head. The ones who respond comprise the Body that is called the Church, whose Head is the Lord. But, as the risen and glorified man, Jesus is exalted within the Holy Trinity, above all and everything on earth and in heaven, so also will His Church, His Body, be exalted to its Head, above all and everything. The whole Church, together with its Head, will stand at the right hand of the Holy Trinity—for where the head is, there also is the body. The redeemed and repentant sinners, the erstwhile adversaries of God—wandering astray like the Prodigal Son and headless as a dead body, but now adopted through Christ and for Christ, and clothed in the beauty of divine life and splendor—will be exalted to such heights, greatness and glory. For it is a great thing, brethren: the Incarnation of the Son of God on earth, His suffering on the Cross and His death for our sake. His visit to earth brought about a great change in the destiny of men, and in the meaning of all things. He changed all things and made all things new. Therefore, brethren, let us not live and conduct ourselves as the old man, but rather as the new man; let us not live according to sin, but according to righteousness; let us not act according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. May we be made worthy of those heights, of the greatness and glory to which we are called by our Head. O Lord Jesus, the Holy Head of the Holy Church, make us worthy to be members forever of Thy Most-pure Body.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.



Commentary on the Epistle reading

Saint John Chrysostom: “This may be considered in two ways: Either he is speaking of the law of grace,...or it is the old law, of which he says that by the law itself he has become dead to the law; that is to say that the law itself has led me to no longer give heed to it...How? Moses says, speaking of Christ, 'The Lord thy God shall raise up to thee a Prophet of thy brethren, like me; Him shall ye hear.' So that those who do not obey Him, transgress the law. Again, the expression, “I through the law died to the law,” may have this meaning. The law commands all its precepts be done, and punishes the transgressor. Therefore we are all dead to it because no one has fulfilled it. And see how herein with measure he fights it. He says not, 'the law is dead to me,' but, 'I am dead to the law,' meaning that 'it is not possible for one dead...to obey the commands of the law, so it is then for me who have come to the end of the curse, for by its word am I put to death. Let it not therefore lay commands on the dead.' ...Now having said, 'I am dead,' lest it should be objected, how dost then thou live? He adds the cause of his living, and shows that when alive the law put him to death, but that when dead Christ through death gave life.

Commentary on the Gospel reading

Saint Ambrose: “His own received Him, but He does not disdain to return to the Jews when asked. Now the ruler of the synagogue, who had an only daughter, prayed for the healing of the dying Synagogue which was driven to death, because it was abandoned by Christ. Whom do you think the ruler of the synagogue to be if not the Law, in contemplation of which the Lord did not wholly forsake the Synagogue, but preserved it as a cure to salvation for believers? Thus, whereas the Word of God hastened to this daughter of the ruler to save the children of Israel, the holy Church gathered from the nations, which was perishing through the error of the lesser offenses, snatched through faith the healing prepared for others. This is a mystic truth: Did it not happen that, although the Word of God came to the Jews, He was received by the Gentiles and was believed first through grace by those who had not believed through the Law?”

Holy Metropolis of Piraeus, Office on Heresies and Cults.

The Holy Metropolis of Piraeus on the occasion of the existence of Yoga Centres within her geographic boundaries, informs the Christian Orthodox that Yoga has absolutely no relationship with the Orthodox spirituality.

Etymologically, Yoga derives from the Sanskrit "yuj" which means "coupling" and "union" of man with the impersonal Absolute One of Hinduism and of the eastern religions.

Therefore, Yoga is not a simple and innocent method of loosening up (relaxation), it is not a way of getting rid of stress, it is not a method of wellbeing, as it advertizes, but a stage of Hindu consideration connected with the anti-Christian theory of reincarnation.

At the different schools of Yoga, we confirm the direct dependence of those practicing to a Hindu teacher (guru) who guides them and changes their Orthodox Christian name.

The different techniques of Yoga have no relationship with science; to the contrary they have the characteristics of witchcraft. The occupation with Yoga hides spiritual and physical dangers.

The "New Age of Aquarius" that fights the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, our Orthodoxy, floods our country with the advertisements of Yoga to deceive with the demonic dogma that all the religions are the same roads that lead to the same purpose.

We call the Orthodox Christians and especially the youth to resist the ideological commands of the New Order Elements, to become members of their parish and their priests, that they may learn the Orthodox ascesis (practice) and spirituality.

The occupation with Yoga is for the Orthodox Christians incompatible with the teaching and dogmas of their Faith.

The occupation with Yoga is a denial of the Orthodox Faith and a blasphemy to the Holy Spirit.