



74th Year

March 1, 2026

Pamphlet #9 (3796)

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (John 1:44-52) **"Come and see"**

At that time, Jesus decided to go to Galilee. And he found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael, and he said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

THE ORTHODOXY OF THE CHURCH

Our Holy Church once again, this year, calls every believer to take part in today's celebration of Orthodoxy, of the right opinion and faith, revealed to the world by the incarnate Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit.

The historical background of the feast is known to most. In the year 842, the Empress Saint Theodora (whose sacred relic, after

the Fall of Constantinople, is preserved incorrupt in Corfu) restored the holy Icons. They had been removed by the iconoclasts, who were unable to grasp the theological, pedagogical, and liturgical foundations of their honorary veneration. During her reign, the harsh persecutions against the Orthodox finally ceased, and the iconoclastic disputes which had lasted for more than a hundred years came to an end. Among other consequences, these disputes had led to the destruction of important works of ecclesiastical art: icons, miniatures, frescoes, sacred objects, and holy relics.

Much has been written by special researchers about the causes of Iconoclasm, this religious, political, and social phenomenon that shook the Empire. For us, however, what matters is that the celebration of the restoration of the holy Icons soon acquired a broader meaning. It came to be regarded as the triumph of Orthodoxy over the various heretical deviations and heterodox teachings that separate man from Christ. For "Orthodoxy" means that the believer lives within the Church, the Truth of Christ, and conforms to the prophetic, apostolic, martyric, and patristic ethos, the ethos of the Saints, our elder siblings, who guide us in the life in Christ.

The theological meaning of the veneration of the sacred Icons

Since the Son of God, through His incarnation, also became the Son of man, He is circumscribable and therefore, can be depicted. Indeed, His depiction is an expression of confessing the ineffable mystery of His incarnation, through which man becomes, by grace, a son of God the Most-High. In the same way, the Theotokos and the Saints of God are depicted, because by participating in the Light and Divinity of Christ, they became living cells and members of His Body. They were sanctified by the operation of the Holy Spirit, so that Christ lives in them, and they in Christ. For this reason, we honor them, invoke their intercessions, and venerate their sacred icons, and their fragrant, precious relics. After all, to venerate means to offer a gesture of reverence, love, and honor toward someone whom we respect and love.

Man as the image of God

The Lord Jesus Christ, as the Apostle Paul states, “is the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15). But every human being is also created “in the image and likeness of God” (Genesis 1:26). It is almost impossible to describe in depth this truth of Holy Scripture. Yet the Fathers of the Church come to our aid, and help us understand, as far as possible, the meaning of this fundamental teaching about human existence. For example, Saint Gregory of Nyssa points out that the phrase “in the image” refers to the divine gifts present in man: reason, creativity, sociability, free will, the freedom of choice, and the capacity for ontological union with God – participation in His holiness through the keeping of the Gospel commandments and through the sacramental life. The phrase “in the likeness” is the gift, the grace of man’s theosis – his participation in the divine life and eternity, in the Kingdom of God, as the fruit of divine love and human cooperation.

Let us pray that we may always honor, through faith, repentance, and our spiritual struggle, the unchanging Image of the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, and that we may understand that this Image is borne by all people, even if it is darkened by our sins. Yet the Holy Spirit of God can cleanse us, enlighten us, and sanctify us, provided that we desire it.

Archimandrite N. K.

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March 1, 2026: 1st Sunday of Lent (of Orthodoxy)

Commemoration of the Restoration of the Holy Icons (843).
Eudokia the Venerable Martyr (†160–170);
Marcellus and Antonina, martyrs.

Pl. 1st Tone – Eothinon: 5 – Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26,32-40
– Gospel: John 1:44-52

NEXT SUNDAY: March 8, 2nd Sunday of Lent (St. Gregory Palamas)
Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3– Gospel: Mark 2:1-12

WEEK OF MISSIONARY WORK ABROAD

(March 1–7, 2026)

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