

14. APRIL. 2019. LITURGY OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT. TONE – 5.
5-th. SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT. VENERABLE MARY OF EGYPT.
14. КВІТЕНЬ. 2019. ЛІТУРГІЯ СВЯТОГО ВАСИЛІЯ ВЕЛИКОГО. ГОЛОС 5-ий.
5-та. НЕДІЛЯ ВЕЛИКОГО ПОСТУ. ПРЕПОДОБНОЇ МАРІЇ ЄГИПЕТЬКОЇ.



"O Lord, open Thou my lips. and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise"

Today, the Fifth Sunday in Lent, is for the Orthodox Church the Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt - she whose story has been called "an icon in words of the theological truth of repentance" (Sr. Benedicta Ward). We have heard this story many times. It is a simple one: the sinful woman becomes the penitent, and the least worthy is revealed as God's chosen treasure. It offers us familiar words about the power of faith, and familiar inspiration in the heroic actions of St. Mary herself. But it is, above all, a disturbing story. In the end, it haunts me far more often than it comforts me. Today, I would like to explore where the heart of this story lies, and why it is given to us especially to remember it on the Fifth Sunday of Lent each year.

The story of Mary of Egypt as it is written for the church is really three separate stories: The story of Mary's life, the story of the priest Zosimas, and the story of their experience together. Without doubt, the action and thrills come in Mary's story,

which she tells to Zosimas when he finds her wandering in the desert. She had been a wanton harlot from her youth, not for money, she told Zosimas solemnly, but "out of insatiable desire". One day she saw the crowds of pilgrims preparing to go to Jerusalem, to celebrate the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. It sounded like fun. She went along, announcing to her fellow-travellers, "I have a body and that will serve as both fare and food for me".

In Jerusalem, when the day of the Feast came round, Mary too set off for the church, drawn by the energy of the crowds thronging to venerate the True Cross. But something happened. At the doors of the church, at its very threshold, Mary was driven back "by some kind of force". Trying as she might, she could not enter, although those around her went in with no difficulty at all. Then she understood: it was her own self that prevented her entrance, the sinfulness of her life that held her captive outside the church. Praying fervently to the Virgin Mary, with her heart open and clear, Mary begged forgiveness and again sought entry at the church.

She remembered it like this, "A great terror and stupor came over me, and I trembled all over, but when I came to the door which until then had been closed to me, it was as if all the force that had previously prevented me from entering now allowed me to go in. So I was admitted without hindrance, and went into the holy of holies and I was found worthy to worship the mystery of the precious and life-giving Wood of the Cross. Thus, I understood the promises of God and

realized how God receives those who repent.”

Guided then by a vision of the Theotokos, Mary left at once for the desert beyond the Jordan River, for there, her vision told her, she would find rest. On the way, she stopped at a church built on the river banks; there she washed herself in the Jordan, receiving thus her baptism, and partook of the Eucharist in that church, all the while utterly alone. From there, she came to the desert, led still by the vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her new life was begun.

A powerful story, indeed! here was a woman of true courage, a woman who had the courage to know herself. She lived life with a perfect freedom and a perfect love that few of us could match.

TROPAR OF SUNDAY IN TONE – 5.

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, born for our salvation of the Virgin. For in His Good will He was lifted up on the Cross in the flesh to suffer death and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

TROPAR OF THE TEMPLE (ST. ELIA) IN TONE-4. An angel incarnate, the foundation of prophets and second forerunner of the coming of Christ, glorious Elias sent grace from on high to Elisha to cast out sickness and cleanse lepers. Therefore he pours forth healing for all who honour him.

TROPAR OF VENERABLE MOTHER IN TONE -8.

The image of God was truly preserved in you, O Mother, for you took up the Cross and followed Christ. By so doing, you taught us to disregard the flesh, for it passes away, but to care instead for the soul, since it is immortal. Therefore, Holy Mother Mary, your spirit rejoices with the angels.

Mary was both changed in herself, and found worthy in the eyes of the Lord. Her response was entirely in character: with perfect freedom and perfect love, Mary turned the whole of herself to God - her heart, her body, her very life. With the huge courage that had once enabled her to lead her life of sin with clear self-understanding, she now lived her life in the presence of God. The desert became her home, the place where she found her rest. Her conversion and turn to the life of solitude were unknown to any other living being, until after forty-eight years the priest Zosimas came and found her. *Fr. Matthias F.*

Wahba<http://www.copticchurch.net/topics/synexarion/maryofegypt.htm>

ТРОПАР НЕДІЛЬНИЙ НА ГОЛОС 5-ий.

Співбезпочаткове Слово Отцеві і Духові, від Діви народжене на спасіння наше, оспівуймо, вірні, і поклонімося, бо Він благозволив Тілом зійти на хрест і смерть перетерпіти, і воскресити померлих славним Воскресінням Своім.

ТРОПАР ХРАМУ (СВ. ІЛІА) НА ГОЛОС

4-ий. У тілі ангел, пророків основа, другий предтеча пришествя Христового - Ілля славний, з висоти послав Єлисеєві благодать недуги відганяти і прокажених очищати. Тому і всім, що почитають його, зливає зцілення

ТРОПАР ПРЕПОДОБНОЇ НА ГОЛОС 8-ий.

У тобі, мати, образ Божий явним став, взявши бо хрест, пішла ти за Христом і цим ділом навчала нас не дбати про тіло, бо воно тимчасове, а піклуватися про душу – бо вона безсмертна; тому разом із ангелами, преподобна Маріє, радіє дух Твій.

KONDAK OF SUNDAY IN ONE – 5.

You descended into Hades, O my Saviour, destroying its gates as the Almighty, resurrecting the dead as Creator and destroying the sting of death. You have delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of Mankind, and we all cry out to You: save us O Lord.

KONDAK OF TEMPLE (ST. ELIA) IN

TONE-2. O greatly renowned Prophet Elias, who foresaw the great deeds of our God; you stopped the rains of heaven by your command. Intercede for us with the only Lover of mankind. **GLORY** to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

KONDAK OF VENERABLE MOTHER IN

TONE -3. You, who were once defiled by every type of fornication, have today become a Bride of Christ through repentance. Emulating the angelic life, you cast down demons with the weapon of the Cross. Therefore, O Glorious Mary, you were made a Bride in the Kingdom. **NOW AND FOREVER** and to the ages of ages. Amen.

THEOTOKION IN TONE – 6.

O Protection of Christians that cannot be put to shame, unchanging mediation unto the Creator, do not despise the suppliant voices of sinners, but be quick to come to our aid, O Good One, who in faith cry out to You: hasten to intercession and come quickly to make supplication, for You, O Theotokos, always protect those who honour You.

READER : “ **ПРОКІМЕН IN TONE – 5.** You, O Lord, shall protect us and preserve us from this generation and forever.”

CHOIR : “ You, O Lord, shall protect us and preserve us from this generation and forever.”

READER : “ O Lord, save me for there is no longer any righteous man.”

CHOIR : “ You, O Lord, shall protect us and preserve us from this generation and forever.”

КОНДАК НЕДІЛЬНИЙ НА ГОЛОС 5-ий.

До аду, Спасе мій, зійшов еси і ворота зруйнував Ти, як Всесильний. Померлих, як Творець, воскресив з Собою, і смерті жало притупив Ти – і Адам від клятви визволений, Чоловіколюбче. Тому всі ми звиваємо: Спаси нас, Господи.

КОНДАК ХРАМУ (СВ. ІЛІІ) НА ГОЛОС

2-ий. Пророче і провидче великих діл Бога нашого, Ілля великоіменитий, вістунням твоїм ти зупиняв і водоточні хмари. Моли за нас Єдиного Чоловіколюбця.

СЛАВА Отцю і Сину і Святому Духові.

КОНДАК ПРЕПОДОБНОЇ НА ГОЛОС 6-

ий. Різним гріхами раніш сповнена, ти, через покаяння, Христовою невістою нині явилася; ангельське життя бо наслідуючи, зброєю Христа демонів нищиш, тому явилася еси невістою Царства, Маріє преславна. **І НИНІ** і повсякчас і на віки вічні, Амін.

БОГОРОДИЧНИЙ НА ГОЛОС 6-ий.

Заступнице християн усердная, молитвенница до Творця надійная, не зневаж молитви грішників, але прийди швидше, як Благая, на поміч нам, що з вірою звиваємо до Тебе, поспіши на молитву і скоро прийди на благання, бо Ти заступаєшся завжди за тих, що шанують Тебе, Богородице.

ЧИТ. : “ **ПРОКІМЕН НА ГОЛОС 5-ий.** Ти, Господи, збережеш нас і захистиш нас від роду цього і повік.

ХОР. : “ Ти, Господи, збережеш нас і захистиш нас від роду цього і повік.”

ЧИТ. : “ **(СТИХ)** “ Спаси мене, Господи, бо нестало праведного.”

ХОР. : “ Ти, Господи, збережеш нас і захистиш нас від роду цього і повік.”

READER : “ ANOTHER PROKIMEN IN TONE – 4. God is wonderful in His saints, the God of Israel.”

CHOIR : “ God is wonderful in His saints, the God of Israel.”

ЧИТ. : “ ДРУГИЙ ПРОКІМЕН НА ГОЛОС 4-ий. Дивний Бог у святих Своїх, Бог Ізраїлів.”

ХОР. : “ Дивний Бог у святих Своїх, Бог Ізраїлів.”

EPISTLE: Hebrews. 9 : 11 - 14.

¹¹ But Christ came *as* High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. ¹² Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? ¹

Galatians. 3 : 23 - 29.

²³ But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

READER : “ ALLELUIA IN TONE – 5. Of Your mercies O Lord, I will sing forever; unto generation and generation I will proclaim Your truth with my mouth.”

CHOIR : “ Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.”

READER : “ You have said: Mercy will be established forever and My Truth will be prepared in the heavens.”

CHOIR : “ Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.”

READER : “ ANOTHER ALLELUIA IN TONE – 4. With patience have I waited patiently for the Lord, and He was attentive to me and listened to my supplication.”

CHOIR : “ Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.”

ЧИТ. : “ АЛИЛУЯ НА ГОЛОС 5-ий. Милості Твої, Господи, повік оспівуватиму, з роду в рід оповім істину Твою устами моїми. Алилуя.”

ХОР. : “ Алилуя, Алилуя, Алилуя.”

ЧИТ. : “ Бо Ти сказав, повік збудується милість, на небесах утвердиться істина Твоя. Алилуя.”

ХОР. : “ Алилуя, Алилуя, Алилуя.”

ЧИТ. : “ АЛИЛУЯ НА ГОЛОС 4-ий. Терплячи, потерпів перед Господом, і зважив на мене і вислухав молитву мою. Алилуя.”

ХОР. : “ Алилуя, Алилуя, Алилуя.”

GOSPEL: Mark. 10 : 32 - 45.

² Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: ³³ “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; ³⁴ and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.”

³⁵ Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, “Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask.” ³⁶ And He said to them, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

³⁷ They said to Him, “Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory.” ³⁸ But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

³⁹ They said to Him, “We are able.” So Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; ⁴⁰ but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* for whom it is prepared.”

⁴¹ And when the ten heard *it*, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. ⁴² But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ⁴³ Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. ⁴⁴ And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

INSTEAD OF: “ IT IS TRULY WORTHY....WE SING IN TONE -8 FROM THE OCTOECHOS.

All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace, the assembly of angels and the race of men. O sanctified temple and spiritual paradise, the glory of virgins, from whom God was incarnate and became a child - our God before the ages. He made your body into a throne, and your womb He made more spacious than the heavens. All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of grace. Glory to you

COMMUNION VERSE:

“ Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest. Alleluia.”
“ The righteous man shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not fear evil tidings.”

ЗАМІСТЬ ДОСТОЙНО.

“ Тобою радується, Благодатна, всякая твар, ангельський собор і людський рід, освячений храме і раю словесний, дівства похвало. Від Тебе Бог воплотився і Дитям став, Предвічний Бог наш. Бо лоно Твоє Престолом учинив і утробу Твою просторнішою небес сотворив. Тобою, Благодатна,! радується всякая твар. Слава Тобі.“

ПРИЧАСНИЙ. “ Хвалить Господа з небес, хвалить його в небі. Алилуя.” “ В пам'ять вічну буде праведник. Лихої слави він не убоїться. Алилуя.”



2. Zosimas' Story

Now Zosimas' story is, alas, far more akin to our own lives. For we are all too glad to dissociate ourselves from Mary and her sinfulness. Hers is a story so different from our lives, after all. Here we are, in church on Sunday, in our ordinariness. We have our homes and families our spouses and children, our work, our life in the church and in the community. We try to be good Christians, to lead good lives. Even though we know our weaknesses, we know (faithfully) that at least we have nothing so spectacular as Mary's life for which to repent. Who among us could truly identify with her story, either the degree of her wickedness, or the degree of her repentance - for who among us would drop everything (*everything*) and turn to a life of ceaseless and solitary prayer? But this is exactly why we are so much like Zosimas.

Zosimas was a priest and a monk, sincere, devoted, and earnest. He sought to live a good Christian life, and he did. From his childhood he had pursued the monastic vocation, with piety and discipline: a man who early on had achieved an enviable sanctity. ...Foolish man! He did not know himself honestly, and so he became captive to his own life. How far from the freedom with which Mary had lived, and loved, and lived again! But the Lord was compassionate with Zosimas, and spoke to him in a vision telling him to go to the desert

beyond the Jordan, 'so that you may know how many and varied are the ways to salvation.'

Zosimas went, expecting to find a great and holy monk who would become his teacher. When he entered the desert, he walked for twenty days into its deepest and most desolate part, where no sign of life could be found. Then he found Mary. The encounter was terrifying and wonderful. She was naked, blackened by years of harsh desert sun, emaciated from her fasting, her hair short and pure white; and she fled from him. Zosimas knew that here, in this utter wilderness, in this strange and frightening creature, he had at last met something he had never before known: the naked power and presence of God.

And so Zosimas, good man of God, found salvation and truth where he least expected it: in the life of a woman who had been as unashamedly sinful as he had been earnest in his life of devotion. And she, not he, was the Person in whom grace was found. Zosimas' story is above all a plea for humility in our lives - for fighting against the complacency (both spiritual and social) which is the constant danger for us as we seek to live the life of faith. It reminds us vividly that appearances and actions deceive, that only God knows the intentions of the heart, and that the moment we think we have accomplished true Christian living we have lost our way. At such moments, the penitent sinner becomes our guide and our hope.