



# St. Cyril of Jerusalem Orthodox Church

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+ **March 3, 2019** +  
**MEATFARE SUNDAY**  
**Sunday of the Last Judgment**  
Martyr Eutropius of Amasea (+308)

I do not pray any longer not to sin, but for thirty years I have been praying: "Lord Jesus, shield me from my tongue." Yet despite this, my tongue trips me up every day, and I commit sin because of it.

- *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*

**THIS WEEK:** Wednesday – Inquirer Class at 5:30 p.m.; Vespers, 7:00 p.m.

**NEXT SUNDAY – FORGIVENESS SUNDAY.** Immediately after Liturgy we will celebrate Vespers and the Rite of Forgiveness. Coffee Hour following service.

## Looking Ahead:

+ **March 10: Forgiveness Sunday**

+ **March 11: Great Lent Begins . . .**

+ **GREAT CANON OF ST. ANDREW – Monday thru Thursday March 11-14, 7 p.m.**

+ **Friday, March 15: First Presanctified Liturgy, 7 p.m.**

## On Judgment

+ Truly, no one knows a person's deeds without knowing the person's spirit. Truly, we must not judge someone before the time, O friends of Christ, before the Lord comes and illuminates everything.  
*- St. Simeon, the Fool for Christ of Emesa*

*[St. Simeon said this, trying to keep his own good works hidden until his departure from this life, so that he might escape human glory.]*

+ Are you unable to stop the mouth of the person who speaks against his neighbor? Then at least keep yourself from having anything to do with him. Understand that if fire comes forth from you and burns others, God will demand an accounting from you for the souls that are burned by your fire. On the other hand, if you yourself do not give off fire, but you agree with the one who ignited it and take pleasure in this, you will be counted as his accomplice in the day of judgment. *- St. Isaac the Syrian*

+ The more the rain falls on the earth, the softer it makes it. In the same way, Christ's holy Name gladdens the earth of our heart the more we call upon it.  
*- St. Hesychios*

# On Death and the Future Life

*An ascetic Elder related the following:*

There once lived an aged nun who excelled in virtue and piety. When I asked her why she fled from the world, she told me this. "When I was still a young girl, reverend Father," she began, "I remember that my father was a very tender and good man. He was thin and sickly in body, so that the majority of his time he passed confined to his bed. He was marked by such simplicity that he spoke only when compelled. When he was well, he dedicated himself to tilling the land, thereby occupying himself and bringing to our home the produce which he cultivated. But he was so reticent to speak that those who did not know him thought him to be mute.

"Wholly the opposite of my father was my mother. She was such a busy-body and so idle that she was anxious to learn about things even outside our village. She talked so much that nobody ever saw her silent, even for a little: rather, one time she would be seen arguing and quarreling, and another time saying obscene and indecent words in jest. Most of the years of her life she wasted in drunkenness and in the company of profligate men. She was often away and was immoral, and, like a prostitute, badly looked after our household, so that we could no longer get by—despite the fact that our assets were not few—, since it was to her that my father had entrusted the administration of the household. Though she lived in this way, she nonetheless never became sick and never felt the slightest pain; for all of the wretched life that she lived, she maintained her bodily health.

"It happened, anyway, that my father died, ravaged by many years of illness. Now, what happened at his death? Immediately a fearful wind came up and almost razed the area. There was continual thunder, and the rain poured so violently that no one dared poke his nose out of his house even for a moment. This foul weather lasted three days, and out of necessity we kept my father inside the house, unburied.

"Our fellow villagers, seeing all of these obstacles, greatly condemned my dead father, saying: 'My, my, what evil was living in our midst, and we did not know it! It seems that this dead man must have been an enemy of God, and for this reason God has not even allowed him to be buried yet.'

"We however, so that the corpse would not start decomposing in the house and make it uninhabitable because of the stench, risked, despite the violent rain, transporting the body to the cemetery, and buried it.

"From that time on my mother had even greater freedom to devote herself with great brazenness to orgies and debauchery. Indeed, she became so audacious that she transformed our home into a house of immorality and, indulging her unceasing sensual pleasures, squandered away all of our holdings; so, in a short time we had nothing left. Some years after the death of my father, my mother died. She had such a splendid and magnificent funeral that one could say that nature itself cooperated in conducting it.

Since my mother had died and I had passed the age of childhood, the flames of youth being kindled and tempting me, one evening the thought came to me: Which path shall I follow in my life? Occupied with this thought, I said off the top of my head, talking to myself: 'Should I choose, I wonder, my father's way of life, and live with kindness, modesty, and judiciousness?'

"But my father, even if he did live virtuously, nonetheless never enjoyed even one good thing, but was always devoured by illness and misfortunes. He was so unfortunate that he was not even allowed in his torments to be buried like other people. If my father's conduct and behavior were pleasing to God, why was he tested by so many disasters? And what was my mother's life like? Did she not live a healthy life, even though she was plunged into a life of pleasures and desires? I will also, therefore, live the life that my mother did, for I prefer to believe in what I can see than in promises about what is to come.'

"By the time that I had decided to follow in the steps of my mother, night had fallen. And when I went to sleep, there appeared before me a man of enormous dimensions and with a savage face. Staring at me with rage and a wild look, he asked me in a dreadful voice: 'Tell me what is in your heart.' I was so frightened that I dared not even look at his face.

"This fearful man, with the same sternness, asked me again:

"Tell me, then. What have you decided?'

"When he saw that I was paralyzed by fear and was in danger of losing my senses, he himself reminded me in detail of all that I had just been thinking of myself.

"Recovering from my fear and astonishment and being unable to deny anything that the man had said, I began begging and imploring him to forgive me.

"Then, as though he had become calmer, he took me by the hand and said:

"Come and see where your father and mother are. On the basis of this you can choose which way of life you want for yourself.'

"Taking me from where I was, he guided me to a vast garden, which was planted with various beautiful trees, beyond description in their charm and filled with different kinds of fruits. And there, as I was walking with this fearful man, my father came up to me, embracing me and covering me with tender kisses, saying, 'My beloved child.'

"I embraced my father with joy, asking if I might remain with him. My father sweetly replied:

"Now, my child, this is not possible; if, however, you will follow my own way of life, not much time will pass and you will be here, too.'

"Just as I was to about to continue in my requests to remain with my father, the Angel who was accompanying me pulled me by the hand and said:

"Come, now, to see your mother, too, so that you can determine firsthand which way of life you want to lead.'

"Then, taking me to a place that was all dark, in which one could hear great disorder and groans, he showed me a furnace, the fires of which would spill over every time it surged up. And outside the furnace a number of ghastly and frightening individuals gazed on the sight.

"As I was looking at this frightening and terrible place of torture, I saw my mother, submerged to her neck in the flaming furnace, numberless worms gnawing on her all over. From my pain and fear, I was trembling, while my teeth began to chatter and to gnash.

"When my mother raised her eyes to look at me, she began to cry harrowingly and said to me:

"Alas, my child. My pains are unbearable. My torments are unceasing. For a few years of delight and sinful pleasure, I brought all of this terrible punishment on myself. Woe to me, such an unfortunate one! Woe to me, wretch that I am! Because of the ephemeral pleasures of temporary life, I am now tormented eternally. But, my child, take pity on your mother, who, as you see, is in flames and is being devoured by fire. Remember, my child, how I gave you suckle and reared you, and take pity on me. Give me your hand and pull me out of here.'

"I, however, did nothing, and could not even approach my mother, who, out of shame before those who were around her, cried out even more strongly and with tears:

"My child, help me and do not scorn your mother and her lamentations. Do not close your eyes to this unfortunate mother, who is tortured in the Gehenna of fire and continually consumed by unsleeping worms.'

"Moved by sympathy for my mother, I stretched out my hand, so that I could pull her out of that frightful Hell. No sooner had the flames of the fire only slightly touched my hand, than I felt great pain and began to cry in moans. From my lamentations and moans, I awoke everyone in the house. They got up, turned on the lights, and ran to my bed, asking with incessant questions to learn why I was crying in my sleep and groaning.

"So, having come to a bit, I began to relate to them everything that I saw in my vision.

"From that day I most decisively resolved to live as did my father, whose way of life I longed for. I pray that God will deem me worthy to succeed therein and to see my father again and live with him, for, by the Grace of God, with my own eyes I saw the glory and honor which awaits those who ready themselves by living reverently and virtuously; and, on the other hand, again, what fearful punishment and Hell awaits those who squander their lives on pleasures and passions."