

The Sunday of Orthodoxy

John 1:43-51

The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man (KJV)

Today is the Sunday of Orthodoxy. Orthodox believers gather each year in unity on this first Sunday of Great Lent to celebrate the restoration of icons to the churches.

Icons enrich the lives of believers and serve to educate as well as inform. Believers learn through viewing icons and venerating them. Believers reach out in prayer when approaching icons.

Miracles have been associated with various icons down through the centuries. Individuals, communities and nations are inspired and feel protected by certain icons.

The Lord Jesus Christ took on human flesh. Jesus Christ is depicted in icons. Numerous miraculous icons of Mary, Jesus' Mother are recorded in the Church's history.

Icons benefit believers in their journey from the Baptismal font to the Heavenly Kingdom. Icons change and enrich the lives of believers. Homes having icon corners creates places for family prayer.

Believers continue to benefit from Jesus Christ's Apostles. Today's Gospel records the "call" of Philip and Nathaniel to follow Jesus Christ. Believers benefit from being attentive to each Gospel reading.

Philip and Nathaniel's experience took place in the city of the Apostles Andrew and Peter. The Holy Apostles spread the Gospel and witnessed to their experience with Jesus Christ

The faith of the Apostles endures through the centuries. Lives continue to be enriched and changed due to the spreading of the Gospel. Following Jesus Christ is possible for each person choosing to do so.

Each person responds voluntarily to follow Jesus Christ at their Baptism. Baptism is a life-changing experience. The commitment to Jesus Christ requires faithfulness and renewal throughout the remaining time of life.

Faithfulness and maintaining purity in Jesus Christ involve guarding against sin. Fighting, repelling and rejecting sin is a life-long challenge. The believer is to always guard against the perils of sin.

The arrival of the Sunday of Orthodoxy draws attention to the Lenten journey. The Sunday of Orthodoxy solidifies the unity of the journey among believers throughout the world.

The Sunday of Orthodoxy unites believers with those of previous centuries and reaffirms the unity of Faith. Participants in Orthodoxy Sunday celebrations are strengthened and empowered by the experience.

The Lenten journey continues until Holy Week. Believers are to make wise use of each day for the benefit of the soul. Great Lent is a time for repentance and renewal in Jesus Christ.

Philip and Nathaniel's identities and lives were changed when they followed Jesus Christ. Each person Baptized into Christ, having put on Christ, has their identity changed.

A person's identity shapes and affects relationships. Individuals identified as Orthodox Christians embrace the life and teachings of Jesus Christ as set forth in The Creed recited at Baptism and at each Divine Liturgy.

Believers are to live out The Creed in daily relationships. The way a person lives in the home, at work and in the community reveals the extent of belief and commitment to Jesus Christ.

Honest personal analysis during Great Lent will reveal the extent of personal sinfulness. The Church encourages repentance, Confession and Communion to deal with personal sinfulness.

Great Lent occurs each year for believers to be renewed in Christ. Great Lent facilitates believers honoring Jesus Christ. Great Lent is integral to the journey to Pascha and celebrating Jesus Christ's Resurrection

Each moment is precious in Great Lent. God provides the time of life for believers to experience and glorify Jesus Christ. Living in Christ is immeasurable and results in hope, peace, love and joy.

The Church provides the nourishment, the Divine services and the directions for believers to journey through Great Lent and to the Paschal celebration. Wise believers make full use of the journey.

The Sunday of Orthodoxy. Holy Martyr Pamphilius, Porphirius, and Those with them. February 16/March 1, 2026. Father Rodney Torbic